

Sent Per email

Department: Office of the Registrar

Designation: Dr MA Kwindu

Reference: Registration 2021

Hospital CEOs

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Dear Colleagues

RE: HPCSA REGISTRATION OF HEALTH PRACTITIONERS – JANUARY 2021

The pandemic and ensuing national lockdown have disrupted processes for many entities. To ensure such impact is mitigated to avoid far-reaching consequences for generations to come, it has become imperative for many organizations to have to adjust to, and accommodate what has become the new normal, at least for a foreseeable future. It is in light of the challenges posed by the less than optimal operating circumstances for both the Health Professions Council of South Africa, HPCSA, and its stakeholders that the following registration concessions are made.

Registration of New Graduates as Medical Interns

The almanac of most universities/training institutions was affected by the pandemic and resultant lockdown such that study programs were completed much later in the year compared to previous years. This led to the crowding effect towards the end 2020 when submissions, by universities to HPCSA, of the required documentation for registration with respect to registration as health professionals occurred at the same time. We confirm however that all universities have since submitted registration documents for locally trained medical graduates. Not all of the submissions received are compliant to effect registration and still need to be corrected as necessary. Secondly, the Nelson Mandela Fidel Castro Collaboration churned out 377 medical graduates, ready to register as medical interns. While the results for the 377 are now available to HPCSA, some universities still need to submit correct registration documents with respect to this cohort to effect their registration as medical interns. This is inevitably causing delays in HPCSA processing all interns to start on 1 January 2021 or as close as possible to that date. Graduates not registered timeously end up starting their training much later, and if this is much later than mid-January, the structure of internship training

is impacted to the extent they would have to delay training by a whole quarter and only start training from 1 April 2021 – an untenable situation which is avoidable.

In terms of the Health Professions Act, section 17, registration is a pre-requisite for one to practise their profession. Given the new normal all stakeholders have had to contend with for nine months of 2020, HPCSA, after consultation with other stakeholders, endeavours to make regulations work effectively by ensuring that professionals are registered correctly and regulations will be implemented to avoid discrimination. It is for this reason that HPCSA would allow a grace period of the month of January 2021 to ensure all interns start training at the same time and will have a registration date of 1 January 2021, that also coincides with expectations of DPSA.

Registration of New Graduates as Community Service Practitioners

Other health professional boards have graduates that were similarly impacted as study programs dragged on to much later, in 2020. While a number of training institutions heeded the request by HPCSA to submit registration documentation in a very specific manner, some disregarded the request only for them to realise as the year 2021 commenced, that their graduates are not registered.

HPCSA intends to work with these institutions to ensure correct paper work is submitted, yet at the same time, not prejudicing the graduate who is eager to commence their career. In that regard, the registration extension of one month, till 31 January 2021, for registration purposes is also granted. Professionals whose application forms were submitted online, contrary to HPCSA request, will still be registered after HPCSA receives the correct supporting documents with effect from 1 January 2021, only if the complaint documents are received within the month of January 2021. Health facilities are encouraged to accommodate health professionals allocated to perform community service at their respective facilities.

Medical Interns Completing Rotations and Seeking Registration as Community Service Medical Practitioners

Most training sites cooperated with HPCSA and submitted confirmation of completion of internship, though some of the training sites sent the confirmation rather late in the year and signed off interns completing their rotations, on the very last day of 2020, expecting the same professional to commence work the following day, on 1 January 2021.

1. Applicants, signed off as of 31 December 2020, who sent in their applications on or before 1 January 2021 as prescribed by HPCSA will be registered with effect from 1 January 2021.
2. Applications, also from applicants signed off as of 31 December 2020, and are received after 1 January 2021, will be registered from a date, after 1 January 2021, at which the application is received at HPCSA.

A compliant application from a practitioner who was signed off as at 31 December 2020, and received at HPCSA, say on 8 January 2021, from an intern wishing to register in the category community service, will be processed with an effective date of 8 January 2021, for example. No backdating is permitted.

Registration of Health Professionals who Completed Community Service and Wishing to Register as Independent Practice Practitioners

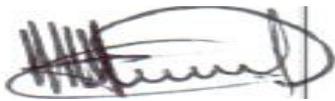
Applications from health professionals who have completed community service at 31 December 2020, have been correctly signed off, and wish to be registered in the category Independent Practice will be processed as follows:

1. Applications received at HPCSA or through an HPCSA mailbox on or before 1 January 2021 will be registered with an effective date of 1 January 2021.
2. Applications received at HPCSA or through an HPCSA mailbox on any date after 1 January 2021, will be processed effective from that later date.

No backdating of registration is permissible.

We trust the above concessions will ease the pressure on the young professionals as they embark on their respective careers.

Yours sincerely



**DR M A KWINDA
ACTING REGISTRAR\CEO**