



**MEDICAL COUNCIL OF MALAWI**

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**PRE-INTERNSHIP EXAMINATIONS POLICY**

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**DECEMBER, 2024**

## Regulation Highlights Dashboard

<b>Policy Name</b>	Pre-internship Examination Policy
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<b>Stakeholders to whom this Policy applies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council and its Committees</li> <li>• Medical Council of Malawi Secretariat</li> <li>• Registered Practitioners</li> <li>• Prospective Intern Practitioners</li> <li>• The Medical Association of Malawi and other Professional Associations</li> <li>• <u>Practical attachments sites.</u></li> </ul>
<b>Responsible Officers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registrar and Chief Executive Officer</li> <li>• Director of Regulatory Enforcement</li> <li>• <u>Director of Finance and Administration</u></li> </ul>
<b>Responsible Office(s)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Registrar and Chief Executive Officer</li> </ul>
<b>Responsible Committees</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Education and Training Committee and its subcommittees, including: The Examinations Sub-Committee, and the Appeals Sub-Committee.</li> <li>• Registration and Inspections Committee</li> <li>• Finance and Establishment Committee</li> </ul>

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## Foreword

Internship marks a crucial milestone in the professional journey of medical, dental and allied health graduates, serving as an essential gateway to clinical practice. As the Medical Council of Malawi, we are committed to ensuring that all aspiring healthcare professionals possess the requisite knowledge, skills, and ethical grounding necessary to provide high-quality healthcare to the communities they serve. This Policy aims to outline a fair, transparent, and comprehensive pre-internship examination process, designed to uphold the highest standards of medical, dental, and allied health education and practice.

The development of this Pre-Internship Examination Policy has been informed by global best practices and tailored to meet the unique needs and challenges of our healthcare system. It sets clear guidelines for examination content, assessment criteria, and logistical processes, all of which are geared towards providing a standardized framework that instils competence and confidence in our future healthcare providers. Through this examination, we aim to assess the readiness of our candidates to transition from theoretical learning to real-world practice, ensuring that they are well-equipped to handle the demands and complexities of patient care.

Our commitment to excellence and patient safety is at the heart of this Policy. We believe that by rigorously evaluating the competencies of our medical, dental and allied health graduates, we contribute not only to the personal and professional growth of these individuals but also to the enhancement of our healthcare standards as a whole. We encourage all relevant stakeholders to engage with this Policy document actively and collaboratively.

Let this Policy be a testament to our shared vision “to be a transformative health regulator of excellence that guarantees provision of competent health practitioners and delivery of quality healthcare.” We look forward to the positive impact that it will have on our healthcare workforce and, ultimately, on the health and well-being of our communities.



**Professor John E. Chisi, Council Chairperson**

## Preface

The health profession demands a steadfast commitment to knowledge, competence, and ethical standards. As such, the journey to becoming a competent practitioner is marked by rigorous training and evaluation processes, aimed at preparing graduates for the multifaceted challenges of patient care. In recognition of this, the Medical Council of Malawi has developed this Pre-Internship Examination Policy to provide a structured framework for assessing the readiness of medical, dental and allied health graduates to undertake clinical responsibilities.

This Policy outlines the purpose, structure, and regulations governing the pre-internship examination, which is designed to evaluate both the theoretical knowledge and clinical acumen of candidates. It details the roles and responsibilities of candidates, examiners, and other key stakeholders, ensuring that each component of the examination process adheres to principles of fairness, transparency, and accountability. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of ethical standards, patient safety, and the application of knowledge in real-world healthcare settings.

The pre-internship examination is not merely a test; it is a critical step towards cultivating a workforce that embodies the values of integrity, empathy, and excellence in medical practice.

We are confident that this Policy will provide a clear pathway for candidates, helping them transition smoothly from being learners to clinical practice. We invite all stakeholders to familiarize themselves with the contents of this document, as it serves not only as a regulatory guideline but also as a reflection of our shared commitment to delivering safe, effective, and compassionate healthcare.

By embracing this Policy, we move one step closer to ensuring that every patient receives care from a competent and ethically grounded medical professional. It is our hope that this document will support the growth of healthcare providers who are well-prepared to meet the demands of modern medicine and contribute meaningfully to the health and welfare of our society.



**Dr Davie B.S Zolowere, Registrar and Chief Executive Officer**

## List of abbreviations and acronyms

CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CEPC:	Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct
DC:	District Commissioner
DOFA:	Director of Finance and Administration
DORE:	Director of Regulatory Enforcement
ECFMG:	Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates
FEC:	Finance and Establishment Committee
MAM:	Medical Association of Malawi
MCM:	Medical Council of Malawi
MPD Act:	Medical Practitioners and Dentist Act
OSPE:	Objective Structured Practical Examination
STRACOS:	Staff Regulations and Conditions of Service
TEC:	Training and Education Committee
TORs:	Terms of References

## Definition of Concepts and Terms

**Appeals Sub-Committee:** This is an ad hoc council-approved sub-committee which shall comprise odd number of experts registered with MCM, all of whom have not participated in the setting, administration and marking of the examinations for which an appeal has been lodged.

