

## Mutual Recognition of Professional Qualifications within a Global Marketplace for the Services of Surveyors

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**Abstract.** This paper considers different means of achieving global free movement of surveyors by investigating experiences of harmonisation, the mutual recognition of higher education diplomas within the European Union and bi-lateral reciprocity agreements negotiated individually between surveying institutions. The reasons for rejecting harmonisation of qualifications and reciprocity as potential solutions to the problem are outlined and the practicalities of adopting mutual recognition of professional qualifications considered. The importance of accepting the outcome rather than the process of professional education and training is highlighted. It is contended that effective communication between surveying organisations is essential in order to understand and respect the differences in our profession, professional practice and underlying relevant cultural backgrounds if any system is to be successful in achieving the “global surveyor” for the rapidly-evolving world-wide marketplace for the services of surveyors.

### 1. Introduction

There is no doubt that globalisation has affected the surveying profession for some time. Many of our clients have had international interests for decades; many of our clients have been expecting professional advice about property and property-related activities in other countries to be provided by international firms of surveyors, who are either demonstrably active and competent in other jurisdictions or who have “associates” who can undertake such work on their behalf. Currently, there is specific pressure from the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to introduce regulations towards the liberalisation of trade (Enemark, 1999).

There is plenty of evidence of companies which, having identified an international market, have established a physical presence in another country, recruited locally-trained and qualified staff, and thereby achieved a balance of local expertise and parent company culture. Indeed, there is great value to the company, the employees and the clients, if the two ingredients (local expertise and parent company culture) can be successfully combined. More recently, highly publicised international mergers of firms of surveyors have taken place.

However, the opportunities for individuals to establish themselves in other countries are not so straightforward. The award of a professional qualification is not easily earned and it seems as if every country requires a different kind of professional education and training for their surveyors (refer, Gronow & Plimmer 1992).

## 2. Professional Education and Training

Surveying is a very old profession within the world and, while some of its constituent activities have relatively recently acquired prominence, the components of the process of becoming a surveyor (irrespective of the surveying specialism) seems to be relatively standardised in many countries (Allen, 1995)

Thus, it is relatively usual for surveyors to undergo a period of professional education and training prior to acquiring their professional title. In some countries e.g. the United Kingdom and Australia, there are university courses at undergraduate level which lead to academic qualifications which, themselves, are accredited by professional organisations or recognised by state authorities. This period of academic study is complemented by a period of supervised work experience during which the trainee surveyor gains experience and is tested in various relevant competencies. Only once satisfactory academic and practice standards have been satisfied, is the surveyor granted professional status, which often involves or includes being admitted to membership of professional organisations.

It is, however, not unusual for various combinations of academic education and professional practice to be required. In France, for example, professional recognition of property managers (*gérants*) is available to individuals who have either: an appropriate diploma (or degree); a lesser diploma (or degree) and professional experience; or professional experience alone (Gronow & Plimmer, 1992 at pages 31-32). Thus, there is a recognition within the state-awarded practising license that either suitable academic qualifications or an appropriate period and range of professional experience alone can equip an individual with equivalent professional and technical skills and knowledge.

Pre-qualification professional education and training provide a number of things:

- (a) they provide technical and professional knowledge and skills, appropriate to the nature of the professional qualification and activities of the profession;
- (b) they provide a basic range and level of both technical and professional skills from which post-qualification specialisms can be developed;
- (c) (subject to the payment of fees and complying with other relevant criteria) they provide public recognition of standing by the award of a professional title, designatory letters, often including membership of a professional organisation, and other support services; and
- (d) they provide a status within the broader professional community and society at large.

Of course, professional education and training does not end at qualification. There is an increasing recognition that professionals have a continuing need (and even duty) to develop and enhance their professional skills throughout their professional lives and post-qualification continuing professional development (CPD) is increasingly recognised as one of the criteria to be observed by all professionals, including surveyors.

