

# HEALTH PROFESSIONS ACT 56 OF 1974

## REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE REGISTRATION OF STUDENTS, UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULA AND PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS IN DENTISTRY

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The Minister of Health has, in terms of [section 61](#)(1), of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No, 56 of 1974), and in consultation with the Health Professions Council of South Africa, made the regulations in the Schedule.

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#### CHAPTER 1

1. **Definitions**

In these regulations “**the Act**” means the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act No. 56 of 1974), and any expression to which a meaning has been assigned in the Act, shall bear that meaning and, unless inconsistent with the context-

**“accreditation”** means the process conducted by an external and impartial body approved by the board to grant recognition and approval to the academic and training standards and professional programme of studies of educational institutions or training facilities:

**“approved”** in relation to an education institution or qualification, means an institution, facility or qualification which has been granted recognition and approval by the board following an evaluation process as prescribed by the board;

**“board”** means the Medical and Dental Professions Board established in terms of [section 15](#) of the Act;

**“curricula”** means the academic programmes outlining the academic learning, clinical training and development of skills as well as the integration of the students professional attitude and conduct;

**“degree”** means a university degree in dentistry recognized by the board in terms of [section 24](#) of the Act for registration as a dental practitioner;

**“graduate”** means a student in dentistry who has successfully completed the curricula and obtained a qualification at an approved educational institution;

**“student”** means a person registered as such with the council in terms of the Act;

**“dental practitioner”** means a person registered as such with the council in terms of the Act;

**“programme”** means the collective set of activities and assessments through which the curriculum is delivered.

## CHAPTER 1

### REGISTRATION OF STUDENTS IN DENTISTRY

#### 2. Registration as a student in dentistry

- (1) A student at an approved educational institution, shall submit to the registrar an application for registration as a student in dentistry on a form provided for by the board in accordance with the provisions of sub-regulation (2), and -
  - (a) in the case of a student enrolling at an approved educational institution in his or her first year of study, within four months of such enrolment; or
  - (b) in the case of a student who has been exempted from the first or second year of study, within four months of such enrolment in the second or third year of study respectively.

- (2) An application by a student for registration as a student in dentistry shall be accompanied by-
  - (a) such student's identity document or birth certificate or, if the student is unable to furnish either of these documents, such other proof of his or her age and correct names as may be acceptable to the registrar;
  - (b) a certificate to prove that such student has commenced study in a subject or subjects in an approved educational institution, which certificate shall specify the year of study and the date on which the student enrolled; and
  - (c) the prescribed registration fee.
- (3) An application for registration as a student in dentistry by a visiting student from a country other than South Africa who has been admitted to an approved educational institution for non-degree purposes for a period not exceeding one academic year, shall be accompanied by-
  - (a) a certificate to prove that such student has commenced such study;
  - (b) proof of registration as a student in dentistry by a recognized registering authority in a country or state other than South Africa; and
  - (c) the prescribed registration fee.
- (4) A student in medicine who wishes to be registered as a student in dentistry, shall submit an application for registration as such within four months of commencing study in dentistry at an approved educational institution,
- (5) An application referred to in sub-regulation (4) shall be accompanied by -
  - (a) a certificate to prove that such student has commenced such study;
  - (b) the initial original registration certificate as a student in medicine issued by the registrar; and
  - (c) the prescribed registration fee.
- (6) A student in dentistry, who resumes his or her studies after interrupting them for at least one year, shall submit an application for re-registration within four months of resuming such study.
- (7) An application referred to in sub-regulation (6) shall be accompanied by a certificate to prove that such student has resumed such study; the initial original certificate of registration issued by the registrar; and the prescribed registration fee.

- (8) Subject to the provisions of regulation 3(3), the name of a student in dentistry who interrupted his or her studies for more than one year, but who indicates annually in writing his or her intention to continue with his or her studies, shall not be removed from the register.
- (9) A student registered with the council as a student in medicine who discontinued his or her studies and whose name was consequently removed from the register of students in medicine and who applies for registration as a student in dentistry, shall submit an application to be registered as such within four months of commencing his or her study in dentistry.
- (10) An application referred to in sub-regulation (9) shall be accompanied by -
  - (a) a certificate to prove that such student has commenced such study;
  - (b) the initial original registration certificate as a student in medicine issued by the registrar; and
  - (c) the prescribed registration fee.
- (11) A student who applies for registration in terms of sub-regulations (4),(6) or (9) and who is unable to submit the initial original registration certificate, shall apply for a certified extract from the register, for which the prescribed fee shall be payable.
- (12) An application, together with the applicable documents and fees referred to in sub-regulations (2), (3), (5), (7) or (9), submitted after the period of four months stated in such regulations (1), (4), (6) and (9), as the case may be, shall be subject to the prescribed penalty fee for late registration in respect of each month or portion of a month for which it is submitted after the due date.
- (13) No student shall be registered or re-registered as a student in dentistry unless he or she has complied in all respects with the requirements of sub-regulation (2), (3), (4), (5), (6), (7), (8), (9) or (10) as the case may be, and those of sub-regulation (12), where applicable.
- (14) The registrar shall, upon registration, furnish a person registered as a student in dentistry with a registration certificate.
- (15) Should a student in dentistry change from one educational institution to another during the course of his or her study, the board shall be advised within four months of such change.

