



**HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA  
PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY,  
MEDICAL ORTHOTICS & PROSTHETICS  
AND ARTS THERAPY**

**POLICY REGARDING INTERN MEDICAL ORTHOTISTS AND  
PROSTHETISTS AND TRAINING OF INTERN  
MEDICAL ORTHOTISTS AND PROSTHETISTS**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In order to become a professional medical orthotist and prosthetist in South Africa, i.e. registered with the Professional Board for Occupational Therapy, Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics and Arts Therapy, the formal academic requirements stipulated for professional training in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics must have been completed as well as the relevant internship. **Full certified documentation is essential for registration.**

- 1.1 Universities are obliged to provide candidates entering a National Diploma in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics with details concerning registration at the time students enter academic course(s) which lead to registration. Upon registration as intern-medical orthotist and prosthetist an applicant has to submit proof of having completed education and training as a registered student-medical orthotist and prosthetist for a minimum period of three years. Universities must also remind candidates of the registration requirements towards the end of the final year of the National Diploma course since intern medical orthotists and prosthetists are legally required to register with the Professional Board for Occupational Therapy, Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics and Arts Therapy prior to commencement with the internship.
- 1.2 The intern medical orthotist and prosthetist, the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist and the accredited training institution are jointly responsible for ensuring the registration of an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist with the HPCSA prior to the commencement of the internship.
- 1.3 Registration as a medical orthotist and prosthetist will only be possible if a person holds registration as an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist.
- 1.4 Registration as a professional medical orthotist and prosthetist is possible only after –
  - a) the academic requirements for the relevant National Diploma in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics have been **completed** (including the award of the relevant diploma or written confirmation by the Registrar of the University that the diploma is to be awarded),
  - b) the internship has been **satisfactorily completed**, and the duly completed intern duty certificate (Form 27 OS) submitted.
- 1.5 Foreign applicants applying for registration must also submit official documentary evidence of having completed a full-time internship in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics. Recognition of a completed internship will only be considered if the internship commenced after completion of the National Diploma. Foreign applicants are normally required to complete an internship or part thereof in order to familiarise themselves with local circumstances.

## **2. ACADEMIC PREREQUISITES FOR INTERNSHIPS IN MEDICAL ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS**

- 2.1 The minimum academic requirements are three years' full-time formal education and training in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics.
- 2.2 an applicant who completed a full-time period of three years' study may then apply to complete the internship in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics.

### 3. INTERNSHIPS

#### 3.1 REGISTRATION

- 3.1.1 Before commencing the internship the candidate is **obliged to register** with the HPCSA as an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist. Where already accredited internship placements are involved and the academic prerequisites are not in doubt, a grace period of **one** month is allowed for completing the registration.
- 3.1.2 When the registration fee is rendered, the exact date of commencing the internship must be clearly stated. It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that the payment for registration is received by the HPCSA. Late registration and non-payment of registration fees could lead to disciplinary action.
- 3.1.3 All applications for internships must be accompanied by the following documents:
- a) A written undertaking from the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist, registered with the Council, stating that he/she is willing to act as supervisor for the intern and stating the period of internship involved;
  - b) A written undertaking from the Head of the training institution indicating that the intern will be accommodated for the full duration of the internship arranged as well as the exact period of the internship;
  - c) A written undertaking from the Head of Department of the supervising university, stating that the university will act as collaborating university in association with the internship setting, that the Department will ensure that the training is undertaken in accordance with the approved internship programme and the dates of the internship. Only universities offering a recognised National Diploma may act as collaborating university. It is the joint responsibility of the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist and the Head of Department of the University to ensure that progress reports on the intern are received timeously.
- 3.1.4 In cases where the internship is completed at more than one Accredited Training institution, the duration of each placement should be clearly stated.
- 3.1.5 The requirements to act as supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist are a recognised qualification in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics plus three year's experience;

**and**

Appropriate training and/or experience in supervision.

#### 3.2 TIMING OF INTERNSHIP

- 3.2.1 The internship may only commence **after** completing the prerequisite formal academic requirements; experience which predates the formal academic requirements **will, therefore, not be** recognised as part of the internship.
- 3.2.2 An internship **must** commence **within two years** of completing the final year of a National Diploma in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics (or equivalent) qualification. In exceptional circumstances the Board may allow an extension, provided the university concerned supports the application in writing and the Board finds the motivation acceptable.