It should be obvious from the above, that the responsibility for the professional education and training of surveyors is a tripartite responsibility, shared between the academic educators (who tend to provide the technical education and professional theory); the practitioner employers (who ensure that theory is put into practice and that necessary practical skills are enhanced) and the state or private institution (which provides the public recognition of qualifications, ensures standards and the professional focus, often for both pre- and post-qualificational continuing professional development).

Thus, while surveyors are the products of a variety of pre-qualificational education and training programmes, we have a large degree of commonality in the process required for qualification.

### 3. Globalisation of Services

There is no doubt that the market for the services of surveyors is world-wide. There is no human activity which does not involve the use of land, in its broadest sense, and, increasingly, our clients have international interests. Pressure is also being generated by the WTO which provides the framework for free trade in professional services (Enemark, 1999) and surveying as a profession needs to respond.

There is, however, no one single surveying qualification nor is there one single pattern for qualification. However, surveyors are qualified (educated, trained and competent to practice) within national boundaries, but, in general, the nature and range of our respective qualifications are unclear to the rest of us. Nevertheless, it is evident that failure to respond to the global challenge to our profession will result in other professionals providing the services our clients require. This will be to the detriment of our own profession, the clients themselves (because if we are the experts in landed property, then no-one else can provide an appropriate level of expertise) and to the erosion of the quality of landed property and property-related services provided to the global community.

We need to respond to this challenge and ourselves devise the means to ensure global free movement, so that the process reflects the requirements of surveyors.

There is no one correct way for this global organisation to occur. There could be one single supreme organisation of which all surveyors are members and which provides a complete and common range of services, including professional education and training, ethics and practice standards, technical support, journals, Continuing Professional Development (CPD). Maybe such an organisation will one day emerge, but that day is, I suggest, not imminent. It is, of course, right that such an organisation, if it is to exist, should, in fact, emerge naturally and not be artificially imposed by one or several large and influential national surveying organisations.

More likely is the development of international links between national associations of surveyors driven by such issues as the common need to provide standards of practice which can be implemented globally. Such international links must be based on mutual co-operation and understanding between the national surveying organisations and are facilitated by effective communications between ourselves. FIG itself demonstrates that these international links are achievable and have, in fact, existed between surveyors for over a century. FIG is, therefore, proof that we can communicate with each other and, through communication, achieve a degree of international understanding.

Indeed, it is apparent that some areas of surveying e.g. geomatics, have developed a greater degree of international homogeneity than, say, property managers. The reasons for this are not important. But the outside world is moving too rapidly to allow the natural globalisation of surveying skills to continue at its existing pace.

What is important is that surveyors as a profession respond to the needs of our clients and the global public and provide a global service. It must mean that, as a profession, we should be able to work anywhere in the world, and this has implications for absolutely every professional service we offer and the way we perform our professional activities. However, in order to work anywhere, we need to be sure that our professional qualifications will be recognised globally and, to date, that is not happening. Until we have total freedom to practice world-wide, and that means recognition of our qualifications by other governments, professional bodies and by international clients, surveyors are not going to be in a position to respond to the global challenge.

## **4. Towards a Global Surveyor**

One of the major problems in achieving a global surveyor is that there are many different kinds of surveyors, all of whom have an important role to play as professionals in the measurement, assembling, planning, administration, use, transfer, disposal, development and redevelopment, and all financial aspects of landed property, including the management of the construction process (based on FIG, 1991 p. 9). The first step to achieving the global surveyor is, therefore, to recognise that we are in fact attempting to achieve several different kinds of global surveyors, who are all united in their responsibility for "land" (defined in its broadest sense), in their level of professionalism and in their common goal to ensure the effective and efficient management of a highly finite and valuable resource on behalf of their clients and the wider public.

The British Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, for example, identifies seven different kinds of surveyors within its divisional structure, each of which has a separate pre-qualificational professional education and training programme. This structure is not replicated in other countries within the European Union (Gronow and Plimmer, 1992) and it is unlikely that it is replicated in other countries in the world. Why should it be? All professional organisations developed their qualifications over time (and continue to do so) to reflect the market (normally on a national basis) which their members serve.