**Council:** means the Council of the Medical Council of Malawi as appointed in line with the Medical Practitioners and Dentists Act number 17 of 1987, section 4.

**Council Examinations Sub-committee:** is the academic organ at the Council responsible for the setting and administration of the pre-internship examinations.

**Council Finance and Establishment Committee:** The Committee of the Council that is responsible for independently vetting the costs of all fees (including examination fees as proposed by the Training and Education Committee), and presenting to the Council for approval.

**Council Registration and Inspections Committee:** is the Committee of the Council that is directly responsible to monitor the registration and inspection of internship sites and interns, as well as the professional practice of all registered practitioners.

**Council Training and Education Committee:** is the Committee of the Council that is responsible for Training, Education, Internship including the pre-internship examinations and Continuous Professional Development.

**Council Pre-Internship Examinations:** are all those examinations, assessments or evaluations that are considered in determining whether any practitioner shall proceed to be enrolled into an internship programme.

**Continuous Assessment:** is any form of evaluation made during the course of the year prior to the sitting of the scheduled council examinations. The continuous assessment shall be done by Council approved preceptors in order to determine whether a foreign trained non-specialist doctor or another discipline is ready to sit for the council approved examinations.

**Practical Attachment Site:** is a designated facility, or institution where candidates undergo hands-on training to gain practical experience prior to the examinations.



## 1.0 Introduction

### 1.1 The Mandate of Medical Council of Malawi

The Medical Council of Malawi (MCM) is a parastatal organisation established under the Medical Practitioners and Dentists (MPD) Act number 17 of 1987. Its mandate is to support the health of Malawi's population by regulating medical, dental, and allied health professions to safeguard public welfare and uphold professional standards. MCM's responsibilities include regulating health practitioners, accrediting health facilities, handling patient and public complaints, and overseeing pre-service and in-service training for its registrable cadres, including internship regulation.

Since commencing operations in 1988, MCM has expanded significantly. Initially, it managed a small number of registrants, health facilities, and training institutions. However, as the health sector has grown, so has the volume of health practitioners and institutions under its purview. While most practitioners are trained within Malawi under MCM-approved curricula, an increasing number are trained abroad and seek registration to practice in Malawi. Some of these practitioners also apply for internship placements.

### 1.2 Policy Rationale

Historically, intern practitioners trained abroad were registered without examinations. However, due to disparities in curricula, limited practical experience, and language barriers, some of these interns faced challenges in adapting to the Malawian healthcare context. To address this, in 2021, MCM introduced pre-internship examinations and eventually a mandatory six-month clinical attachment at a Central Hospital before these examinations. This aligns with similar regulatory practices in other African countries and aims to ensure interns have the necessary skills to provide safe, high-quality care to the public.

This Policy document outlines the goal, objectives, procedures, guidelines, rules and regulations for administering MCM's pre-internship examinations. It aims to foster accountability, transparency, integrity, teamwork, and fairness in the examination process. Ultimately, the Policy seeks to ensure that only competent interns are registered for clinical internships, thereby safeguarding public health and supporting high-quality patient care.

### 1.3 Citation and application of the Pre-Internship Examinations Policy

This document shall be known and referred to as the Medical Council of Malawi Pre-Internship Examinations Policy.

The scope of this Regulation encompasses all individuals and groups involved in the administration and oversight of MCM's pre-internship examinations. This includes the MCM Council, as well as members of its Committees and Subcommittees, employees, the Medical Association of Malawi (MAM), health facilities where practical attachments are conducted, and all registered practitioners who participate in the examination process. Furthermore, this document applies to all prospective intern practitioners seeking to apply for, or sit for, the MCM pre-internship examinations.

The Policy establishes guidelines and standards that ensure accountability, transparency, and fairness in the examination process, promoting the integrity of MCM's mandate to safeguard public health

through rigorous assessment of practitioner competency.

## 2.0 Policy Goal

To ensure the competence and readiness of qualified foreign-trained Medical, Dental, and Allied Health Practitioners by implementing a standardized pre-internship examination and supervised mentored practical attachment programme(s) that aligns with MCM's mandate to protect the public and promote high-quality healthcare in Malawi.

## 3.0 Policy Objectives

**Safeguard Public Health:** Ensure that all qualified intern practitioners meet minimum competency standards before beginning clinical practice, thereby enhancing patient safety and public confidence in healthcare.

**Standardize Competency Assessment:** Establish a fair, transparent, and rigorous process for assessing the skills and knowledge of all intern practitioners, particularly those trained outside Malawi.

