



PROFESSIONAL BOARD FOR OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY, MEDICAL ORTHOTICS AND PROSTHETICS AND ARTS THERAPY

VIRTUAL/ONLINE EVALUATIONS GUIDELINES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Professional Boards postponed evaluations that were due in 2020 because of COVID 19 and the consequent lockdown that imposed strict protocols, including social distancing, that had to be adhered to. Several programmes accredited by the HPCSA at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) expired and require to be evaluated for purposes of re-approval. With the restrictions imposed by COVID 19 regulations, the professional boards opted for the use of virtual/online evaluations of accredited programmes.
- 1.2 These guidelines are meant to be used to guide Virtual/Online Evaluations, as and when they are used, including during the current National State of Disaster arising from the COVID-19 Pandemic. They will be subjected to review and revision on an annual basis or as circumstances may require.

2. PURPOSE OF VIRTUAL/ONLINE EVALUATIONS

- 2.1 To ensure that there are no disruptions to the routine evaluation of board approved education and training programmes.
- 2.2 To ensure the continued standardised and systematic assessments of appropriateness of programmes offered by HEIs.

3. APPROACHES TO VIRTUAL/ONLINE EVALUATIONS

3.1 Methods of conducting evaluations

3.1.1 Desk top review of documents and media

- 3.1.1.1 All information to be reviewed should reach the HPCSA's offices by dates to be communicated in advance by the HPCSA's secretariat. HEIs should submit information via email or relevant online platform, at times stipulated by the Secretariat.
- 3.1.1.2 The Secretariat and the convenor will ensure that the evaluation panel receives the documentation. Upon receiving the documentation, the panel members must sign a declaration of confidentiality.
- 3.1.1.3 Media information could include imagery of, among others, physical structures and equipment which ordinarily would have been inspected during physical visits.
- 3.1.1.4 Evaluation panel members will have one month to review the submitted material.

- 3.1.1.5 Evaluation panel members may decide to meet virtually for no more than a day to collectively review submitted information.

3.1.2 Virtual interviews/Video conferencing

- 3.1.2.1 Evaluation panels will interview, remotely, identified stakeholders (including University Management, staff, students, interns, wherever applicable) in HEIs, for the evaluation.
- 3.1.2.2 Standard videoconferencing platforms may be used, especially Microsoft Teams, which is the HPCSA's preferred platform, or as negotiated with the Institution.
- 3.1.2.3 All engagements on virtual platforms will be recorded.

3.1.3 Physical assessments

- 3.1.3.1 Evaluation panel members may choose to visit HEIs for physical assessments, but these should be over limited periods, generally a day.
- 3.1.3.2 A physical site visit is advised if the evaluation panel is not familiar with the new sit and prevailing conditions allow.

3.2 IT SUPPORT

- 3.2.1 The HPCSA's IT officials will always be available to troubleshoot any problems that may arise during virtual engagements where electronic platforms are being used.

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1. Education and Training Division (E&T Division)

4.1.1. Pre-Evaluation

- 4.1.1.1 Ascertain that the HEI/Clinical Facilities have paid outstanding accreditation/evaluation fees from prior years.
- 4.1.1.2 Ensure that the virtual/online evaluation dates are set and agreed with the relevant parties.
- 4.1.1.3 Provide the HEI/Clinical Facilities with the Application Forms, previously approved evaluation reports and the *Guidelines for Virtual Evaluation*.
- 4.1.1.4 Send letters of appointment.
- 4.1.1.5 Ensure that the required evidence is submitted by the HEI/Clinical Facilities.
- 4.1.1.6 Send the evaluation pack to the panel members.
- 4.1.1.7 Send the proforma invoice with estimated amounts to the HEIs/Clinical Facilities.
- 4.1.1.8 Ensure the availability of dedicated IT personnel to assist with technical glitches.

4.1.2 During the evaluation

- 4.1.2.1 Monitor the process and communicate with the Chairperson of the evaluation panel, and HEIs/Clinical Facilities

- 4.1.2.2 Provide any additional, relevant documents or information as required by the evaluation panel.
- 4.1.2.3 Provide any other required support to the evaluation panel.
- 4.1.3 Post-Evaluation**
- 4.1.3.1 Ensure that the evaluation report is received from the Chair of the panel within 14 days of the virtual/online evaluation and shared with other panel members.
- 4.1.3.2 Ensure that the virtual/online evaluation recording is safely filed and stored.
- 4.1.3.3 Ensure the received report serves at the relevant ETRC and Professional Board.
- 4.1.3.4 Communicate the outcome of the Board, in the form of a report, to the HEIs/Clinical Facilities.
- 4.1.3.5 Ensure that the evaluation database is accordingly updated.

4.2 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

4.2.1 Pre-Evaluation

- 4.2.1.1 Ensure submission of a duly completed Self Evaluation Report to the Education and Training Division.
- 4.2.1.2 Ensure that all the necessary documentation and evidence is electronically submitted to the Education and Training Coordinator six weeks prior to the ETRC meeting in order to be included in the agenda for that meeting.
- 4.2.1.3 Confirm in writing the set dates of the virtual/online evaluation.
- 4.2.1.4 Ensure that arrangements for the virtual/online evaluation are made on time for the interviewees to connect virtually during the evaluation, and that evidence required is readily available. HEI's are responsible to send links for meeting platforms.
- 4.2.1.5. HEI's are required to provide the panel with a link to all evidence of work inclusive of:
- All current virtual and non-virtual examination including recording of examinations
 - Recordings of teaching engagements
 - Recordings of practical manufacturing of assistive devices (MOP)
 - Recordings of student's practical engagements
 - Photographic proof of clinical sites and facilities
 - A folder containing all documentation referred to annexure G in form 59

4.2.2 During Evaluation

- 4.2.2.1 Ensure that the HEI's representative, and identified interviewees, e.g. Management, Lecturers, Students are available throughout the entire virtual meeting.