### **3. Information to be submitted to the board**

- (1) An approved educational institution in South Africa, shall submit to the board within four months after registration of each year -

- (a) a list of all students in dentistry enrolled for that year; and
  - (b) a list of all students in dentistry who have discontinued their studies during the preceding year.
- (2) The lists referred to in sub-regulation (1) shall include students in dentistry's full names, the year of study and, where applicable, the date of discontinuation of study.
- (3) Together with the lists referred to in sub-regulation (1), an approved educational institution shall submit-
- (a) a list of students in dentistry who discontinued their studies temporarily during the preceding twelve months, specifying the reasons for such discontinuation and the date on which the students concerned are expected to resume their studies; and
  - (b) a list of students in dentistry who resumed their studies during the preceding twelve months after temporarily discontinuing such studies.
- (4) The name of a student in dentistry shall be removed from the register as soon as he or she has been registered as a dentist or as soon as the registrar receives proof that such student has discontinued his or her studies in South Africa.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM IN DENTISTRY AND PROFESSIONAL EXAMINATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN DENTISTRY**

#### **4. Profile of a graduate**

- (1) The curriculum of a student in dentistry shall provide for-
- (a) the academic learning;
  - (b) training and development of skills; and
  - (c) development of a student's professional attitudes and conduct.
- (2) On the successful completion of the curriculum referred to in sub-regulation (1), such a student should have developed into a dental practitioner able to work independent, and having the foundations for further specialist education and training.
- (3) An approved educational institution shall create a curriculum which must achieve the following:

- (a) conveying knowledge, skills, attitudes and appropriate modes of professional conduct to a student in dentistry;
  - (b) preparing a student for health promotion, the prevention or treatment of dental diseases and condition and the rehabilitation of dental impairment;
  - (c) developing research and management abilities and stimulate a preparedness for continuous professional development as part of life-long learning;
  - (d) ensure relevance to local oral health needs while satisfying international standards of excellence.
- (4) **Cognitive outcomes:** In order for a graduate to have a sound knowledge and understanding of oral health care, the promotion thereof and of the prevention and management of disease, such graduate shall have:-
- (a) applied knowledge and understanding of the normal structure, functions and development of a person as whole and as an individual within the context of the family and community within the scope of dentistry;
  - (b) applied knowledge and understanding of disease and pathological processes as the basis of clinical dentistry;
  - (c) an understanding of scientific principles and concepts in dentistry and the ability to think critically, analytically and creatively in regard to clinical problem-solving and decision-making;
  - (d) the ability to use medical, dental and scientific terminology with confidence;
  - (e) applied knowledge and understanding of the principles of therapy and disease management.
- (5) **Skills outcomes:** A graduate shall have acquired and be able to demonstrate his or her proficiency in essential skills required for dental practice, including the following:
- (a) The basic clinical skills-
    - (i) to take a history;
    - (ii) to perform a physical head and neck examination and assess the bio/psycho/social/medical/dental status of a patient;
    - (iii) to interpret findings and make a diagnosis; and

- (iv) to formulate a plan for treatment and management based on sound professional reasoning and problem-solving abilities;
  - (v) be able to utilize diagnostic aids, as well as the services of professionals allied to dentistry and medicine;
  - (b) skill in basic clinical procedures;
  - (c) basic computer and management skills;
  - (d) communication skills;
  - (e) health promotion skills;
  - (f) leadership skills and ability to function as a member of a multi-disciplinary team; and
  - (g) skills required to accurately refer patients to appropriate resources.
- (6) **Values and Attitudes outcomes:** A graduate shall have appropriate attitudes and behaviour patterns to ensure quality oral health care which shall include -
- (i) a commitment to the oral health care of the community with regard to their bio/psycho/social/medical/dental well-being;
  - (ii) a recognition of the importance of primary oral health care and of a community orientated approach to oral health care;
  - (iii) the establishment of a commitment to life-long learning;
  - (iv) a willingness to participate in self and peer evaluations;
  - (v) an awareness of personal limitations and a willingness to seek help when necessary;
  - (vi) recognition of and respect for human and patients rights;
  - (vii) a commitment to professional practice and the ability to take independent clinical decisions with due consideration of the ethics involved;
  - (viii) acting as an advocate for his or her patients and communities;
  - (ix) being sensitive to oral health needs of the country.
- (7) In order to develop a graduate who has all the above characteristics, a two-phased approach shall be followed consisting of undergraduate education and training.