**Enhance Knowledge of Malawi's Health Policies and Practice:** Regulate a structured clinical attachment to equip intern practitioners with hands-on experience in the Malawian healthcare setting, bridging any gaps from differing training systems.

**Uphold Professional Ethical and Medico-Legal Standards:** Ensure intern practitioners adhere to the ethical and professional standards expected by the MCM, fostering accountability, integrity, and teamwork within the healthcare profession.

**Improve Quality of Care:** Support the delivery of high-quality care by preparing intern practitioners to manage diverse patient needs effectively within Malawi's healthcare environment.

## 4.0 Policy Outcomes

**Competent and Skilled Intern Practitioners:** Interns entering the workforce will have demonstrated the necessary skills, knowledge, professional and occupational health standards required for safe practice.

**High Standards of Patient Care:** The implementation of pre-internship assessments and clinical attachments will lead to improved patient outcomes and a higher standard of healthcare delivery.

**Public Trust in Healthcare Providers:** The public will have increased confidence in the qualifications and abilities of intern practitioners, knowing they meet MCM's rigorous standards.

**Increased Accountability and Transparency:** The Policy will foster accountability and transparency in the registration process, ensuring that only qualified practitioners advance to internship.

**Alignment with Regional Standards:** By following similar procedures as other health regulatory bodies, MCM will maintain consistency with best practices in health professional regulation on the continent.

## 5.0 Related Policies and Legislations

This Policy support and complement the Constitution of Malawi, the MPD Act of 1987, the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct (CEPC) of 2022, the Public Health Act of 1948 chapter 34:01 of the Laws of Malawi, the Staff Terms Regulations and Conditions of Service (STRACOS), Clinical Guidelines, as well as other relevant policies governing the operations of MCM, and applicable laws and Acts of Malawi.

Section 42 of the MPD Act grants the Council the authority to approve teaching hospitals, health training institutions, undergraduate and postgraduate curricula, and the qualifications of individuals seeking registration as practitioners.

Under Section 11, the MPD Act further authorizes MCM to appoint examiners and moderators, conduct examinations, approve certificates, and prescribe fees related to these examinations and certifications. Additionally, Section 45(e) empowers the Council to conduct examinations, appoint examiners and invigilators, regulate the entry and disqualification of examination candidates, and publish examination results. Therefore, this Policy is informed by the MPD Act.

The CEPC provides essential guidance on the ethical and professional standards expected of practitioners regulated by the MCM. Accordingly, this Policy requires all stakeholders involved in the administration and participation of the examinations to adhere to the principles set forth in the CEPC. Furthermore, the pre-internship examinations should be designed to emphasize ethical-legal issues, ensuring that practitioners are well-informed and proficient in the ethical and legal responsibilities of their profession within Malawi.

## 6.0 Administration of Pre-Internship Examinations

### 6.1 Application requirements and eligibility

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that requirements for admission to sit for Council Certified Examinations and registration for internship are complied with.

#### 6.1.1 Application requirements

- i. Complete MCM application and statutory declaration form (electronic or physical).
- ii. A duly commissioned statutory declaration form by a lawyer, district commissioner (DC) or magistrate.
- iii. Legible certified copies of original Degrees, Diplomas, and Certificates must be attached to the application form. MCM may require legible certified copies of academic transcripts issued by a university.
- iv. MCM may request for verification of the documents of credentials by the Education Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) and other independent local and international credential verifiers. These credential verifying services have to be obtained at the applicant's own cost. *Where MCM determined the need to have this verification,*

*and the candidates fail to meet this requirement they will not be permitted to write the examinations.*

- v. Certified copy of highest secondary school education certificate or its equivalent.
- vi. Sworn translated copies in English must be attached if the documents are in other languages, not in English.
- vii. Two passport size photos.
- viii. Personal curriculum vitae.
- ix. Proof of adequate knowledge of the English Language where the candidate obtained their qualifications in any other language except English. The proof may include ability to communicate fluently in English or may submit certificate of English proficiency testing.
- x. A copy of valid passport or identity document.
- xi. Relevant application fees must be paid.

Note that in addition to the above minimum requirements, MCM may request the applicant to submit additional documents as it sees fit.

### **6.1.2 Eligibility for examinations**

- i. The candidate shall be eligible to undergo mandatory pre-internship practical placement prior to the examinations as determined by Council from time to time. However, MCM shall consider waiving or reducing the placement duration:
  - a. where the candidate has worked in the Malawi setting before, providing the relevant services at a relatively similar level for a period similar to that stipulate by Council in (6.1.2 above) in the specified departments.
  - b. where the candidate presents valid evidence of attachment at a similar practicing environment to Malawi for a period not less than 6 months in similar departments.
- ii. Upon submission of pre-internship clinical placement report or signed logbooks to the MCM, the candidate shall then be eligible to sit for examination. The MCM shall allocate an examination number to the candidate and issue an examinations candidate certificate.

