

HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA
PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR EMERGENCY CARE
GUIDELINES: FAILURE OF REFRESHER PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS

1. PREAMBLE

In terms of section 26 of the Health Professions Act, 1974 (Act 56 of 1974), compliance with certain conditions of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) is a requisite for continued registration with the HPCSA. The HPCSA may from time to time make rules on CPD pertaining to each profession.

In terms of section 19A of the Act a Professional Board or its Committee may authorize the Registrar to suspend the registration of a registered Health Practitioner who has failed to comply with the requirements in respect of continuing professional development.

2. RESTORATION PROVISIONS

Emergency Care Providers whose names were off the register and who wishes to restore their names to the register have to comply with the following requirements:

- i. Persons whose names have been off the register for 2 years to 3 years and longer have to successfully complete a refresher course at an accredited education and training provider;
- ii. Persons whose names have been off the register for 4 years to 7 years and longer have to successfully complete the full set of final examinations at an accredited education and training provider;
- iii. BAAs, AEAs and Paramedics (CCAs) who completed the short course training and whose names have been off the relevant registers for 8 years and longer have to redo the full course at an accredited education and training provider.
- iv. Persons who obtained the National Diploma, the BTech degree and the Bachelor degree in Emergency Medical Care and are registered as Paramedics and Emergency Care Practitioners and whose names have been off the relevant registers for 8 years and longer have to undergo an examination/assessment, to be determined by the Board.
- v. The emergency care providers referred to in i. to iv. above will also be required to accrue the necessary Continuing Education Units (CEU's) according to the CPD guidelines and will be included in an audit within a year of restoration.

3. FAILURE OF REFRESHER PROGRAMME ASSESSMENTS

- i. When an Emergency Care Provider registered with the HPCSA has attended a formal HPCSA CPD accredited refresher programme for the purposes of routine CPD, and the candidate fails the final assessments, this gap-analysis represents an opportunity for learning and professional development, exactly consonant with the ethos of CPD.

- ii. When a candidate has attended a formal HPCSA CPD accredited refresher programme for the purposes of passing a refresher programme for his/her name to be restored to the HPCSA register, as prescribed by the Professional Board for Emergency Care, who then fails the final assessments, this has more serious implications. However, the assessment is only meaningful to the extent that the assessment is valid, reliable, comprehensive, authentic and sufficient. If this assessment is moderated and quality assured via the Professional Board for Emergency Care, then the failing candidate should be given the opportunity within three months to re-attempt the assessment.
- iii. Should the candidate in (2) above fail the second moderated assessment, he/she should be granted one final opportunity to challenge the full final moderated examinations of the respective qualification level, or as determined by the Professional Board for Emergency Care, within 6 months.
- iv. Should the candidate fail this examination and the permissible supplementary attempts, given reasonable opportunities for remediation between attempts, then the candidate should be suspended by the HPCSA.
- v. The culminating assessments of the respective CPD Programme should be standardised (in terms of duration, programme, learning outcomes, etc), validated, externally moderated, akin to the evaluation process in the formal education and training environment.
- vi. It would be unfair to attach consequences to a failing grade on the refresher assessment if that refresher course and associated assessment is not standardised, regulated, audited and quality controlled. The courses should allow for the same complaint and dispute resolution mechanisms required in formal training programmes.
- vii. Should a candidate (in item [1] above) fail such a moderated assessment, this is flagging a potential risk for patient safety, and thus should be followed up as a priority.
- viii. It is recommended that a registered Emergency Care Provider (item 1 above), who has been found *not yet competent* in a moderated refresher course examination process, should be afforded an opportunity to remediate and to demonstrate competence within three months of the examination. This re-attempt must be externally moderated by a moderator approved by the Professional Board for Emergency Care.
- ix. Should the candidate referred to in item (1) above fail that assessment, they should be required to attempt the final examination of the respective qualification/registration they hold, as determined by the Professional Board for Emergency Care, within six months, or as determined by the Professional Board for Emergency Care.

4. NOTE TO PRINCIPALS

The current variability in refresher training programmes does not lend itself to standard or robust assessment policies or procedures. Only standardised, accredited refresher training courses that are regulated, controlled and externally moderated should be allowed to culminate in judgements relating to continued registration with the HPCSA.

Principals should not be allocating CEUs to candidates who do not comply with the requirements of CPD accredited refresher training, forcing the candidate to undertake further CPD activity. They are compelled to report potentially unsafe Emergency Care Providers to the Professional Board for Emergency Care, and the candidates themselves should sign a formal declaration of understanding of this, prior to enrolling on the course.