



Ag Rialáil Gairmithe Sláinte
agus Cúraim Shóisialaigh

Regulating Health +
Social Care Professionals

Regulatory Impact Assessment Report

Amendment of the Podiatrists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law 2026

July 2026

[1] Summary of Regulatory Impact Assessment

Organisation	CORU – Health and Social Care Professionals Council
Registration Board	Podiatrists Registration Board
Regulatory Intervention	Revocation of the Podiatrists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law 2023 and replacement with the Podiatrists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law 2026 to facilitate the inclusion of the Degree of Master of Science in Podiatric Medicine (Pre-Registration), University of Galway, as an approved qualification for registration.
Relevant Legislation	Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended)
Date of Assessment	16 July 2026
Stage	Post-Public Stakeholder Consultation
Associated Documentation	Public Consultation Report; Podiatrists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law 2026; EU Proportionality Assessment Report.
Contact	Education Quality Assurance Unit: education@coru.ie

[2] Statement of Regulatory Intervention Context and Objectives

The Health and Social Care Professionals Act 2005 (as amended) establishes a qualifications-based registration system for regulated health and social care professions. Individuals seeking registration must demonstrate that they hold a qualification that attests to the standard of proficiency required for practice within the profession.

The Approved Qualifications Bye-Law (AQBL) serves as the statutory mechanism through which a Registration Board identifies qualifications approved for registration purposes. Following approval of an education and training programme, the qualification awarded on completion of that programme is listed on the Board's Approved Qualifications Bye-Law. Graduates holding qualifications listed on the Bye-Law are eligible to apply for registration under Section 38 of the Act. It is important to note that the AQBL only applies to qualifications awarded by the Republic of Ireland. It does not impact on the recognition of qualifications awarded outside of the state or in other jurisdictions.

The Podiatrists Registration Board recently approved a new entry-to-practice programme delivered by the University of Galway leading to the award of the **Degree of Master of Science in Podiatric Medicine (Pre-Registration)**. Following approval of the programme, it became necessary to amend the Board's Approved Qualifications Bye-Law to ensure that graduates of the programme could apply for registration.

The objective of this regulatory intervention is therefore to:

- Ensure that the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law accurately reflects qualifications approved by the Podiatrists Registration Board
- Facilitate registration of graduates who have completed an approved programme and achieved the required standards of proficiency.
- Maintain public protection by ensuring that registration remains linked to Board-

approved education and training.

- Support transparency, consistency and legal certainty within the registration system.

Importantly, the intervention does not alter the scope of practice of podiatrists, create a new profession, introduce new registration requirements or impose additional obligations on existing registrants. Rather, it updates the legislative framework to reflect the approval of an additional qualification.

[3] Initial Scoping by the Podiatrists Registration Board

The Registration Board considered the regulatory implications arising from the approval of the Degree of Master of Science in Podiatric Medicine (Pre-Registration), University of Galway.

The Board identified the following key considerations:

Educational Standards

The programme approval process concluded that graduates of the programme would achieve the standards of proficiency required for safe and effective entry into practice as a podiatrist. As a result, the associated qualification was deemed suitable for recognition within the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law.

Registration Eligibility

The Board recognised that graduates cannot rely upon a qualification for registration purposes unless it is formally incorporated within the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law. While programme approval establishes educational suitability, the Bye-Law provides the legislative basis upon which registration decisions are made.

Public Protection

The Board considered the importance of maintaining a clear connection between approved education programmes and registration. The Bye-Law contributes to public protection by ensuring that only approved qualifications are recognised for registration purposes.

Workforce Considerations

The Board also considered broader workforce implications. Establishing an additional approved route into the profession supports the continued development of podiatry services while maintaining existing educational and professional standards.

[4] Identification of Options: Analysis of Risks, Benefits and Impacts

On the basis of the initial scoping by the Podiatrists Registration Board (16 July 2026) potential regulatory pathways were identified and examined by the Board:

Option One: Retain the Existing Approved Qualifications Bye-Law

Under this option, the Podiatrists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law 2023 would remain unchanged and the new Master's qualification would not be added.

Risks	Graduates of the newly approved programme would not have a qualification recognised for registration purposes. This would create inconsistency between the programme
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	approval framework and the statutory registration framework. It could also adversely affect workforce planning and restrict access to the profession for suitably qualified graduates.
Benefits	No legislative amendment required.
Impacts	Prevents graduates of a Board-approved programme from accessing registration through the approved qualifications route. Creates unnecessary regulatory uncertainty and would not reflect the Board's programme approval decision.