### **6.1.3 Registration for examinations**

- i. The applicant's name shall only be entered on a register of examination candidates upon satisfactory completion of forms, submission of the required documents and meeting the eligibility requirements above.
- ii. All required documents and payments should be submitted at least one month prior to the examinations.

### **6.1.4 Examination fees**

- i. The MCM approved examinations fees shall apply. Therefore, Candidates should refer to the

approved applicable examination fees schedule.

- ii. The fees are adjusted from time to time depending on the prevailing economic circumstances. Therefore, candidates may in circumstances in which there is a fees adjustment be requested to top up their fees balance where applicable.
- iii. The Examination fees shall be proposed by the Training and Education Committee, then presented to the Finance and Establishment Committee (FEC) for independent review. The FEC shall review the proposed fees and present to the Council for approval.
- iv. The examination fees shall be paid into the MCM banking account, whose details shall be provided to the candidates by the MCM Secretariat.
- v. All examination fee payments should be receipted and the candidate is expected to keep a copy of the receipt as the MCM may require it as evidence.

### **6.1.5 Failure to sit for examinations and Re-takes**

- i. If a registered candidate is not able to sit for examinations where fees have already been paid, he/she should inform the Registrar and CEO in writing at least a week prior to the examination date, clearly stating reasons for failure to sit for examinations. Such candidates may be advised to pay for top up fee in the event that fees have been adjusted.
- ii. Examination fees for “late notification” or “no show” shall be forfeited.
- iii. Subject to the MCM approval, where a registered candidate fails to sit for examinations due to medical incapacitation or bereavement of an immediate family member, he/she shall be eligible to re-take the examination without additional fees, provided this is communicated to the Registrar and CEO in writing. Such candidates may be advised to pay for top up fee in the event that fees have been adjusted.
- iv. Registered candidates who have failed an examination attempt shall be eligible for a re-attempt. Relevant fees shall apply.

## **6.2 Setting and moderation of examinations**

### **6.2.1 Components of the examinations**

The MCM examinations shall preferably be conducted in a combination of both written and practical examinations. However, depending on the specific profession and for special circumstances the MCM may choose to administer written examinations only on recommendation of the Examinations Sub-Committee.

#### *(a) Written Examination*

The written examination shall consist of generic formatted questions assessing practical, ethical, and professional practice knowledge. The test shall be set in the English Language and the examination time shall be defined based on standardised question format and load in health professions education. There shall be no negative marking.

#### *(b) Practical Examinations (OSPE)*



The practical examinations shall assess knowledge, application, attitude, practice and skills. The examination will be delivered in a generic Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) structure. The minimum set of practical stations will cover core competency areas of the particular health professional training that facilitates their functionalities as practitioners in Malawi. Some stations shall be done with the examiner present (“manned for oral examinations”), while others may be answered on paper (“unmanned”).

### **1.1.2 Scope of the examinations**

The examinations cover the following areas:

- i. Practice Knowledge, attitude and skills

The examinations shall cover the areas of expected competencies for the specific profession of the intern practitioner. For example, intern medical practitioner areas of competency shall include: internal medicine, paediatrics and child health, obstetrics and gynaecology, surgery, public health, and psychiatry. Other professions like dentistry, and allied health practitioners shall determine the expected areas of examinations in line with their training and expected competency areas.

- ii. Ethics and professionalism

Both the written and practical examinations components shall each be expected to have at least one question on ethics and professionalism.

### **1.1.3 Grading**

The examination scripts shall be marked and graded preferably on the same day but not more than 72 hours after the examinations. The pass mark shall be 50 percent for each component. The marked scripts shall be kept at the MCM. *NB: Scale of scaling OSPE questions.*

### **1.1.4 Examination setting**

#### **1.1.4.1 Marking and Moderation of Examinations**

- i. All Examiners shall mark a section of all the examination scripts to ensure an even distribution of individual influence using a relevant marking scheme. Where the system is digitalised, automated marking shall be adopted subject to the approval of quality control measures by the Council.
- ii. All examiners are required to submit results and records to the Chairperson of the Examination Sub-committee within 72 hours of completion of exams for review and approval.

#### **1.1.4.2 Processing of Examinations**

- i. The Examiners shall be expected to attend the Examination Sub-committee meeting.
- ii. Grades shall be tabulated electronically and presented to the Examination Sub-committee for vetting (borderline grades shall be reviewed for accuracy).
- iii. All documents tabled during the Sub-committees of Examiners Meeting shall be reclaimed from members of the Sub-committee at the end of the Meeting.

- iv. The Chairperson of the Examinations Sub-committee shall present the grades to the Education and Training Committee.
- v. Examiners shall not divulge marks to candidates.
- vi. All examination results are confidential until the Council approves them for release.

