



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

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## WRITTEN STATEMENT BY THE WELSH GOVERNMENT

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<b>TITLE</b>	<b>The Recognition of Overseas Qualifications (Charges) (England and Wales and Northern Ireland) Regulations 2025</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>10 March 2025</b>
<b>BY</b>	<b>Vikki Howells MS, Minister for Further and Higher Education</b>

Members of the Senedd will wish to be aware I have given consent to the UK Government's Secretary of State exercising a subordinate legislation-making power in a devolved area in relation to Wales.

The 2025 regulations revoke the Recognition of Overseas Qualifications (Charges) Regulations 2024 (S.I. 2024/942). The earlier regulations extended and applied to the whole of the UK. However, following discussions with the devolved Governments in relation to matters of competence, this instrument extends and applies only to England, Wales and Northern Ireland. In re-making provision contained in S.I. 2024/942, the 2025 regulations also correct previous drafting errors with respect to definitions relating to services intended for refugee organisations and priority services.

This Instrument also updates the services and charges related to the comparability and recognition of UK and overseas qualifications. These services are provided in pursuance of international obligations. The UK's National Information Centre ("UK ENIC") provides these services ("the UK ENIC services"). An external provider, Ecctis Limited, carries out the UK ENIC services through a contract with the Department for Education.

This Instrument includes the following changes in respect of services and charges:

- **Charges for services:** An increase has been applied to all UK ENIC services to manage increased costs of delivery resulting from inflation.
- **Subscription Package:** The description of the service has been updated to reference the subscriber query support where this is relevant.
- **Ancillary Services:**
  - The £7.50 charge for the delivery of a 'statement of comparability' or 'qualification reference statement' in electronic format containing an electronically verifiable signature has been removed as a charging option.
  - Charges for additional support to subscription package users from the provider of up to 300 additional queries has been added as a charging option.

- Members rate and non-member rate charges for a one day conference and a two day conference have been included as charging options.

Regulations 3 to 6 set out the applications and services for which charges may be charged. Regulation 7 states the payment arrangements. Regulation 8 makes provision on refunds. Regulation 9 contains revocation and savings provision. The Schedules summarise each application or service and state the corresponding charge.

The UK is a signatory to two international treaties regarding the recognition of academic qualifications: the Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region, signed by the United Kingdom on 7th November 1997; and the Global Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education, signed by the United Kingdom on 25th November 2019 (together “the Conventions”).

The Conventions aim to facilitate academic and professional mobility between states and enhance international cooperation and trust in higher education. The Conventions oblige signatory states to implement the recognition of qualifications from other signatory states and set out how recognition decisions shall be made. The Conventions also require signatory states each to establish and maintain a national information centre that facilitates access to information about higher education and qualifications.

UK ENIC fulfils information and recognition functions for the United Kingdom. To date the UK has met these obligations through services that the Department for Education has contracted an external provider (Ecctis) to supply. The UK ENIC service is essential for recruitment of students and workers in various sectors of the UK economy. The UK ENIC Service is used by Welsh higher education institutions and individuals both living in Wales and intending to study in Wales.

The Welsh Government’s general principle is the law relating to devolved matters should be made and amended in Wales. However, on this occasion, I consider it appropriate for the substance of the amendments contained in this UK Statutory Instrument to apply to Wales. The regulations providing the legal basis for the charging of fees must align with and come into force to coincide with the UK Government’s new contract with an external provider to deliver the services. I consider legislating separately for Wales would be neither the most appropriate way to give effect to the necessary changes, nor a prudent use of Welsh Government resources.

The Recognition of Overseas Qualifications (Charges) (England and Wales and Northern Ireland) Regulations 2025 were made by the Secretary of State, with consent of the Treasury, on 4 March in exercise of powers conferred by section 56(1) and (2) of the Finance Act 1973. The Regulations were laid before Parliament on 5 March and will come into force on 28 March.