4.3 Evaluation Panels

4.3.1 Pre-Evaluation

- 4.3.1.1 The Chairperson of the Evaluation panel must discuss the outline of the virtual evaluation process with the panel members.
- 4.3.1.2 The Chairperson of the Evaluation panel will approve the draft programme for the virtual/online evaluation in consultation with the HEIs/Clinical Facilities.

- 4.3.1.3 The panel members should confirm and inform the ETC of the unavailability to conduct the evaluation **3 days** prior the schedule on-line evaluations.
- 4.3.1.4 The ETC should establish the availability of panel members 3 days before the virtual /online evaluation.

4.3.2 During Evaluation

- 4.3.2.1 The Evaluation panel must evaluate the application form and supporting evidence submitted by the HEI/Clinical Facilities.
- 4.3.2.2 The panel members should “pre-meet” with the chair to discuss the documents submitted and further to plan on how the virtual/online evaluation process should unfold.
- 4.3.2.3 The chairperson of the panel should ensure that the members adhere to the signed prescribed code of conduct.
- 4.3.2.4 The panel should confirm and validate the availability of the required evidence as per Self Evaluation Report.
- 4.3.2.5 During the interviews with the staff members and students, the evaluators will among other things probe or establish the following:
 - 4.3.2.5.1 Relevant teaching, learning and assessment practices including infrastructure and adaptation to accommodate blended learning
 - 4.3.2.5.2 The level of clinical supervision and accompaniment of the learners by all members of professional staff.
 - 4.3.2.5.3 Management and supervision arrangements.
 - 4.3.2.5.4 The level to which the clinical training department/unit promotes an atmosphere that is conducive to quality learning.
 - 4.3.2.5.5 A system of recording examinations/procedures/treatments performed and clinical assessments in place for the students.
 - 4.3.2.5.6 Learner assessments, including aspects of ethics, human rights and medical law.
 - 4.3.2.5.7 Communication channels between the clinical training facility/unit and the HEI promote quality clinical training of learners.
 - 4.3.2.5.8 Appropriateness of learner contracts/MOUs are in place.
- 4.3.2.6 The following persons may be interviewed online during the evaluation process to verify or obtain relevant information relating to the students’ clinical training:
 - 4.3.2.6.1 Staff member responsible for the clinical training and welfare of students at the clinical training facility/unit.
 - 4.3.2.6.2 A sample of all levels of students.
 - 4.3.2.6.3 Any other professional who may have an impact on student training.

- 4.3.2.7 The evaluators should ask questions that include, but are not limited to information about:
- 4.3.2.7.1 Management's willingness and support for student training;
 - 4.3.2.7.2 Role of qualified practitioners in providing guidance to the students;
 - 4.3.2.7.3 Role of the appointed clinical training supervisor;
 - 4.3.2.7.4 Role and conduct of the appointed assessor/s;
 - 4.3.2.7.5 Role of the supervisors/mentors/intern curators in the clinical education/training of the learners;
 - 4.3.2.7.6 Availability and accessibility of the required resources for students – e.g. Textbooks, journals, computer, internet access;
 - 4.3.2.7.7 Provision of transport for students to various clinical facilities/units;
 - 4.3.2.7.8 The provision of accommodation where facilities/units are far from the HEI;
 - 4.3.2.7.9 How the facility ensures that quality of clinical education and training is maintained in the facility/unit.

4.3.3 Post-Evaluation

- 4.3.3.1 After online interviews, evaluators should compile a report, which must be signed by Chairperson of the panel.
- 4.3.3.2 The clinical facility/unit report needs to reflect the following:
- 4.3.3.2.1 Names of the evaluators.
 - 4.3.3.2.2 Representatives from both HEI and clinical training facility/unit who were consulted by the evaluators during the virtual evaluation process.
 - 4.3.3.2.3 Names of persons who were interviewed and their designations. (*Students interviewed need to stay anonymous*).
 - 4.3.3.2.4 Information attained and report on evaluation conducted.
 - 4.3.3.2.5 Evaluators should also provide general comments about the HEI/Facility Unit in relation to student training.
 - 4.3.3.2.6 A summary of the critical points noted during interviews with the different professionals and students.
 - 4.3.3.2.7 Recommendations for approval or re-approval in accordance with the rating below:

Criteria	Judgement	Outcomes
New programmes Approval of existing programmes	Exceeds minimum standards: a) All minimum standards specified in the criteria are met. b) Examples of good practice and innovation are identified.	Programme approval (5 Years)
	Complies with minimum standards: All minimum standards specified in the criteria are met.	
	Needs improvement: a) Not all minimum standards specified in the criteria were met. b) Problem weaknesses could be addressed in a short period of time.	Provisional programme approval (with conditions: Submission of remediation plan within the timelines stipulated. (2 Years)
	Does not meet minimum standards: a) Did not meet the majority of minimum standards specified in the criteria	Non approval of Programme

4.3.3.2.8 The chairperson of the evaluation panel should submit the consolidated report to the Secretariat for submission to the ETR Committee.

5. APPEALS BY HEIs

- 5.1 HEIs are entitled to appeal findings of evaluations.
- 5.2 The Appeals should be in writing and directed to the Education, Training and Registrations Committee through the Education and Training Division.
- 5.3 Appeals shall be managed in accordance with the HPCSA's Appeals Policy.