

**POLICY REGARDING THE CRITERIA FOR
ACCREDITATION OF FACILITIES FOR INTERNSHIP
TRAINING IN MEDICAL SCIENCE**

**MEDICAL AND DENTAL PROFESSIONS BOARD:
MEDICAL SCIENCE**

The purpose of this document is to provide a comprehensive guideline on matters relating to the accreditation of medical science internship training facilities and has to be read with the following documents:

- *Application for accreditation as training facility for Intern Medical Biological Scientists – Self-Evaluation Questionnaire – CMS D1 MBS*
- *Application for accreditation as training facility for Intern Genetic Counsellors Medical Biological Scientists – Self-Evaluation Questionnaire – CMS D2 GC*
- *Application for accreditation as training facility for Intern Medical Physicists – Self-Evaluation Questionnaire – CMS D3 PH*

- *Inspection of facilities for training of Intern Medical Biological Scientists – Self Evaluation Report - CMS E1 MBS*
- *Inspection of facilities for training of Intern Genetic Counsellors – Self Evaluation Report - CMS E2 GC*
- *Inspection of facilities for training of Intern Medical Physicists – Self Evaluation Report - CMS E3 PH*

- *Annual Report to the Committee for Medical Science – CMS C*
- *Evaluation of the experience of the intern candidate during training – CMS F*
- *Application for increase in the number of intern medical scientist posts – CMS G*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Profession of Medical Science

The profession of medical science consists of three disciplines, medical biological science (MBS), genetic counselling (GC) and medical physics (PH).

Medical scientists in the discipline medical biological science, may in addition, be registered in various professional categories as determined by the Medical and Dental Professions Board hereafter referred to as “the Board”. At present the board recognised the following categories, Anatomical Pathology, Cell Biology, Clinical Biochemistry, Haematology, Genetics, Immunology, Molecular Biology, Microbiology, Pharmacology, Radiation Biology, Reproductive Biology and Virology.

Regulations relating to the qualifications for registration of Medical Scientists – Government Notice No. R.581 published in Government Gazette No. 32244 of 22 May 2009 prescribes:

Regulation 4 – The registrar may register a person as a medical scientist in one of the following disciplines – (a) Medical Biological Science; (b) Genetic Counselling; or (c) Medical Physics.

Regulation 5 – Medical scientists in the discipline medical biological science may in addition, be registered in professional categories as determined by the board from time to time.

1.2 Scope of the Profession of a Medical Scientist

Regulation 2 of Regulations relating to the regulations defining the scope of profession of Medical Scientists – Government Notice No. R.579 published in the Government Gazette No. 32244 of 22 May 2009:

The following acts are hereby specified as acts which, for purposes of section 33 of the Act, shall be deemed to be acts pertaining to the profession of medical science, which acts shall be performed as an auxiliary and supporting service to medicine and in line with the scope of practice for medical scientists as prescribed under the medical and dental professions board Annexure 6 to the Ethical Rules published as Government Notice no.R.717 of 4 Augusts 2007:

The development, the evaluation; and the practice of scientific procedures which involve humans, human biological material, or medical equipment subjects thereto that such acts will lead to or impact on treatment, diagnosis and genetic counselling of humans and, where appropriate, interpretation, quality management, patient genetic counselling and consultation with other registered and appropriately qualified health practitioners.

1.3 The definition of an accredited intern training facility

*The Government Gazette Notice No R.578 (22 May 2009) under the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act no, 56 of 1974) – Regulations relating to the registration of interns in medical science defines the term “**accredited training facility**” as a hospital, clinic, laboratory, health care centre, or any other institution which is accredited by the board for the purpose of internship training”.*

Intern genetic counsellors must be trained in an environment with direct patient exposure and appropriate supervision when counselling patients in prenatal, pediatric and adult contexts. Facilities offering genetic counselling internship must specify the procedure in which manner the intern candidates will have direct consultations with patients; either through their own services or through an agreement with an academic center.

Internship must be performed in a functional diagnostic laboratory (Medical Biological Scientists) or a hospital-based clinic (Reproductive Biology and Genetic Counselling) or a hospital (Medical Physics) with a valid medical practice number.

2. THE COMPREHENSIVE NATURE OF ACCREDITATION

It must be appreciated that the purpose of accreditation visits is to guide the professional and to protect the public. The assessment of training facilities must be performed with mutual respect, in an enabling environment to establish the best training platform with the highest professional ethics and standards and to provide a platform of empowerment and open communication.

The main objective of internship training is to provide candidates holding registration as intern medical scientists with opportunities to further develop their competence by providing them with knowledge, skills, appropriate behavior patterns and professional thinking, to gain insight, understanding and experience in the health care platform. To equip and enable them to function as safe and independent professionals.