Thus, each country and in some cases each professional organisation in each country has developed its own professional groupings of professional activities and, derived from these, professional qualifications, which are normally based (among other things) on pre-qualification education and training, codes of conduct, professional indemnity and continuing professional development.

We must therefore accept that, in order to achieve the free movement of surveyors world-wide, we need to produce a number of different kinds of global surveyors, all of whom retain a common code of conduct, of ethics, professionalism, and probably a common pre-qualificational educational structure (e.g. three years tertiary professional education and a minimum period of supervised work experience), but who pursue different aspects of surveying activities (e.g. spatial information management, valuation, construction economics).

How then can we expect to negotiate a single professional qualification for surveyors? There are various options which have already been implemented in order to achieve the free movement of surveyors within the world, but investigation of each of these highlights enormous practical difficulties.

### **4.1 Reciprocity Agreements**

There are agreements reached between surveying organisations in different countries under which appropriately qualified surveyors from one country can have their professional qualifications recognised in another country. For example, in response to pressure from its members, The Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors has negotiated reciprocity agreements with the Appraisal Institute of Canada, The New Zealand Institute of Valuers and the Australian Institute of Quantity Surveyors, amongst others.

Each agreement was reached after a full and frank exchange of correspondence which establishing the essential nature of the professional education and training of surveyors leading up to membership of the representing organisations and also details of post-qualificational requirements. The terms of some of the reciprocity agreements require an applicant to undertake a professional examination in an appropriate (normally law-based) subject, but all of them require a period of work experience, supervised by a member of the host surveying organisation followed by a professional interview.

However, this process is relatively slow to implement, highly selective in terms of freedom of movement and (as implemented by the RICS) subject to review and/or abandonment.

## 4.2 Harmonisation of Qualifications

One of the choices to achieving free movement is to ensure that all surveyors have the same qualifications. This means that they are required to follow an identical programme of professional education and training, to abide by largely similar procedures and practices and to lobby governments, clients and other interested persons to ensure that this qualification is recognised world-wide as being the appropriate one for surveyors.

For neatness and for uniformity, this solution is ideal. Every geomatic surveyor, for example, would follow a largely identical academic course in every university in the world which offers geomatic surveying qualifications. Every graduate undertakes the same kind of supervised work experience for the same length of time and supplements the academic learning with work-based skills – all broadly similar. Entry would be to a single qualification, subject to a standard requirement for codes of conduct, monitoring of professional conduct, continuing professional development etc. which would be undertaken in a uniform manner by each nation's surveying governing or representative body. This process is known as harmonisation of qualifications and there is logic behind such a theory. For a discipline which has a large technical base, harmonisation is particularly attractive.

However, the practicalities of implementing it are, if the European Union's experience is anything to go by, horrendous. Harmonisation requires that the rules which apply in one country apply in all of the others and, in advance of the drive to achieve the Single European Union (which was only really begun in earnest in 1982 (Plimmer, 1991 at p. 46)), harmonisation had been the device for achieving the free movement of professionals in Europe (Commission of the European Communities, 1988, paras. 61-63). Harmonisation involved detailed discussions between all of the (then) twelve member states to establish a European Standard for each profession, so that the same rules are acceptable and applicable in each member state. This led, inevitably, to much negotiation and delay.

For Architects, for example, harmonisation was achieved by the negotiation of a specific directive dealing solely with their qualifications (professional education, training and practice) and which means that anyone who achieves the education and training required of an architect in any of the Member States must be accepted as being professionally qualified to practice as an architect in any of the other member states. The Architects' directive took 17 years to agree, before being adopted in 1985. A directive for Engineers had been in negotiation since 1969 before being abandoned, in part because of the implementation of the EU's general system for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications (refer 4.3). In fact, sectoral directives within the European Union exist only for architects, dental practitioners, general practitioners, midwives, nurses responsible for general care, pharmacists and veterinary surgeons (DTI, 1988 p. 40). The importance of the sectoral directive is that anyone qualified, say, as an architect in any member state is able to perform that professional activity in any other member state without having to undergo any additional professional education or training and, should an architect, educated and qualified in a mainland European member state apply to the Royal Institute of British Architects, the application cannot be rejected on the grounds of inadequate qualifications.

