

Challenges facing graduates of foreign medical schools returning to South Africa: developing criteria for the recognition of medical degrees

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Summary

- Overview of medical graduate output in South Africa
- HPCSA process for curriculum review
 - “Robot” system
 - Exam vs non-exam track

Background and problem statement-output of MBChB graduates into the health care system

- 9 medical schools in South Africa
 - UP
 - UKZN
 - UCT
 - UFS
 - WSU
 - SMU (Medunsa established in 1976)
 - UL (first intake in 2016- 40 year gap)
 - Wits
 - SU
- Planned
 - NMU (first intake in 2021; accreditation planned for completion in Oct 2019)
 - NWU
- Mandela-Castro collaboration students

	South Africa	United Kingdom
Population	56.7 million	66 million
Number of medical schools	9	33
Number graduates annually	1800	6000

- Local production around 1800 / yr
- The present doctor population ratio is around 0.8 / 1000.
- We should be targeting at least 1,5 to 2 / 1000.
- So need to double the total registered.
- Even if we double production it will take quite a few years to reach the target.
- NHI should support more GP s without necessarily employing them in public sector

Medical School application numbers

- 1770 places for students in SA (2014) ; 36 000 applications
- Roughly 20-30 applicants / place
- UKZN as example: 6945 for 250 places

Placement of graduates

- 1900 students applied for 1400 internship posts
- 1342 interns applied for 1332 community service positions
- Recently, NHLS has also taken up community service doctors

Study abroad

- China, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ireland, Egypt, Mauritius, Pakistan, Scotland
- 2017: 150 in Mauritius; 900 in China
- Provincial governments; Turkey; Romania, Russia, China

- A number of recruiting agencies that recruit for foreign medical schools also mislead students into believing that following graduation from a foreign medical school with a medical degree, they can register with the HPCSA.
- Some use cleverly worded phrases such as “*graduates are eligible to apply for registration with the HPCSA....*” or “*graduates eligible for registration as a medical practitioner in HPCSA.*” This gets wrongly interpreted as implying that they will be granted registration with the HPCSA.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Medical students expose Russian varsity hell

BY MANDLA KHOZA - 30 August 2018 - 14:29

A group of medical students from Mpumalanga studying in Russia have vowed not to return to Astrakhan State University, claiming it was like a "sangoma's hut".

The 53 students and their parents marched to the Mpumalanga government on Wednesday demanding to be removed from the university and also demanding the removal of a middle man facilitating for students in the province to study in Russia.

The students accused the middleman, known only as "Racus", of telling female students to engage in prostitution to avoid paying too much in taxi fares.

The students, who are in their third year of study, said they have never had practicals, the university has no laboratory and it looked like a dump site.

"First when we went to study in Russia, we were told we would get top-class education in one of Russia's universities but they now have to read material sourced from Wikipedia and Google.

"There are no functions, no practicals, no laboratory, no library, no internet, no electricity, no water, no food, no money. When we went to study in Russia, we were told we would get top-class education in one of Russia's universities but they now have to read material sourced from Wikipedia and Google.

Mpumalanga students to study medicine, engineering in Russia

6 August 2019, 9:48 PM | SABC | @SABCNewsOnline



Tags: Mpumalanga, Medical students, Bonakele Majuba



Image: Reuters

The group will be joining the 282 students who have been studying in Russia since 2015.

Over 80 students from Mpumalanga will leave the country in September to study medicine and engineering in Russia.

Speaking at a send-off ceremony held in White River, MEC for Education, Bonakele Majuba encouraged the group to represent the country with pride.

Majuba says the group will be joining the 282 students who have been studying in the Russia since 2015.

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SA medical students in Russia made to study from Wikipedia, Google

NEWS

Sizwe Sama Yende

© 2018-06-20 11:59



A group of 53 Mpumalanga medical students thought they would get top-class education in one of Russia's universities but they now have to read material sourced from Wikipedia and Google.



