



**MEDICAL COUNCIL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS
FOR
POSTGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

1. CONTEXT OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

1.1 GOVERNANCE

- 1.1.1 The training organisation's governance structures and its education and training, assessment and continuing professional development functions are defined.
- 1.1.2 The governance structures describe the composition and terms of reference for each committee, and allow all relevant groups to be represented in decision-making.
- 1.1.3 The training organisation's internal structures give priority to its educational role relative to other activities.

1.2 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

- 1.2.1 The training organisation has established a committee or committees with the responsibility, authority and capacity to direct the following key functions:
 - planning, implementing and reviewing the training programme(s) and setting relevant policy and procedures
 - setting and implementing policy and procedures relating to the assessment of overseas-trained specialists
 - setting and implementing policy on continuing professional development and reviewing the effectiveness of continuing professional development activities.
- 1.2.2 The training organisation's education and training activities are supported by appropriate resources including sufficient administrative and technical staff.
- 1.2.3 Funding and Resource Allocation - there must be a clear line of responsibility and authority for budgeting of training resources. The training bodies must be adequately funded in order to plan and deliver the programme.

1.3 EDUCATIONAL EXPERTISE AND EXCHANGE

- 1.3.1 The training organisation uses educational expertise in the development, management and Continuous improvement of its education, training, assessment and continuing professional development activities, as required.
- 1.3.2 The training organisation collaborates with other educational institutions and compares its curriculum, training programme and assessment with that of other relevant programmes.

1.4 INTERACTION WITH THE HEALTH SECTOR

- 1.4.1 The training organisation seeks to maintain constructive working relationships with relevant health departments and government, non-government and community agencies to promote the education, training and ongoing professional development of medical specialists.
- 1.4.2 The training organisation works with healthcare institutions to facilitate clinicians employed by them to contribute to high quality teaching and supervision, and to foster peer review and professional development.

1.5 CONTINUOUS RENEWAL

- 1.5.1 The training organisation reviews and updates structures, functions and policies relating to education, training and continuing professional development to rectify deficiencies and to meet changing needs.

2. THE OUTCOMES OF THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

2.1 PURPOSE OF THE TRAINING ORGANISATION

- 2.1.1 The purpose of the training organisation includes setting and promoting high standards of medical practice, training, research, continuing professional development, and social and community responsibilities.
- 2.1.2 In defining its purpose, the training organisation has consulted fellows and trainees, and relevant groups of interest.

2.2 GRADUATE OUTCOMES

- 2.2.1 The training organisation has defined graduate outcomes for each training programme including any sub-specialty programmes. These outcomes are based on the nature of the discipline and the practitioners' role in the delivery of health care. The outcomes are related to community need.
- 2.2.2 The outcomes address the broad roles of practitioners in the discipline as well as technical and clinical expertise.
- 2.2.3 Outcomes must reflect domains of professionalism as defined by the Medical Council with particular reference to patient safety
- 2.2.4 The training organisation makes information on graduate outcomes publicly available.

3. THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMME - CURRICULUM CONTENT

3.1 CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

- 3.1.1 For each of its education and training programmes, the training organisation has a framework for the curriculum organised according to the overall graduate outcomes. The framework is publicly available.

3.2 CURRICULUM STRUCTURE, COMPOSITION AND DURATION

- 3.2.1 For each component or stage, the curriculum specifies the educational objectives and outcomes, details the nature and range of clinical experience required to meet these objectives, and outlines the syllabus of knowledge, skills and professional qualities to be acquired.
- 3.2.2 Successful completion of the training programme must be certified by a diploma or other formal award.

3.3 RESEARCH IN THE TRAINING PROGRAMME

- 3.3.1 The training programme includes formal learning about research methodology, critical appraisal of literature, scientific data and evidence-based practice, and encourages the trainee to participate in research.
- 3.3.2 The training programme allows appropriate candidates to enter research training during specialist education and to receive appropriate credit towards completion of specialist training.

3.4 FLEXIBLE TRAINING

- 3.4.1 The programme structure and training requirements recognise part-time, interrupted and other flexible forms of training.
- 3.4.2 There are opportunities for trainees to pursue studies of choice, consistent with training programme outcomes, which are underpinned by policies on the recognition of prior learning. These policies recognise demonstrated competencies achieved in other relevant training programmes both here and overseas, and give trainees appropriate credit towards the requirements of the training programme.