## **6.3 Regulations for the conduct of the examinations**

### **1.1.1 Instructions to invigilators and candidates**

- i. Candidates shall acquaint themselves with the instructions on the front page of the answer books/examination papers.
- ii. Candidates shall ensure that they write their examination numbers, titles, and the paper number on the answer books, including the continuation sheets.
- iii. No candidate shall be permitted to enter the examination room after the examination has resumed. However, if a candidate arrives within the first half-hour, the invigilator may use their discretion to extend the time limit for the candidate, provided no other candidate has already left the room.
- iv. No candidate shall be allowed to leave the examination room during the first or last 30 minutes, except in cases of absolute emergency. Outside of these periods, candidates may leave the room and be escorted to designated common toilets. Candidates may leave the examination room and sign upon re-entering.
- v. Misreading the examination timetable shall not be regarded as a 'sufficient cause' for missing an examination.
- vi. Candidates shall be allowed to bring prescribed accessories into the examination.
- vii. Invigilators shall have the authority to expel any candidate who creates a disturbance in the examination room. The invigilator who observes this behaviour must submit a written report about the disturbance, which shall be countersigned by the lead or chief invigilator. Refer to Appendix 1 for the reporting form used by invigilators to document any misconduct during examinations.
- viii. At the end of the examination, upon instructions from the senior invigilator, candidates shall stop writing and assemble their scripts. Candidates must hand in their scripts to the invigilator and sign to confirm submission.
- ix. If a candidate is unable to attend an examination for reasons such as sudden illness or other sufficient cause, they should report the circumstances to the Registrar and CEO at the earliest possible moment before the scheduled start of the examination.
- x. A candidate who fails to present themselves for examinations shall be deemed to have failed that part of the examination.
- xi. These instructions shall remain in force unless amended by the Council upon the recommendations of the Council Examinations Sub-committee through the Training and Education Committee.

### **1.1.2 Examinations integrity**

Academic integrity is the responsibility of all critical stakeholders including Council members, the Training and Education Committee, the relevant Sub-Committees, the secretariat, examiners and candidates. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense as it undermines trust and personal responsibility among candidates and faculty, weakens the credibility of the MCM enterprise, and defrauds those who trust in the integrity of the examinations. Any stakeholder involved in the examinations who commits an act of academic dishonesty will face disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty can take several forms:

#### **6.3.2.1 Cheating**

Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorised materials, information, or study aids in any academic examination.

#### **6.3.2.2 Facilitating Cheating**

Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another candidate to cheat.

Candidates who have been discontinued from an examination on grounds of cheating may reapply to be reconsidered at the MCM's discretion only if:

- i. At least one calendar year has passed since their disqualification, and
- ii. They submit a report reflecting on the professional impact of their behaviour.

#### **6.3.2.3 Leakage of Examinations**

Any act that results in a candidate or candidates gaining access to, or knowledge of, examination questions or any unauthorised materials related to the examinations before the scheduled date and time shall constitute an examination leakage.

#### **Procedure for dealing with leakage of examinations**

- i. Any person suspecting leakage of a test or examination shall immediately report to the Registrar and CEO.
- ii. If there are strong indications that an examination leakage has occurred, the Registrar and CEO, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Examinations sub-committee, shall cancel or withdraw the examination and order a fresh examination to be prepared and administered.
- iii. If it is established that an examination leakage has taken place, appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken against those found responsible.

### **6.4 Appeals**

- i. Only candidates (not their guardians, benefactors or dependants) shall be allowed to lodge an appeal.
- ii. Appeals must be submitted within 14 calendar days (weekends inclusive) from the date the results are released.
- iii. Appeals must be addressed to the Registrar and CEO.



- iv. All examination appeals shall first be assessed by the Appeals Sub-Committee which shall report directly to the Board/Council.
- v. Once ratified by the Board, the decision shall be final.

## 7.0 Implementation Arrangements

### 7.1 Implementation Arrangements

The Policy has identified various players who have important roles in the administration of pre-internship examinations. Their respective roles shall be as follows:

#### 7.1.1 Registrar and Chief Executive Officer

The Registrar and CEO shall provide overall leadership in the implementation of this Policy. Specifically, the Registrar or his/her designate shall:

- a) Serve as a Secretary to the Council's Examinations Sub-Committee and Appeals Sub-Committee;
- b) Publish applications and eligibility requirements for various examinations administered by the MCM;
- c) Present a list of registered candidates for pre-internship examinations to the Council's Examinations Sub-Committee;
- d) Publish the examination dates at least one month in advance;
- e) Publish and issue instructions to examiners, candidates and invigilators regarding the procedures for conducting examinations;
- f) Report cases of academic dishonesty and examination irregularities and recommend disciplinary actions;
- g) Issue examination numbers to registered candidates as part of the examination preparation process;
- h) Appoint invigilators for the examinations;
- i) Allocate invigilators to examination rooms;
- j) Ensure the safekeeping of examinations prior to administration and prevent any examinations leakage;
- k) Receive and consider invigilator's reports on examination irregularities for further processing;
- l) Request written statements from the candidates involved in examination irregularities within 48 hours of receiving the invigilator's report;
- m) Initiate investigations into alleged examination irregularities within one month of receiving a report on the alleged irregularity;
- n) Receive investigation reports on alleged examination irregularities and present them to the Examinations Sub-Committee for consideration;
- o) Collect back and secure all documents presented during the meeting of the Sub-Committee of Examiners;
- p) Receive examination results from the examiners for presentation to the Training and Education Committee for endorsement and to the Council for approval;
- q) Release and publish examination results after Council approval;