Thus, the harmonisation of qualifications which is implemented in the EU by sectoral directives permits free movement of professionals by requiring that professional education and training (and thereby qualifications) in one member state be the same as those in all other member states, with no further investigation. Obviously, if other requirements are imposed on members of that professional organisation, these too have to be met.

However, even with sectoral directives, there continue to be problems implementing their terms. Inevitably, pre-qualification professional education and training (particularly if it is based on academic courses) is subject to periodic change and harmonisation requires that such changes are subject to renewed negotiation. It seems, therefore, that even when there are legal requirements to enforce the free movement of professionals between member states which have negotiated a common programme of professional education and training and also have a common and agreed binding legal, economic and social system, free movement of professionals between different countries is not assured.

As part of their policy to ensure that the single European market was irreversible, the European Commission decided that it could not wait for all professions to negotiate their own harmonisation of professional qualifications and, I suggest, that if the European Architects' experience is anything to go by, neither can surveyors.

#### **4.3 Mutual Recognition of Qualifications**

The system which the European Union decided to adopt was mutual recognition of professional qualifications, based on certain assumptions and principles. These are firstly that of "recognition . . . of the essential equivalence of the objectives of national legislation" (Commission of the European Communities, 1985, para. 63) and therefore of the principle of the comparability of university studies between member states (op. cit. para. 93). The second principle on which mutual recognition is based, is mutual trust between member states.

Thus, unlike harmonisation, mutual recognition does not mean that all rules are the same in all member states. Mutual recognition means accepting the standards which are the norm in all the other member states in the Union and the principle relies heavily on the political willingness of member states to respect the principle of free movement across technical barriers.

Mutual recognition was implemented by a general directive (European Council, 1988) which came into effect on 4 January 1991 and applies to all professions for which a sectoral directive does not exist. It applies, therefore, to surveyors.

Mutual recognition of qualifications, as implemented within the EU, permits free movement of professionals provided that the applicant:

- (a) holds a diploma which gives access to the profession, if the profession is regulated in the "home" member state; or
- (b) holds a diploma (which does not give access to the profession) and has practised the profession for two years, if the profession is unregulated in the "home" member state.

Thus, for the EU, mutual recognition applies only to practitioners who hold a specified qualification at post-secondary academic education (refer Plimmer (1990) and Plimmer (1992) for details of the terms of the Directive). Similarly, the EU Directive also recognises that its provisions only apply to "corresponding professions" i.e. a profession in another member state which includes a substantial number of the professional activities comprised in the profession in the host member state. Thus, it is necessary to ensure that there is a substantial degree of commonality between the professional activities of any "profession" if the terms of the Directive are to achieve mutual recognition.

Provision is made within the Directive to permit additional work experience, where the length of pre-qualification training received by the applicant is less than that required by the host member state and, more importantly, to permit an adaptation mechanism, where the nature and content of the professional education and training of the applicant is deficient in some significant respect from that required by the host member state (refer Plimmer (1990) and Plimmer (1992)).

Thus, it is possible for an Italian building surveyor to demonstrate to the RICS that appropriate professional skills, which are not required of a building surveyor in Italy, have been acquired for working in the UK.

#### 4.4 Suitable Route to World-Wide Qualifications

Each of the three methods for enabling professionals to practice in other countries which have been described above has inherent problems.

Reciprocity agreements tend to operate for the benefit of surveyors in no more than two countries which tend to have very similar surveying professions. They are (by definition) negotiated on an individual basis, and their influence, as providers of global free movement, is, therefore, severely restricted. Nevertheless, they demonstrate that free movement can be achieved to a limited extent when like-minded professional organisations have an incentive to provide access to each other's professional qualifications for their members. The principles of accessibility and the willingness of surveying organisations to come to such agreements are, therefore, demonstrated.

