

**HEALTH PROFESSIONS COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA**  
**SUBCOMMITTEE FOR POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING**  
**‘CRITERIA FOR THE RECOGNITION OF SPECIALIST TRAINING TIME’**

**RECOGNITION OF TRAINING TIME IN A REGISTRAR POST**

1. A registrar is a person training in a recognised speciality.
2. Training may only take place in an HPCSA-accredited academic department in a teaching hospital under the control of a university with a Faculty of Health Sciences or Medical School. Accreditation is awarded by the Medical and Dental Professions Board through the Subcommittee for Postgraduate Education and Training (Medical).
3. A batch of HPCSA training numbers is allocated to all accredited academic teaching departments. The number of HPCSA training numbers is determined by the trainer to trainee ratio which is reviewed from time to time.
4. A registrar or subspecialist trainee (or senior registrar) is required to spend a minimum duration of education and training in an HPCSA-accredited registrar post under the control of an academic teaching department in a teaching hospital.
5. Training time is set at a minimum of four years for all base specialities and two years for all subspecialities.
6. Training time therefore should account for 48 months of which 4 months will be official leave for base specialities, and 24 months of which 2 months will be official leave for subspecialities. The minimum training time will be 44 months for base specialities, and 22 months for subspecialities. In the case of all other leave, including maternity leave, the training time will be lengthened by the period of leave taken. Should training time be interrupted that time will not count towards training. Of the remaining 44 months, 3 months may be spent outside the accredited training site, provided the candidate remains in the accredited post under the control of a university with a Faculty of Health Sciences or Medical School.

**RECOGNITION OF TRAINING TIME OUTSIDE A REGISTRAR POST**

1. **Existing criteria for recognition of prior learning:** In terms of regulation 6 (6) (a) and (b) up to 12 months of time spent outside a registrar post may be recognised under the following conditions:
  - 1.1 Research performed in the discipline.
  - 1.2 Training time spent in a related discipline in a recognized HPCSA-accredited training post.

2. **Criteria for the recognition of prior learning (i.e., training time) in a medical officer post:**
- 2.1 Medical Officers (MO) are health professionals who have obtained an MB ChB or equivalent qualification and who are employed by the health authority to render a clinical service.
- 2.2 A number of health authorities have decided to apply salary parity to the ranks of MO and registrar and even name the health authority posts as “registrar/medical officer”. There is no consistency between training institutions whether an MO post is a term appointment or a permanent appointment.
- 2.3 Consequently, many MO posts are allocated by the health authorities to various departments where such MOs work alongside registrars and attend academic meetings and training workshops. Such MOs may present a case of having done and performed the same work as registrars and may request recognition of a certain amount of time spent as an MO as specialist training time.
- 2.4 This is an inherently difficult situation for the HPCSA for two reasons. First, the objectives of MO appointments are not intended to allow incumbents to become specialists while in the MO position, but to render a service to patients on behalf of the health authority. Second, in the calculation of the trainer to trainee ratio the number of MO posts in a department is not ordinarily taken into account.
- 2.6 **If recognition of prior learning as a medical practitioner in a non accredited post is to be accepted, in terms of regulation 6 (6) (a), the following conditions will have to be met:**
- 2.6.1 **Time to be recognized as training time for the purpose of specialist training must take place in an institution that is accredited by the HPCSA for specialist training.**
- 2.6.2 **A maximum term of 12 months may be recognised, provided that the practitioner applies for recognition of medical officer time after passing the primary examination or after at least 2 ½ years of registrar training, whichever period is longer. It must be understood that a period of MO time may not necessarily be translated to the same amount of registrar time, and that all applications will be considered on their individual merits.**
- 2.6.3 **A report from the Head of Department with supporting documents (i.e., logbook/portfolio, continuous assessment report, and/or other academic contributions) must accompany the application in order for such applications for recognition of “prior learning time” in an MO post to be accepted.**

**SUBCOMMITTEE FOR POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION AND TRAINING (MEDICAL), 20 JANUARY 2010.**