- r) In consultation with the Chairperson of the Examinations Sub-Committee, cancel or withdraw an examination and order a fresh examination to be set and administered if there are strong indications of an examination leakage;
- s) Take appropriate disciplinary action against individuals responsible for examination irregularities including examinations leakage;
- t) Receive applications for appeals regarding suspected unfair marking from candidates who sat for the examinations. Appeals deemed to have merit shall be forwarded to the Appeals Sub-Committee; and
- u) Draft the Terms of Reference (TORs) for the various Sub-Committees.

### 7.1.2 Examiners

The Registrar and CEO or his/her designate, in consultation with the Chairperson of the Examinations Sub-Committee, shall appoint qualified examiners (excluding the External Examiner, and examiners who are part of the Examinations Sub-Committee as these shall be appointed by Council) to administer and mark the examinations. The specific roles and responsibilities of the examiners are as follows:

- a) Administer the examinations.
- b) Review and grade examinations scripts.
- c) Attend Examiners' meetings to review examination results and make recommendations to the Examinations Sub-Committee.
- d) Mark every script using the approved marking scheme.
- e) Report any suspected cases of examination leakage to the Registrar and CEO;
- f) Complete, verify, and sign all relevant examination mark sheets.
- g) Maintain confidentiality of examination results and not disclose marks to candidates, as all results are confidential until reviewed by the Council and officially released by the Registrar and CEO.
- h) Submit a report on the examination to the Registrar and CEO within the prescribed deadlines for presentation to the Training and Education Committee by the Chairperson of the Examination Sub-Committee; and
- i) The External Examiner shall be appointed by the Council upon recommendation from the Training and Education Committee. The role of the External Examiner shall be to:
  - i. Attend and contribute to examiners meetings.
  - ii. Independently assess the quality, appropriateness, and fairness of examination papers.
  - iii. Ensure that intern examinations are marked fairly, consistently, and in line with the grading criteria.
  - iv. Identify and address significant differences in marking across different examiners.
  - v. Independently ensure the examinations are conducted fairly, confirming if the examination process is unbiased and transparent.
  - vi. Validate final grades.
  - vii. Submit external examiners reports that includes constructive feedback highlighting strengths, concerns, and areas for improvement. See Appendix 2, the external examiner

reporting format.

### 7.1.3 Invigilators

Invigilators shall be responsible for the supervising candidates during examinations, ensuring that candidates do not engage in examination irregularities. The Registrar and CEO or his/her designate shall appoint the Chief Invigilator and other invigilators to co-ordinate invigilation in each examination room where multiple examinations are taking place. To fulfil this role, invigilators shall:

- a) Ensure that registration lists of registered candidates are available in the examination room for each examination paper;
- b) Collect examination papers and related materials from the Registrar and CEO at least half an hour before the start of all respective examinations;
- c) Supervise registered candidates during the examinations;
- d) Inform candidates about the seriousness and related penalties of academic dishonesty and irregularities in examinations;
- e) Lay out examination papers and ensure their security;
- f) Report any suspected cases of examination leakage to the Registrar and CEO;
- g) Ensure that all examinations start and end on time;
- h) Remain in the examination room throughout the examination;
- i) Confiscate any unauthorized materials including the answer book and examination question paper from candidates involved in examination irregularities;
- j) Expel any candidate from the examination room who violates examination regulations or brings unauthorized materials into the room;
- k) Submit a written statement/report on alleged examination irregularities to the Registrar and CEO;
- l) Certify the total number of scripts received from the candidates who have taken the examination; and
- m) Ensure candidates have signed the examination report sheet upon submission of the script.

### 7.1.4 Council Examinations Sub-Committee

The Examination Sub-Committee shall be chaired by the Chief Examiner who shall be the Chairperson of the Training and Education Committee. The Sub-Committee shall be constituted as follows: The Chairperson, who must be a member of the Training and Education Committee, and not less than four other members appointed from the different specialties and professional experts. The Examinations Sub-Committee Shall Co-opt members with the required expertise for the specific examinations being set. The Council shall appoint members of the Examinations Sub-Committee, based on the recommendation of its Education and Training Committee in collaboration with the Secretariat, after reviewing their Curriculum Vitae. The Examinations Sub-Committee shall be appointed for three consecutive years corresponding to the Council appointment duration, unless otherwise decided by the Council.