**5. General requirements relating to curriculum and learning approach**

- (1) The undergraduate curriculum in dentistry shall extend over a minimum period of five (5) years, of which the first year shall be at least 32 weeks, and subsequent years at least 36 weeks, excluding assessment time.
- (2) A core curriculum shall be developed by each approved institution to ensure that graduates achieve the minimum core competencies or exit level outcomes as defined by the Medical and Dental Professions Board, acting as a Standard Generation Body (SGB), as required by the South African Qualification Authority (SAQA), from time to time.
- (3) In addition to core, the curriculum shall offer elective modules which allow for in-depth study of a choice of themes.
- (4) The curriculum shall address national oral health issues and take cognizance of the available resources in South Africa. Sensitivity to cultural, racial, language, gender and religious differences shall be emphasized.
- (5) Dental public health as a theme shall figure prominently throughout the curriculum.
- (6) Curriculum content, teaching methods and assessment methods shall be designed to promote students' ability to source information, critically evaluate information, synthesize information from different sources, and solve problems.
- (7) Education and clinical training shall take place at all levels of health care.
- (8) Horizontal and vertical integration of curriculum content over the spectrum of disciplines is encouraged.

**6. Requirements relating to clinical training**

- (1) Clinical training of a student shall include-
  - (a) comprehensive patient care which shall be adapted to changing patterns in oral health care needs;
  - (b) experience in primary oral health care;
  - (c) hospital-based education and training
  - (d) community-based education and training;
  - (e) management of oral health care in hospitals, rural practices, clinics with special emphasis on care in peripheral areas.

- (2) A student shall develop his or her clinical skills by using skills laboratories, simulated patients, models for practical procedures and ultimately patients while proficiency in skills shall be rigorously assessed.
- (3) Where discipline-based clinical training predominates, an institution shall make provision for a student to treat patients holistically and to integrate knowledge and clinical approaches from different disciplines.

**7. Requirements relating to the assessment of performance of students in dentistry**

- (1) Continuous assessment of the affective, cognitive and clinical skills of a student shall be emphasized.
- (2) The skills required by a student for admission to independent practice shall be acquired under supervision and shall be assessed on a continuous basis.
- (3) The focus in the assessment of a student shall balance an emphasis on the application of knowledge with the assessment of problem-solving skills, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, clinical skills, professional competence and social values.
- (4) The assessment and examination of prescribed modules may be integrated or divided (i.e. disciplined based) at the discretion of the educational institution concerned: Provided that there must be some component of the final assessment that assesses a student's ability to adopt an integrated approach to clinical knowledge and reasoning.
- (5) In order to ensure continuous assessment, examiners shall take into account the student's work throughout the course of study.
- (6) A student shall pass both the clinical and theory components of the assessment. The pass mark shall be as prescribed in the University rules: Provided that a student's mark for the clinical components of the assessment should not be condoned to a pass on the grounds that other components are satisfactory.
- (7) The final student assessment must enable the accredited institution to meet its legal obligation to certify that the candidate is competent to practice in a safe and effective manner in relation to the essential skills/competencies as defined by the Board for the undergraduate dental degree.

**8. Requirements relating to the evaluation of curricula and programmes**

- (1) An approved educational institution shall construct programmes which -
  - (a) must be in congruence with the prescribed Board guidelines and taking into account the guidelines of the Department of Education; and

- (b) should comply with the principles as determined by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) to qualify for recognition under SAQA Act, 1995 (Act No.58 of 1995).
- (2) An approved educational institution shall establish structures for the internal evaluation of programmes with a view to quality assurance and in preparation for external evaluation.
- (3) An approved educational institution shall, from time to time as determined by the Board, submit progress reports to the board to ensure implementation of guidelines referred to in sub-regulation (1) and structures referred to in sub regulation (2).
- (4) The educational programme offered by an approved educational institution that leads to registration with the Board shall be accredited by the Board to achieve professional recognition.
- (5) Criteria and standards shall be specified by the Board for the accreditation of curricula and programmes, teaching, training and learning processes.

## **9. General Requirements of Approved Institutions**

- (1) The mission and goals of an approved educational institution shall be available in writing.
- (2) An approved educational institution shall encourage research, including research in dental education and community based research, in order to advance intellectual creativity, oral health care provision and development, as well as to form a basis for teaching and learning in the undergraduate curriculum;
- (3) An approved educational institution shall have systems and structures to ensure that learning systems are grounded in contemporary educational theory.
- (4) Approved institutions shall have adequate learning infrastructure and resources, such as classrooms, lecture theatres, libraries, computer facilities, basic science laboratories, clinical skills laboratories, residence facilities at clinical sites, transport services for students to access remote clinical sites, as determined by the Sub-committee of the board for Undergraduate Education and Training (UET), from time to time.
- (5) Approved institutions shall have in place formal agreements with oral health and health service facilities and authorities to ensure adequate access of students to the necessary range and quantity of clinical teaching environments.

## **10. Repeal**

The regulations published as Government Notice No.R.652 of 5 May 1995, in as far as they relate to dentistry are hereby repealed.

**MINISTER OF HEALTH**

**DATE: 06/01/2009**