3.5 THE CONTINUUM OF LEARNING

- 3.5.1 The training organisation contributes to articulation between the specialist training programme and prevocational and undergraduate stages of the medical training continuum.

4. THE TRAINING PROGRAMME - TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 4.1.1 The training is practice-based involving the trainees' personal participation in relevant aspects of the health services and, for clinical specialties, direct patient care.
- 4.1.2 The training programme includes appropriately integrated practical and theoretical instruction.
- 4.1.3 The training process ensures an increasing degree of independent responsibility as skills, knowledge and experience grow.

5. THE CURRICULUM - ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING

5.1 ASSESSMENT APPROACH

- 5.1.1 The assessment programme, which includes both summative and formative assessments, reflects comprehensively the educational objectives of the training programme.
- 5.1.2 The training organisation uses a range of assessment formats that are appropriately aligned to the components of the training programme.
- 5.1.3 The training organisation has policies relating to disadvantage and special consideration in assessment, including making reasonable adjustments for trainees with a disability.

5.2 FEEDBACK AND PERFORMANCE

- 5.2.1 The training organisation has processes for early identification of trainees who are under performing and for determining programmes of remedial work for them.
- 5.2.2 The training organisation facilitates regular feedback to trainees on performance to guide learning.
- 5.2.3 The training organisation provides feedback to supervisors of training on trainee performance, where appropriate.

5.3 ASSESSMENT QUALITY

- 5.3.1 The training organisation has a policy on the evaluation of the reliability and validity of assessment methods, the educational impact of the assessment on trainee learning, and the feasibility of the assessment items. It introduces new assessment methods where required.

5.4 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIALISTS TRAINED OVERSEAS

- 5.4.1 The processes for assessing of specialists trained overseas are in accordance with the principles outlined by the Irish Medical Council

6. THE CURRICULUM - MONITORING AND EVALUATION

6.1 ONGOING MONITORING

- 6.1.1 The training organisation regularly evaluates and reviews its training programmes. Its processes address curriculum content, quality of teaching and supervision, assessment and trainee progress.
- 6.1.2 Supervisors and trainers contribute to monitoring and to programme development. Their feedback is systematically sought, analysed and used as part of the monitoring process.
- 6.1.3 Trainees contribute to monitoring and to programme development. Their confidential feedback on the quality of supervision, training and clinical experience is systematically sought, analysed and used in the monitoring process. Trainee feedback is specifically sought on proposed changes to the training programme to ensure that existing trainees are not unfairly disadvantaged by such changes.

6.2 OUTCOME EVALUATION

- 6.2.1 The training organisation maintains records on the graduates of its training programme, is developing methods to measure outcomes of training and is collecting qualitative information on outcomes.
- 6.2.2 Supervisors, trainees, health care administrators, other health care professionals and consumers contribute to evaluation processes.

7. IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM – TRAINEES

7.1 ADMISSION POLICY AND SELECTION

- 7.1.1 A clear statement of principles underpins the selection process, including the principle of merit-based selection.

- 7.1.2 The processes for selection into the training programme
- are based on the published criteria and the principles of the training organisation concerned
 - are evaluated with respect to validity, reliability and feasibility
 - are transparent, rigorous and fair
 - are capable of standing up to external scrutiny
 - include a formal process for review of decisions in relation to selection, and information on this process is outlined to candidates prior to the selection process.
- 7.1.3 The training organisation documents and publishes its selection criteria. Its recommended weighting for various elements of the selection process, including previous experience in the discipline, is described. The marking system for the elements of the process is also described.
- 7.1.4 The training organisation publishes its requirements for mandatory experience, such as rotation through a range of training sites. The criteria and process for seeking exemption from such requirements are made clear.
- 7.1.5 The training organisation monitors the consistent application of selection policies across training sites and/or regions.

7.2 TRAINEE PARTICIPATION IN TRAINING ORGANISATION GOVERNANCE

- 7.2.1 The training organisation has formal processes and structures that facilitate and support the involvement of trainees in the governance of their training.

7.3 COMMUNICATION WITH TRAINEES

- 7.3.1 The training organisation has mechanisms to inform trainees about the activities of its decision-making committees, in addition to communication by the trainee organisation or trainee representatives.
- 7.3.2 The training organisation provides clear and easily accessible information about the training programme, costs and requirements, and any proposed changes.
- 7.3.3 The training organisation provides timely and correct information to trainees about their training status to facilitate their progress through training requirements.