The specific roles and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee shall be as follows:

- a) Attend Sub-Committee meetings.
- b) Set examination questions.
- c) Assess the quality of examination papers.
- d) Moderate the examinations in consultation with the External Examiner.
- e) Consider examination results and recommendations presented by the Examiners.
- f) Serve as examiners for examinations that match their professional registration and expertise.
- g) Present the examination results to the Training and Education Committee through their Sub-Committee Chairperson.
- h) In consultation with the Registrar and CEO, cancel or withdraw examinations and order a new examination to be set and administered if there are strong indications of examination leakage.

### **7.1.5 Appeals Sub-Committee**

The Appeals Sub-Committee shall be chaired by a nominee of the Training and Education Committee and shall consist of a total of three members. The Council's legal counsel shall be an ex-officio member of the Appeals Sub-Committee. The Chairperson and other members of the Examinations Sub-Committee shall not be members of the Appeals Sub-Committee. Additionally, all members who participated in the setting and administration of the examinations shall be ineligible to serve on the Appeals Sub-Committee. The Appeals Sub-Committee shall report directly to the Council. The Registrar and CEO shall serve as the Secretary of the Appeals Sub-Committee. The specific roles and responsibilities of the Sub-Committee shall be as follows:

- a) Attend Sub-Committee meetings.
- b) Consider reports on alleged unfair administration and marking of the examinations lodged by candidates who sat for the examinations.
- c) Guide the Registrar and CEO on whether to show the physically marked answer sheets of the candidates disputing the results of the examination.
- d) Prepare a report with findings and clear recommendations for consideration by the Council.

### **7.1.6 The Training and Education Committee**

The specific roles and responsibilities of the Training and Education Committee on Examinations shall be as follows:

- a) Attend the Committee meetings.
- b) Receive results of administered examinations for endorsement.
- c) Present the examination report to the Council for approval;

### **7.1.7 The Council**

The Council shall be responsible for policy direction on issues related to the administration of pre-internship examinations. The specific roles and responsibilities of Council member shall be as follows:

- a) Attend Council meetings.
- b) Appoint the Examinations Sub-Committee and the External Examiner based on the recommendation of the Training and Education Committee. The Examinations Sub-Committee and the External Examiner shall be appointed for three consecutive years. The term of office shall correspond to the duration of the Council appointment unless decided otherwise by the Council.
- c) Approve the pass mark on recommendations by the Examinations Sub-Committee, which shall vary depending on the nature of the course in question.
- d) Approve examination results for release and publication by the Registrar and CEO.
- e) Approve the TORs of the various Sub-Committees.

### **7.1.8 Individual Candidates**

The specific roles and responsibilities of individual candidates interested in sitting for the MCM's examinations shall be as follows:

- a) Acquaint themselves with the application and eligibility requirements for the MCM's examinations, including submission deadlines and examinations dates.
- b) Submit all relevant and complete documents in support of their applications to sit for examinations.
- c) Pay the required examination fees and submit proof of payment to the Registrar and CEO.
- d) Familiarise themselves with the examination timetable and instructions, including policies on academic dishonesty and the penalties for examination irregularities.
- e) Ensure that they write their examination numbers and the paper number on the answer books, including any continuation sheets.
- f) Enter the examination room on time and sign in upon entering and sign out when leaving.
- g) Refrain from bringing unauthorised materials such as books, bags, notes, calculators, log tables and rough papers into the examination room, unless otherwise advised. Any unauthorised materials should be handed over to the invigilator before the examination starts.
- h) Hand in their examination scripts to the invigilators for marking by the examiners.
- i) Report to the Registrar and CEO at the earliest possible moment before the start of the scheduled examination if unable to sit for an examination due to sudden illness or other sufficient cause. Failure to provide a valid and acceptable reason shall be deemed as having failed that part of the examinations.
- j) Submit a written statement to the Registrar and CEO concerning any alleged examination irregularity within 48 hours.
- k) Lodge an appeal within 14 days from the date of the results release if there are suspicions of unfair marking.

### **7.1.9 The Medical Association of Malawi and practical attachment sites**

Legal health professional associations like the Medical Association of Malawi (MAM) and certified practical attachment sites are partners in facilitating orientation, coaching and mentorship for MCM

regulated practitioners: Their roles in the pre- internship examinations process are as follows:

- a) Providing practical attachment services to candidates who wish to write the MCM Pre-Internship Examinations.
- b) Use the MCM-approved curriculum and logbooks to assess candidates' performance in the orientation program before the examinations.
- c) Issuing practical attachment completion letters to confirm candidates' eligibility to sit for the examinations.