Harmonisation in theory is ideal, but in practice is a tortuous and lengthy procedure. Partly because there are so many different kinds of surveyors, some of whom have expertise which their counterparts in other countries perceive as belonging to another kind of surveyor or other professionals or which are not practised at all. The issue of "corresponding professions" i.e. a profession in another country which includes a substantial number of the professional activities comprised in the profession in the host country, is a major problem. Harmonisation has another inherent problem in that it is based only on the nature of the pre-qualification professional education and training as at one point in time. Thus, any changes to the pre-qualification process proposed subsequent to the initial agreement must also be the subject of negotiation. It is suggested that surveyors cannot afford to spend time negotiating and then renegotiating the harmonisation of all of the routes to professional qualifications for all of the various kinds of surveyors to be achieved.

However, the principle which underpins mutual recognition (which, in the EU has imposed by legislation, and is directed at all professions for which a sectoral directive does not exist) is attractive. It does not reflect any particular requirements or specific needs of any particular group. The time-scale required for its implementation within the EU was, inevitably, short and its implementation has been hampered by some very major problems, some of which are inherent in the whole principle of imposing free movement of professionals using a legislative device rather than by agreement at professional level and some of which are less technical in nature.

The analysis of the above three possible solutions highlight some important issues for any system designed to achieve the global surveyor:

1. there should be a recognised need for the process to occur. In the case of reciprocity agreements, members of the surveying organisations lobbied for their implementation; in the case of the EU's mutual recognition directive, the drive came from the European Commission; the need for surveyors to respond to the increasingly global marketplace has already been demonstrated;
2. dialogue and understanding of professional issues are vital. In the case of harmonisation, negotiation took a long time, but the range of issues to be agreed between the (then) twelve EU countries was vast. In the case of reciprocity agreements, confidence in the practice and procedures of other professional organisations could only be achieved through efficient and effective communication;
3. despite the best of intentions, despite the force of law behind the process, problems can remain, unless all of the parties involved have mutual trust and a thorough understanding of each other and their respective practices and procedures.

If the free movement of professionals world-wide is to be achieved efficiently and effectively, I suggest that, based on the experiences outlined above, the process to be adopted is the mutual recognition of professional qualifications. This should be undertaken at the level of professional institutions and not be introduced with the force of government, and the whole process should be underpinned by effective and efficient

communication between organisations which recognise, both the areas of professional activities undertaken by their members and the quality of the output of each of these organisations' professional qualifications. Indeed, the WTO is seeking co-operation and involvement with the international professional bodies in professional services (such as FIG) for the establishment of mutual recognition agreements or bi-lateral agreements in order to achieve free trade in professional services (Enemark, 1999).

There is an attraction in developing and extending the principle of mutual recognition of professional qualifications. Mutual recognition allows each country to retain its own kind of professional education and training because it is based, not on the process of achieving professional qualifications, but on the nature and quality of the outcome of that process. Mutual recognition assumes an appropriate process of pre-qualificational education and training and encourages dialogue between professional organisations in each country in order to investigate the nature of the professional activities undertaken, professional qualifications and the details of pre- and post-qualification education and training. It therefore concentrates, not on the process of qualification, but on the outcome of that process.

In other words, it does not matter how individuals become qualified in their own country, the important fact is that they ARE qualified. The secondary issue to investigate in order to achieve free movement is: in what professional areas are they qualified? i.e. what kind of surveyor are they and, therefore, for what kind of professional activities are they qualified?

It is suggested that this concentration, not on the process of qualification, but on the outcome of the process of qualification is one which should be emulated by surveyors in the system which they adopt.

## **5. Communication between Professional Organisations**

FIG is proof that professional organisations which represent surveyors can work together, can represent the interests of surveyors with international external organisations and ensure efficient and effective communication to the mutual benefit of all. However, what is being proposed by the global market place for the services of surveyors will demand a much greater rapport between surveyors from different countries and from cultures.