7.4 RESOLUTION OF TRAINING PROBLEMS AND DISPUTES

- 7.4.1 The training organisation has processes to address confidentially problems with training supervision and requirements.
- 7.4.2 The training organisation has clear impartial pathways for timely resolution of training-related disputes between trainees and supervisors or trainees and the organisation.
- 7.4.3 The training organisation has reconsideration, review and appeals processes that allow trainees to seek impartial review of training-related decisions, and makes its appeals policies publicly available.
- 7.4.4 The training organisation has a process for evaluating de-identified appeals and complaints to determine if there is a systems problem.

8. IMPLEMENTING THE TRAINING PROGRAMME – DELIVERY OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

8.1 SUPERVISORS, ASSESSORS, TRAINERS AND MENTORS

- 8.1.1 The training organisation has defined the responsibilities of hospital and community practitioners who contribute to the delivery of the training programme and the responsibilities of the training organisation to these practitioners.

- 8.1.2 The training organisation has processes for selecting supervisors who have demonstrated appropriate capability for this role. It facilitates the training of supervisors and trainers.
- 8.1.3 The training organisation routinely evaluates supervisor and trainer effectiveness including feedback from trainees and offers guidance in their professional development in these roles.
- 8.1.4 The training organisation has processes for selecting assessors in written, oral and performance-based assessments who have demonstrated relevant capabilities.
- 8.1.5 The training organisation has processes to evaluate the effectiveness of its assessors/examiners including feedback from trainees, and to assist them in their professional development in this role.
- 8.1.6 Organisation and development of trainers – instructional activities must be included as responsibilities in the work schedules of trainers and their relationship to work schedules of trainees must be described.

8.2 CLINICAL AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

- 8.2.1 The training organisation has a process and criteria to select and recognise hospitals, sites and posts for training purposes. The accreditation standards of the training organisation are publicly available.
- 8.2.2 The training organisation specifies the clinical and/or other practical experience, infrastructure and educational support required of an accredited hospital/training position in terms of the outcomes for the training programme. It implements clear processes to assess the quality and appropriateness of the experience and support offered to determine if these requirements are met.
- 8.2.3 The training organisation's accreditation requirements cover: orientation, clinical and/or other experience, appropriate supervision, structured educational programmes, educational and infrastructure supports such as access to the internet, library, journals and other learning facilities, continuing medical education sessions accessible to the trainee, dedicated time for teaching and training and opportunities for informal teaching and training in the work environment.
- 8.2.4 The training organisation works with the health services to ensure that the capacity of the health care system is effectively used for service-based training, and that trainees can experience the breadth of the discipline. It uses an appropriate variety of clinical settings, patients and clinical problems for training purposes, while respecting service functions.
- 8.2.5 The training organisation should monitor the working environment to ensure it is a safe environment for training.

9. CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

9.1 CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

- 9.1.1 The training organisation's professional development programmes are based on self-directed learning. The programmes assist participants to maintain and develop knowledge, skills and attitudes essential for meeting the changing needs of patients and the health care delivery system, and for responding to scientific developments in medicine as well as changing societal expectations.
- 9.1.2 The training organisation determines the formal structure of the CPD programme in consultation with stakeholders, taking account of the requirements of relevant authorities such as medical boards.
- 9.1.3 The process and criteria for assessing and recognising CPD providers and/or the individual CPD activities are based on educational quality, the use of appropriate educational methods and resources, and take into consideration feedback from participants.
- 9.1.4 The training organisation documents the recognised CPD activities of participants in a systematic and transparent way, and monitors participation.

- 9.1.5 The training organisation has mechanisms to allow doctors who are not its Members and/or Fellows to access relevant continuing professional development and other educational opportunities.
- 9.1.6 The training organisation has processes to counsel fellows who do not participate in ongoing professional development programmes.

9.2 RETRAINING

- 9.2.1 The training organisation has processes to respond to requests from the Medical Council for retraining of doctors who have been absent from practice for a period of time.

9.3 ASSESSMENT AND REMEDIATION

- 9.3.1 The training organisation has processes to respond to requests from the Medical Council for assessment and remediation of doctors where concerns have been identified that these doctors may be under-performing.

**Approved by the Medical Council
1st June 2010**

and

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