## **8.0 Monitoring and Evaluation**

### **8.1 Monitoring**

Monitoring shall ensure that the Policy is effectively implemented and remains aligned with the MCM's objectives. The Registrar and CEO shall have overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of this Policy by;

- a) Collecting data for monitoring and evaluation of processes related to the administration of pre-internship examinations.
- b) Periodically convening meetings to monitor and evaluate the effects of the Policy.
- c) Gathering feedback from various stakeholders to assess their satisfaction with administration of pre-internship examinations.

### **8.2 Evaluation and Review**

Evaluation shall be conducted less frequently than monitoring. The Registrar and CEO shall evaluate the Policy at the end of each year to determine their effectiveness and utilise feedback to improve planning and implementation for the following financial year. Additionally, he/she shall arrange for an evaluation every three years to assess whether, and to what extent, the Policy has succeeded in making the intended impact.

It is the MCM's intention to periodically review the Policy to accommodate changing realities. Therefore, the Policy shall be reviewed every three years if significant changes have been observed that warrant improvement. The MCM reserves the right not to review the Policy if no significant changes are noted after three years.



## 9.0 List of Appendices

### Appendix 1: Invigilators reporting form

<b>Date</b>	Date of the examination here
<b>Venue and address</b>	Write the venue of the examination here
<b>Examination room/venue</b>	Write the specific room where the examination were conducted here
<b>Examinations Title</b>	Name of the examination here (E.g. Practical Pre-Internship Examinations for Foreign Trained Laboratory Practitioners)
<b>Time examination commenced</b>	Document the time the examination started here
<b>Time examination completed</b>	Document the time the examination ended here
<b>Invigilators Names and Titles:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Name....Chief Invigilator</li> <li>2. Name....Invigilator</li> </ol>
<b>Names of Candidates who sat for the examinations</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Write the names of all the candidates to wrote the examinations here</li> </ol>
<b>Report detail</b>	<p>Provide a detailed summary of events during the examination. This should include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Names of people that entered or left the examination room</li> <li>2. Description of any incident that may have occurred (if applicable) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-time the incident occurred-name(s) of people involved in the incident</li> <li>-nature of the incident and the actions taken</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Invigilator declaration</b>	As the invigilator, I confirm that I have followed MCM's Policy for Conducting Examinations, and that all reasonable steps have been taken to ensure the integrity of the examination.
<b>Invigilator signature(s) and date</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Signature of Invigilator 1 and the date signed</li> <li>2. Signature of Invigilator 2 and the date signed</li> <li>3. Signature of Invigilator 3 and the date signed</li> <li>4. Etc.</li> </ol>

### Appendix 2: Outline for the MCM External Examiner's Report

#### 1. Cover Page

- **Institution Name:**
- **Examinations Title:**
- **Examination Period:**
- **External Examiner's Name and Title:**
- **Date of Submission:**

#### 2. Introduction

- **Purpose of the Report:** Briefly outline the examiner's role and objectives.
- **Scope of Evaluation:** Specify the scope of the examinations.
- **Meetings Attended and any activities conducted:** List dates and nature of meetings attended and any activities conducted with respect to the role as an external examiner.

#### 3. Examination Process Review

- **Quality and Fairness of Exam Papers:**
  - Assess the relevance, difficulty, and clarity of questions.

- Confirm alignment with learning outcomes and curriculum standards.
- Highlight any issues identified.

- **Conduct of the Examinations:**

- Evaluate how the examinations were administered.
- Comment on fairness, transparency, and adherence to protocols.

#### 4. Marking and Grading Evaluation

- **Consistency and Fairness:**

- Assess if marking schemes were applied uniformly.
- Identify and address discrepancies across different examiners.
- Comment on the effectiveness of moderation procedures.

- **Quality of Feedback Provided to Candidates:**

- Assess if feedback was constructive, clear, and aligned with grading criteria.

#### 5. Analysis of Final Grades

- **Validation of Grades:**

- Confirm that final grades accurately reflect performance of candidates.
- Ensure no anomalies in grade distribution or unexpected patterns.

- **Comparative Benchmarking:**

- Compare overall standards with similar institutions or national benchmarks if applicable.

#### 6. Strengths Identified

- Highlight positive practices and areas where standards were well-maintained.
- Mention exemplary teaching or assessment methods observed.

#### 7. Areas for Improvement

- **Process Improvements:**

- Suggest enhancements in examinations design, invigilation, or marking.

- **Curriculum Suggestions:**

- Recommend changes to content or assessment methods for better alignment with learning objectives.

- **Training Needs:**

- Identify areas where examiners or the MCM secretariat staff might benefit from additional training.

#### 8. Conclusion

- Provide an overall assessment of the examination process.
- Summarize key observations and recommendations.
- Affirm the validity of the examination results.

#### 9. Appendix (if applicable)

- **Supporting Documents:**

- Copies of marking schemes.
- Detailed data or statistical analysis.



- **Attendance Records:**

- Document examiner participation in meetings.

## **10. Sign-off**

- **External Examiner's Signature and Date:**
- **Contact Information (if follow-up is required):**