HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MEDICAL)

REGISTRATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFIED SPECIALISTS (FQS)

Principles:
1. There are known universities whose graduates are recognized for registration under the ‘non-exam’ track as medical practitioners by the HPCSA.
2. The Subcommittee of Postgraduate Education and Training (Medical) [PETM] employs the same list of institutions and countries to establish reciprocity of specialist qualification with respect to the ‘non-exam’ track for foreign qualified specialists.
3. A system of assessment and accreditation is applied to foreign-qualified specialists from universities that are not covered by the ‘non-exam’ track (i.e., the examination track).
4. Abbreviations used:
   4.1 PS = Public Sector
   4.2 MP = Medical Practitioner
   4.3 CMSA = The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa
   4.4 MBChB Equivalent = undergraduate exit examination offered by universities on behalf of the HPCSA for the purpose of obtaining registration for independent practice; this is equivalent to the MBChB examination for South Africa graduates
   4.5 FWMP = Foreign Workforce Management Programme of the Department of Health
   4.6 FQS = Foreign Qualified Specialists.
5. FQS in the category “Education” are included for the purposes of this document
6. Must have a job offer and cleared by FWMP.
Process:

Examination track

The Health Professions Council of South Africa has introduced a new system of evaluation of foreign qualified specialists. The Postgraduate Education and Training Subcommittee (PETM) evaluates all applications for registration of foreign qualified specialists, in consultation with The Colleges of Medicine of South Africa (CMSA). A determination is made on the basis of the documentation submitted on whether a specialist will follow the ‘exam’ or ‘non-exam’ track. The flow chart indicating the ‘exam’ track and ‘non-exam track’ is presented above.

Foreign qualified specialists who fall under the ‘exam’ track are required to write the board examination of the Health Professions Council to register as medical practitioners (public service) in a specific domain. They are required to keep a portfolio and logbook of their practice, according to the CMSA standard, for a period of at least twelve (12) months if they...
wish to be accredited to practice as specialists in the public service. The accreditation process involves a visit by two specialist accreditors to evaluate their practice and determine whether it is at the level of a specialist in South Africa.

The accreditation is conducted, and will involve the review of the portfolio, interviews with the applicant, his/her supervisors, nursing staff and hospital managers over 1 day. Evaluators may employ other methods to establish the credibility of the candidate to work as a specialist or subspecialist in South Africa, if necessary. Evaluators are required to submit a report within two (2) weeks of the visit in which they make recommendations on the suitability of the applicant for registration as a specialist in public service in South Africa.

If they are accredited then they are allowed to register as public service specialists. If they wish to register in the category of independent practice, and provided they are either a permanent resident or citizen of South Africa, they are required to write the exit examinations of The CMSA. Unsuccessful applicants may repeat once, if they still do not succeed the Postgraduate Education and Training Subcommittee will recommend a period of training as a registrar in an accredited institution prior to repeating the examinations of The College of Medicine of South Africa.

Non-examination track

The application to be registered as a specialist is to be assessed by the Postgraduate Education and Training Subcommittee. After approval by the Subcommittee the specialist is registered probationally as a specialist under the category of Public Service for a period of 12 months. The employer and supervisor (i.e., Head of Department) is required to submit a report to the PETM Subcommittee after a period of 6-12 months on the performance of the incumbent as a specialist. The PETM Subcommittee reserves the right to send specialist accreditors to evaluate the specialist when needed.

Successful evaluation of the candidate to lead to the specialist retaining registration and the specialist applying for Independent Practice provided the practitioner has attained South African citizenship or permanent residence. The unsuccessful candidate to repeat assessment after 6-12 months with time limited to three (3)years and not influenced by citizenship or residential status.

SUBCOMMITTEE FOR POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MEDICAL), 20 JANUARY 2009.