#### 3.3 INTERNSHIP TRAINING ARRANGEMENTS

- 3.3.1 All Internship placements will be arranged by the supervising university.
- 3.3.2 The term internship refers to the prescribed minimum period of 12 months of **full time** practical training (within which no more than 4 weeks may be taken as leave and 12 days as sick leave).

- 3.3.3 An institution accredited by the Board will be required to follow a stipulated programme of training including the prescribed 4 blocks as provided for in the Intern Manual.
- 3.3.4 All requirements relating to the internship in Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics must be completed within a two-year period.
- 3.3.5 Should an intern require sick leave or leave for any other reason in excess of the 12 working days per annum permitted, the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist of the Training institution accredited by the Board will be required to extend the internship, i.e. the period of internship in order to meet the above requirements.
- 3.3.6 Registration as an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist is permitted for a **maximum** period of **two years**.
- 3.3.7 An internship will only commence in January or July each year.

#### **3.4 INTERNSHIP PROGRAMMES**

- 3.4.1 All internship programmes must comply with the set Internship curricula.

#### **3.5 COMPLETION OF INTERNSHIP**

- 3.5.1 An internship must be completed within two years from date of first registration as an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist.
- 3.5.2 Separate intern duty certificates must be submitted by the relevant supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist for each training placement. These certificates should be handed to the intern by the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist for submission to the Board together with the application for professional registration as a medical orthotist and prosthetist.
- 3.5.3 Training institutions (or supervising medical orthotists and prosthetists) are obliged to ensure that intern medical orthotists and prosthetists are evaluated, **at least every three months**, according to the criteria for intern training. The intern must be kept informed of his/her progress on the basis of this evaluation and **copies of the progress reports must be retained** by the university and made available to the Board, if required.
- 3.5.4 Extension of internships: Internship training **may not** be extended beyond the two year period without **prior approval** of the Board. An intern medical orthotist and prosthetist may not perform any professional acts unless it forms part of the formal internship period or approved extended internship.

#### **4. UNSATISFACTORY PERFORMANCE OF THE INTERN**

- 4.1 In the event of unsatisfactory performance of an intern, a written report should be submitted timeously by the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist to the Board with recommendations for either –
- a) the termination of the internship at a given date; or
  - b) an extension of the internship with clearly specified objectives, such an application for an extension to be submitted not later than following the second progress report or the eighth month of the internship, preferably earlier if possible.
- 4.2 Should an intern become mentally or physically impaired to perform Medical Orthotics and Prosthetics as required professionally, the matter should be reported to the Health Committee of Council. The Health Committee will investigate the circumstances and will provide guidance on the treatment and rehabilitation of the intern medical orthotist and prosthetist or deal with the matter as circumstances dictate.

**5. TRAINING AND SUPERVISION OF INTERNS**

- 5.1 Supervision of interns requires that the supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist is accessible and available for personal contact on a day-to-day basis.
- 5.2 A ratio of **one intern to each supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist** may not be exceeded.
- 5.3 An approved training institution may not have in its employ more than one intern-medical orthotist and prosthetist in respect of every supervising medical orthotist and prosthetist.
- 5.4 If an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist fails to comply with the requirements set by the Board, or the training institution fails to deliver the training programme, such training may not be recognised by the Board.
- 5.5 A medical orthotist and prosthetist supervising the internship of an intern medical orthotist and prosthetist **not registered** as such or not fulfilling his/her supervisory obligations **will be liable** to disciplinary action.
- 5.6 An internship setting must provide **suitable** and adequate exposure.

**6. PERFORMANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ACTS BY INTERN MEDICAL ORTHOTISTS AND PROSTHETISTS**

- 6.1 An intern shall perform professional acts only under the supervision of a registered medical orthotist and prosthetist as prescribed for this purpose and in accordance with these guidelines.
- 6.2 An intern shall limit acts referred to in (6.1) to acts related to his or her education and training as part of a structured internship programme.
- 6.3 An intern shall not act as a locum or conduct an independent private practice.
- 6.4 An intern who has completed his or her internship shall not perform any professional acts until he or she has satisfied all the requirements for registration as a medical orthotist and prosthetist and has been registered as such.

The registration number of the intern medical orthotist and prosthetist must be reflected in all correspondence.

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