- a) Training shall be comprehensive and be complementary to the future health care system presently being developed for South Africa.
- b) The National Curriculum and facility-based training programs prescribed the minimum required elements and shall play a significant role during the period of internship training.
- c) The prescribed components or elements of these programs are a developmental approach that emphasizes the Scope of Profession of a Medical Scientist to participate and empower in a multi-professional collaboration and cost-effective health care system.
- d) Internship training shall be a properly planned and an ongoing process, offered as an integrated system and be undergone only at facilities and complexes accredited by the Board. Facilities and trainers shall be subject to regular inspections and adherence to the prescribed criteria.
- e) Medical scientists provide an auxiliary and supporting service to medicine, which leads to or impacts treatment, diagnosis, patient genetic counselling and *consultation with other health care practitioners*. They are part of a multidisciplinary health care team and may be based in public or private diagnostic laboratories, health care facilities and hospitals.
- f) Internship training shall extend over a period of twenty-four (24) months, unless otherwise recommended by the board. The structure and requirements of training shall be as specified by the board.
- g) Accreditation for internship training, therefore, is the process whereby the board, on the basis of specified criteria, inspects and assesses facilities and complexes as being appropriate in terms of training teams, ethos and physical structures and resources to provide such training and, if found to comply or provisionally to comply, approves them for internship training.
- h) Accreditation of facilities for internship training shall be the sole responsibility of the board and it shall be the board's prerogative to grant or not to grant, or provisionally to grant accredited status to any facility or, should circumstances require, withdrawing such status.

3. MAJOR PARTNERS IN IMPLEMENTATION

- a) In order to achieve these objectives and in the best interest of intern candidates' various role players, the Board, the employing Health Authorities (public and private) and Faculties of Health Sciences all have an important role to play.
- b) The Health Authority (primary or key stakeholder) is defined as the employer or provider of the intern training program and shall be indicated on the application for registration as an intern candidate and application for accreditation as a training facility forms.

- c) Health Authorities, as responsible employers, have a duty to ensure that their employees receive appropriate in-service training in order to help to continually improve the standard of service to the public.
- d) Presently the Health Authorities in medical science are, but not limited to:
 - In the discipline *Medical Biological Science* - Private Pathology, National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS), including the National Institute for Communicable Disease (NICD) and the National Institute for Occupational Disease (NIOH) and the Faculties of Health Sciences.
 - In the discipline *Medical Physics* - the Tertiary Academic Hospitals and the Faculty of Health Sciences.
 - In the discipline *Genetic Counselling* - Private Pathology, National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS), Tertiary Academic Hospitals and the Faculties of Health Sciences.
- e) Stakeholder engagement will be scheduled annually (or when needed) to consult, discuss, disseminate and gathering of information. The decisions taken during the engagement are not final but viewed as recommendations.
- f) Faculties of Health Sciences must provide broad based support to assist the Board and employing Health Authorities to develop and maintain appropriate and professionally sufficient training programmes to assist in the training of trainers and to be accessible as sources of professional knowledge, consultation and advice.
- g) The board in terms of its statutory function must protect the interests of the public by establishing and maintaining standards of education, training, practice, conduct and behavior.
- h) Continued recognition as an accredited laboratory/facility/department shall be subject to regular accreditation assessments and submission of satisfactory reports as deemed necessary by the Board.

4. EMPHASIS OF ACCREDITATION

The assessment leading to accreditation for internship training shall be comprehensive. It will include an ongoing self-analysis by the applying facility, information gathering and the assessment of professional, personal and human attributes, essential physical structures, equipment and resources. Organisational and administrative processes and functioning, in combination with the above, create the environment and atmosphere, or lack thereof, in which the particular facility's culture of training and learning shall be assessed and monitored.

4.1 Governance and resources

- a) The management and reporting structures are responsible for the overall governance and management of the accredited training facility and needs to ensure effective planning, organization, leadership and control of internship training.
- b) Responsibility for training of intern candidates lies with the proposed employer, head of the training facility, head of training program and individual trainers of internship training.
- c) The head of the training department is responsible for the overall standard of the training.
- d) Basic facilities and infrastructure such as laboratories, suitable equipment, the necessary literature and other resources for internship training must be available.
- e) An annual report must be submitted even if the training program is inactive.

- f) The primary purpose of the annual report is to monitor the progress of intern candidates, changes in resources (human resources, training resources and physical resources) and required amendments or upgrading of training program to keep in line with new technology and innovations. The secondary purpose is to monitor progress on recommendations (if applicable) during the accreditation visit.
- g) The test repertoire/methodology/therapeutical/clinical interventions have to stay relevant to the health demand on national level. This should be representative of the entire scope of the academic discipline (or professional category in medical biological science).
- h) The recruitment of intern candidates must be fair and selection criteria shall be appropriately indicated and implemented.
- i) A career progression strategy should be in place to provide opportunities for successful candidates to enter the workforce.
- j) A process must be in place for the induction of intern candidates.
- k) A process must be in place to support of impaired interns. The Health Professions Act section 51(1) defines “impaired” as a mental or physical condition, or the abuse of or dependence on chemical substances, which affects the competence attitude, judgement or performance of a student or another person registered in terms of this Act”. For more information refer to Guidelines for management of impaired students. Medical and Dental Board, November 2014 and A national strategy for managing impairment in students and practitioners registered with Council, Health Professions Council of South Africa, 15 October 1996).