We have already established within FIG, through over a century of communication, that there is nothing wrong with doing things differently, provided that certain standards, such as the highest quality of service and professionalism, are maintained. It is axiomatic, therefore, that different does not mean inferior or wrong and it is proposed that the basis for any free movement of surveyors should be achieved on the basis of the outcome of professional qualifications, rather than on the process of achieving professional qualification.

However, it is recognised that we are all products (to a greater or lesser extent) of our national and professional backgrounds and the various cultural influences which affect how we work and why we undertake our professional activities in the way we do. In order to achieve any kind of dialogue, these differences, particularly those in professional practice, and those which affect inter-personal relationships, need to be investigated, understood and respected.

### **5.1 Language**

The most obvious difference which divides us all is language, but access to learning different languages is normally dependent on individual opportunity and effort, and, initially, on national primary and secondary education systems which can provide either a very positive or rather negative lead. Language skills are, however, vitally important to permit international communication and genuine understanding of the rich variety of professional and personal life-styles.

## 5.2 Cultural Differences

However, there is also the matter of culture which permeates our national or regional society and which comprises a series of unwritten and often unconscious rules of conduct, professional practice and of perceiving relationships. Failure to understand and observe the cultural norms of other people can result in confusion, hurt and, at worse, perceived insult, and there is evidence that culture divides us, both as individuals (as the products of our nation's upbringing) and also as surveyors (as the products of our professional background).

Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997), in a work which illustrates that many management processes lose effectiveness when cultural borders are crossed, describe the nature of specific organisational culture or functional culture (pp . 23-4) as “. . . the way in which groups have organised themselves over the years to solve the problems and challenges presented to them.” Based on the historical and original need to ensure survival within the natural environment, and later within our social communities, culture provides an implicit and unconscious set of assumptions which control the way we behave and expect others to behave. Thus, “The essence of culture is not what is visible on the surface. It is the shared ways groups of people understand and interpret the world.” (op. cit. at p. 3), and as surveyors, although we all perform similar functions and provide similar services to our clients, we achieve these by different means.

This paper contends (as do Trompenaars and Hampden-Turner (1997)) that the fact that we use different means is irrelevant. What is important is that we perform similar functions and provide the services professionally (efficiently and effectively) and to the satisfaction of our clients.

However, to develop the investigation further into the global surveyor, cultural differences need to be recognised, in order to understand and accept that surveyors in different countries have different perceptions as to the nature of professional practice and the routes to professional qualifications.

For example, it is not unusual in the UK for properties to be valued by surveyors who are also estate agents. They are able to use their market experience of sale prices to advise, for example, on property valuations for balance sheet purposes. If required, they are capable of appearing in court as expert witnesses on matters of property valuation. In France, such a grouping of professional activities does not exist. The estate agent's role is considered totally incompatible with that of the expert witness. There is nothing inherently wrong with either of these ways of undertaking professional activities. The French system developed independently of the British system, each in order to meet the needs of their societies over time and each has continued (because these systems of agency and valuation in both Britain and France work) ever since. Difference is not wrong.

However, this has implications for the free movement of professionals, because the ability of a French valuer to come to Britain and be recognised as professionally qualified to undertake the full range of professional activities of a British valuer without additional professional education and training is limited by this cultural background.

There are other such discrepancies between the professional activities undertaken by different kinds of surveyors in different countries, with some kinds of surveying activities demonstrating a greater or lesser degree of international commonality. Remember, that there is nothing wrong with difference, it merely has to be recognised and accommodated within whatever system is devised for the creation of the free movement of professionals.

## 5.3 Culture of Surveyors

There is an additional cultural problem we face and there is evidence to suggest that it affects us all. This is our apparent inability to articulate explicitly the fundamental basis on which our professional knowledge rests. Where daily problems are solved in such obvious ways “the solutions disappear from our awareness,

and become part of our system of absolute assumptions” (Trompenaars, & Hampden-Turner, 1997 at page 23). Attempts to explain these solutions can provoke confusion or irritation (op. cit.).