Option Two: Revoke the Existing Bye-Law and Make the Podiatrists Registration Board Approved Qualifications Bye-Law 2026

Under this option, the existing Bye-Law would be revoked and replaced by a new Bye-Law incorporating the Degree of Master of Science in Podiatric Medicine (Pre-Registration), University of Galway.

Risks	Administrative resources required to conduct consultation, complete statutory approvals and implement the revised Bye-Law.
Benefits	Provides legal certainty; ensures consistency between educational approval and registration requirements; supports public protection; supports workforce development; enhances transparency.
Impacts	Positive impacts for graduates, employers, education providers, future applicants and service users. Maintains confidence in the registration system while supporting access to the profession.

Having considered the available options, the Board concluded that Option Two represented the most proportionate, transparent and legally robust solution. The risks associated with implementation were limited and manageable while the benefits to public protection, regulatory certainty and workforce development were significant.

The following section of this assessment explores the impacts of this regulatory intervention more completely.

[5] Exploring the Impact of the Regulatory Intervention Selected

Impact on Public Protection

The intervention reinforces public protection by ensuring that registration remains linked to educational qualifications that have been formally approved by the Registration Board and demonstrated to meet the standards of proficiency required for practice.

Impact on Applicants

The intervention ensures that graduates of the Degree of Master of Science in Podiatric Medicine (Pre-Registration), University of Galway, can access registration through the standard registration route established under the Act.

Impact on Education Providers

The amendment recognises the successful completion of the Board's programme approval process and provides clarity to education providers regarding how approved qualifications are recognised within the regulatory framework.

Impact on Employers

Employers benefit from a clear and transparent framework for determining whether prospective employees possess approved qualifications. Recognition of the additional qualification may also contribute positively to workforce supply and recruitment.

Impact on Workforce Planning

The introduction of an additional approved qualification expands educational pathways into the profession while preserving existing standards of competence. This supports workforce sustainability objectives without lowering professional requirements.

Impact on Competition and Consumer Choice

The amendment does not restrict access to the profession. Rather, it expands educational opportunities and facilitates additional entry routes into podiatry practice while maintaining public protection safeguards. Accordingly, the intervention is expected to have a positive effect on workforce availability and consumer access to services.

[6] Public Consultation Processes

In accordance with established procedures governing Approved Qualifications Bye-Laws, the Podiatrists Registration Board undertook a public consultation process in advance of finalising the proposed Bye-Law.

The consultation process:

- Was publicly advertised by CORU.
- Provided stakeholders with an opportunity to review and comment on the proposed amendment.
- Allowed feedback to be submitted through established consultation mechanisms.
- Formed part of the Board's obligations under the proportionality assessment framework and wider principles of transparency and stakeholder engagement.

Following completion of the consultation, the Board reviewed all feedback received before progressing the Bye-Law through the statutory approval process. A Public Consultation Report was subsequently prepared and published.

The link to the consultation report is available on the CORU website:

<https://coru.ie/public-protection/publications/consultation-reports/podiatrists-registration-board/>

[6] Enforcement and Compliance of Regulatory Intervention

The amendment does not require any new enforcement mechanisms.

The existing regulatory framework remains unchanged and continues to provide the mechanisms through which compliance is achieved:

- Programme approval processes.
- Monitoring of approved programmes.
- Registration assessment procedures.
- Verification that applicants hold an approved qualification listed within the Bye-Law.

The amendment simply updates the list of approved qualifications recognised within these existing arrangements.

[6] Review Mechanisms

The Board's education and training requirements are subject to periodic review and monitoring. Approved qualifications remain listed on the Approved Qualifications Bye-Law while the associated programme continues to maintain approval status.

Future amendments may be required where:

- New qualifications are approved.
- Qualification titles change.
- Awarding institutions change.
- Approved qualifications require removal following regulatory decisions.

The Board will continue to review its Approved Qualifications Bye-Law as necessary to ensure that it accurately reflects approved pathways into the profession.

[7] Publication

This Regulatory Impact Assessment will be published on the CORU website:

<https://coru.ie/public-protection/publications/consultation-reports/podiatrists-registration-board/>