The situation is dire. Mpumalanga's medical students to head for Russia

For the last decade the province has been sending hundreds of students to Cuba to study medicine, but the premier said they now intend to send more to Russia.

June 10, 2016

They believe and will act as doctors in the province.



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AUTHOR

MBOMBELA - Mpumalanga will send 20 students to study medicine in Russia. This was revealed by the premier, Mr David Mabuza in a meeting with the Russian ambassador, Mr Mikhail Petrakov, on Tuesday.

For the last decade the province has been sending hundreds of students to Cuba to study medicine, but the premier said they now intend to send more to Russia.

HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO SEEK CLARITY ON MPUMALANGA MEDICAL STUDENTS ATTENDING TROUBLED RUSSIAN UNIVERSITY

Parliament, Thursday, 20 September 2018 – The Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training has called on provinces to first discuss international studies programmes with the Department of Higher Education and Training before students are sent abroad.

The Chairperson of the committee, Ms Connie September, said it is important that students and their parents were also part of the negotiations with the DHET.

The committee is currently conducting a study tour of the Russian system, and on Thursday visited the Lomonosov Moscow State University to find out more about such issues as university governance, management, funding and student financial assistance.

The committee was alerted of life challenges South African students encountered in Russia, but also a situation involving about 53 medical students from Mpumalanga at Astrakhan State Medical University. The committee was unable to visit the university.

Members are very disturbed that the embassy in Russia was not informed about the Astrakhan State Medical University programme but has to deal with the matter now.

The committee will write to the MEC for Education in Mpumalanga, and the company involved to explain the challenges of the students. If that fails, we will ask them to come to Parliament. The committee understands the plight of the students and will get to the bottom of it.



DID YOU KNOW?

The Constitution says a parliamentary committee meeting may not be closed to the public "unless it is reasonable and justifiable to do so in an open and democratic society".

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(former) Curriculum subcommittee of the MDB

- Restructuring of MDB - now falls under the ambit of Medical Education and Training committee (METC)

Curriculum committee

- Created in 2014 by MDB
- 10 members of this committee including Medical and Dental Board members; representatives of the following entities:
 - committees of medical and dental deans;
 - medical scientists;
 - postgraduate education and training committees;
 - clinical associates;
 - the HPCSA Ombudsman
 - and a medical education specialist.

- reviewing curricula from foreign institutions to determine if the graduates are eligible for the exam track or non-exam track pathway before being registered as a medical practitioner with the HPCSA.
- A graduate from a non-exam track institution is not required to take the HPCSA board exam.
- The intention is for this list to be reviewed every 5 years and adjustments made to the listing if required.
- This means that an institution previously deemed to be non-exam track, can potentially move to the exam track listing if circumstances of the institution have changed

Process

- the enquiry is usually initiated by a foreign medical graduate, often a South African citizen who has been studying abroad.
- The applicant then has to ensure that the full curriculum and programme details are submitted to the HPCSA for the committee to evaluate.

”Robot” system

- Based on the ‘Competent Authority’ process used in other countries to register foreign medical graduates
- This is the basis of deciding whether an applicant who qualifies outside of South Africa can be registered without writing an exam, or whether they need to write an exam in order to assess their clinical competence

- The process of choosing the ‘Competent Authorities’ is based on those operating in English speaking countries which have a National medical regulatory authority (such as the HPCSA) which accredits medical schools in a process which is rigorous and transparent.
- Competent Authorities identified using these criteria are the GMC of the UK and the Medical Board of Australian, New Zealand and the Canadian medical council

Registration for Internship

Application of practitioner holding a foreign qualification as medical/dental practitioner

Administrative compliance

Curriculum review
Robot system

Green	Orange	Red
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Non Exam Track	Non Exam Track	Exam Track (Board Exam)
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Successful