4.2 Training as a team approach

- a) Internship training for medical science is a professional matter and training, therefore, is the responsibility of adequately qualified, experienced and competent health professionals.
- b) The training institution should inform the HPCSA immediately if the head of the training department or supervisor for a specific training programme has resigned or in the case of a change in training staff.
- c) An accredited training program must have a registered medical scientist and/or medical specialist as academic head for the relevant discipline (and professional category in the case of the discipline medical biological science) and he or she must be appropriately qualified and experienced for the purpose of internship training requirements.
- d) There shall be a team of trainers and all members of the training team need to have a letter of appointment or equivalent from the employing Health Authority, specifying the responsibility of that employee in terms of training, supervision and assistance to intern candidates.
- e) The entire training team, including the trainers, the supervisors and the intern candidates shall be fully integrated with the entire education/training program of the training department.
- f) Supervisors must be involved in the assessments and moderation of Portfolio of Evidence on national level.
- g) Supervisors shall be part of evaluation panels for accreditation of internship training facilities for medical science.
- h) Training and supervision by medical scientists (registered in the same professional category as the intern candidate and more than three years after registration) shall be available daily on a full time basis and such availability shall be appropriate for the level of health care provided.

- i) In addition to their normal line-management and medico-legal responsibilities, the training team will be co-responsible for the delivering of a pathology/clinical and/or therapeutical service of the intern candidate to patients.

5. THE TRAINING PROGRAM

- a) The facility-based program shall be comprehensive and contain all the prescribed components, the instruction method and method and frequency of assessment.
- b) .A medical specialist (pathologist) may supervise an inter medical scientist on the following conditions: (i) should be in good standing with the HPCSA, (ii) should comply with the CPD requirements, (iii) should be actively registered with the HPCSA in the same category/discipline as the intern candidate for more than three years, (iv) can only be considered as a supervisor of an intern medical scientist in the category molecular biology if the curriculum of the relevant post graduate qualification obtained, contained sufficient academic teaching and practical training in molecular biology and (v) supervising may **only be** in the specific specialization.
- c) The training program shall be regularly updated to include new innovative technology. The updated program shall be approved by the board before implementation.
- d) It remains the responsibility of the head of the training department to ensure that the relevant facility-based training program includes all the prescribed components or parts of a component and that the National Curriculum in its entirety is followed. The Guideline for the submission and assessment of the Portfolio of Evidence serves as a comprehensive checklist to ensure that all prescribed criteria have been included in the training program.
- e) In the case where a facility-based training program lacks a prescribed component or part of a component and it has been overseen by the evaluation panel during the accreditation visit, it is within the authority of the board to request remedial action. The board will immediately on confirmation request the training department to remedy the situation within an appropriate timeframe and with proper assistance from the Committee for Medical Science.
- f) Trends of unsatisfied performance of intern candidates in the board approved competency-based assessment in the form of a Portfolio of Evidence, will be discussed with the training department and recommendations on improvement will be provided. In the case where the improvements are not met to the satisfaction of the board the accreditation status of the training facility may be withdrawn.
- g) Formal, structured interviews will be conducted at the time of the visit by the evaluation panel with all intern candidates.
- h) The Portfolio of Evidence must be updated at all times and intern training records will be assessed during the accreditation visit.

6. APPLICATION FOR ACCREDITATION AS A TRAINING FACILITY FOR INTERN MEDICAL SCIENTISTS

The following documents should be submitted with the application for accreditation to train intern medical scientists:

- a) Provide evidence that this facility is a diagnostic/clinical/therapeutical facility.
- The training facility shall provide a list of health professionals employed.
 - The number of patients' treated/diagnostic reports/clinical reports.
 - The practice number of the training facility
- b) The CVs of key training staff, including their qualifications, HPCSA registration, involvement with training, professional society membership.
- c) The ratio of intern candidates to training staff should be clearly indicated. The ratio depends on the nature of the academic-discipline (and/or professional category) and the nature and level of the involvement of the training staff. It may be appropriate in some cases to involve external lecturers/trainers. The ratio of supervisor to trainee is usually 1:2, but can be increase based on staff establishment and the number of appropriate supervisors.
- d) Description of the facilities and equipment for training.
- e) If the application is for internship in medical biological science, please provide the Scope of Tests (Test Repertoire). Internship training must be comprehensive and the intern candidate has to be proficient in both the basic and specialized test methods, as well as the molecular biology-related test methodology of the professional category.

7. REQUIRED FORMS

- 7.1 When applying for accreditation as a training facility for INTERN MEDICAL BIOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS applicants (training facilities) should complete the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire Form CMS D1 MBS.
- 7.2 When applying for accreditation as a training facility for INTERN GENETIC COUNSELLING STUDENT applicants (training facilities) should complete the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire Form CMS D2 GC.
- 7.3 When applying for accreditation as a training facility for INTERN MEDICAL PHYSICIST applicants (training facilities) should complete the Self-Evaluation Questionnaire Form CMS D3 PH.

8. HPCSA WEBSITE

Relevant documentation is available on the HPCSA website (<https://www.hpcsa.co.za>). Go to Professions Boards, Medical and Dental (and Medical Science) and documents.