Like our national cultural characteristics, such professional culture “is beneath awareness in the sense that no one bothers to verbalise it, yet it forms the roots of actions.” (op. cit.) It has been described by Scott, (1988) in his investigation of an expert system for valuation as “the paradox of expertise. The more expert valuers become, the more difficult it becomes to articulate what they do.” As surveyors, the assumptions which underlie our professional culture and which invariably encompass our pre-qualification professional education and training must be fully explored and recognised. Professional culture must not be allowed to impede the efficient and effective communication which must underpin any system which achieves international recognition of surveying qualifications.

## 6. Conclusion

However, we do have a number of very real advantages to achieving the free movement of surveyors. Firstly, it is something which, as a group, we have recognised is important, and FIG has established a Task Force to consider “. . . a framework for the introduction of standards of global professional competence . . . looking specifically at mutual recognition and reciprocity, in order to “. . . develop a concept and a framework for implementation of threshold standards of global competence in surveying.” (FIG, 1999).

Secondly, we have a proven record of being able to negotiate international standards of professional practice. For example, the creation and adoption of the so-called Blue Book of European standards of valuation (refer, for example, Armstrong, 1999) has created a uniform standard for valuation practice within the region of Europe. The creation of the so-called Blue Book is the result of decades of international negotiation by valuers and has, inevitably, been the subject of up-dating and amendment. Nevertheless, this demonstrates that such agreements can be achieved and that the “paradox of expertise” (Scott, 1988) can be addressed.

Thirdly, we have a universal definition of “surveyor” (FIG 1991) which is capable of being up-dated to reflect changes in the evolving nature of our professional practices and skills. We may group these professional skills in different ways in different countries, we may use different terms to describe our skills, we may have greater need for particular kinds of surveying skills in some countries compared to others, but, broadly, as surveyors, we have a very clear idea about what services we offer to the public and our employers.

What we do not have is:

- (a) a uniform system of pre-qualificational education and training;
- (b) universal state recognition of our professional qualifications (e.g. the British surveying qualifications are granted and controlled by sub-state-level professional organisations, whereas the professional qualification in France derives from a state practising licence, the *carte professionnelle*); nor we do not have
- (c) the full range of surveying skills recognised and practised as separate professions throughout the world (e.g. the skills of the building surveyor (being defined as the planning and implementation of the repair, maintenance and refurbishment of existing buildings (Plimmer, 1996) are not recognised as a separate profession in all EU member states).

Nevertheless, if we concentrate, not on the process of becoming a qualified surveyor, but on the outcomes of that process, then the above cease to be any real barrier to the free movement of professionals. Mutual recognition, either as a profession world-wide or on a more selective reciprocity basis, becomes simply an

issue of investigating the competence of qualified individuals to perform the surveying tasks undertaken in other countries.

It is contended that no attempt should be made to impose a uniform system of professional education and training on surveyors. It has been demonstrated that such harmonisation is a lengthy and detailed process which continues after initial agreement has been reached, as the profession develops. Free movement should be achieved by respecting the outcome of the professional education and training processes throughout the world and by considering the nature and level of competence of surveyors rather than the process through which they achieved their skills.

It is axiomatic that different does not mean inferior and we have all developed our professions along historical and cultural lines which have worked for us in the past and which continue to work for us today. It must be recognised that we can achieve the same ends (free movement of professionals) by respecting and not disrupting or replacing existing professional educational processes which are based largely on our own historical cultural values and national requirements.

Understanding of and a respect for the cultural norms and values of both the individual professional and the countries in which the professional activities are to be performed will ensure that any barriers to free movement are minimised and that we are all free to develop our profession in ways which best reflects the needs of our members and our clients within a global marketplace.

Inevitably, one of the essentials to achieving the free movement of professionals is the recognition and acceptance by our clients of our particular skills, but that is more of a promotional exercise, not of “internal” restructuring.

Through the forum of FIG, surveyors have demonstrated a will to provide the professional services for the global marketplace. We now need to communicate effectively in order to develop the understanding of post-qualificational professional practice and standards on which mutual recognition can be based within a global marketplace for our services.

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