Register as Intern

- Listing of the institution in the World Directory of medical/dental schools; International medical education directory
- proof of national/international accreditation
- Accreditation by the UK GMC/GDC and one other medical council acceptable to the HPCSA (Australia, New Zealand, Canada, as well as ECFMG accreditation
- Programme of study must be at least 5500 hours over a minimum of 5 years and at least 75% of the training must be at the primary institution
- Curriculum must be similar to the core South African curriculum
- Proof of academic English proficiency

- Three possible routes (Green, Orange & Red) for practitioners applying for registration are outlined:

GREEN: Non-exam track

- Generalists
- The qualification must have been awarded by an institution listed in the following:
 - World Directory of Medical Schools
 - IMED (International Medical Education Directory). Proof of National or International (approved by HPCSA) accreditation: National Ministry of Health, and national Ministry of Education confirmation or appropriate national agency.
 - Avicenna Directory for Medicine: only listed, not accredited
 - The institution listed in these directories will allow verification of qualifications
- The qualification must have accreditation by the General Medical Council (GMC) of the United Kingdom and *at least one other* Medical Council acceptable to the HPCSA e.g. Australia, New Zealand or Canada and be accredited by the ECFMG (Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates).
- Programme of study (*need to ensure appropriate balance of theoretical and clinical teaching*) must include at least 5500 hours over a minimum period of 5 years. The majority of the training (75%) must be undertaken at the institution where the degree has been awarded.
- Curriculum must be equivalent to South African core curriculum as accredited by HPCSA and be internationally recognized.
- Proof of academic English proficiency (IELTS or TOEFL) within the previous 2 years (if English is not the language of tuition at medical school)
- The applicant must be 2 years post qualification or they would need to do supervised internship training in South Africa
- IELTS = International English Language Testing System
- TOEFL = Test of English as a foreign language

GREEN: Non-exam track

- Post registration, the practitioner must undergo a probation period of 12 months (with 3 favorable probation reports by their clinical supervisor) to ensure exposure to the South African disease profile, and to assess that they are clinically competent, have good communication skills, work well in a team and practice ethically.
- The applicant must accrue 25 CPD points in their first year of working in South Africa.
- Specialist applications
- As above for points 1, 2, 5, 7, and 8
- Re specialist training and experience required:
- Duration of training must be equivalent number of years as in SA for the speciality
- Evidence of research competence
- Portfolio of clinical experience

ORANGE: QUALIFICATIONS THAT MAY BE EXEMPT FROM EXAMINATIONS

- The primary qualification must have been awarded by an institution listed in the following:
 - IMED (International Medical Education Directory): Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education confirmation or appropriate national agency.
 - Avicenna Directory for Medicine: only listed, not accredited
 - The institution listed in these directories will allow verification of qualifications
- The primary qualification must have accreditation by *either* General Medical Council, United Kingdom *or another* Medical Councils acceptable to the HPCSA e.g. Australia and Canada
- Programme of study (*need to ensure appropriate balance of theoretical and clinical teaching*) must include at least 5500 hours over a minimum period of 5 years. The majority of the training (75%) must be undertaken at the institution where the degree has been awarded.
- Proof of academic English proficiency (IELTS or TOEFL) within the previous 2 years (if English is not the language of tuition at Medical School)
- The applicant must be 2 years post qualification or they would need to do supervised internship training in South Africa
- Candidate may be required to do the HPCSA “Board Examination” written section. If they pass with a mark of >65%, they can be registered without doing the practical examination.

RED: QUALIFICATIONS WHICH REQUIRE APPLICANTS TO PASS AN EXAMINATION BEFORE REGISTRATION

- Where the candidate's qualification fails to satisfy any of the above mentioned criteria and there is no proof of accreditation with a medical council recognized by a Competent Authority, the candidate must complete an examination, before being considered for which would be either:
- Generalist: HPCSA Board Examination which consists of a written and practical component.
- Specialists: The appropriate College of Medicine Examination
- Note: the other criteria noted in points 5,6,7 & 8 are also applicable once registered.

Summary

- Overview of medical graduate output in South Africa
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Thank you for your attention