EXECUTION OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME FOR MCM REGULATED PRACTITIONERS

The Medical Council of Malawi (MCM) is a semi-subvented parastatal established under the Medical Practitioners and Dentists (MPD) Act number 17 of 1987. MCM exists to protect the public, regulate and guide medical, dental, and allied health practitioners. MCM has a statutory obligation to act on behalf of the professions and in the interest of the public. MCM's responsibilities include regulating practitioners and health facilities, handling healthcare complaints, and regulating training including internship.

Internship ensures that newly qualified practitioners are adequately trained and competent before applying for permanent registration. While MCM is working to expand the cadres that require internship prior to permanent registration, the Council has observed non-adherence to standard operating procedures in the implementation of internship programs.

Therefore, the MCM would like to remind all stakeholders, including internship hosting sites (health facilities), heads of institutions, internship coordinators, heads of departments (HoDs), district medical officers (DMOs), supervisors, and designated persons responsible for the governance of internship, of the required internship standards.

1. **Approved Internship Training Site**
    - Internship shall be undertaken only at an internship site approved to offer internship programs.
    - All approved sites shall be subject to regular regulatory inspections to assess continuous adherence to the requirements.

2. **Eligibility**
    - All relevant intern applicants shall be issued with an internship registration certificate, which is a mandatory requirement before the commencement of internship.
    - Internship training duration shall only be recognized if the intern was registered for the full period of the training.
    - Internship sites shall only accept interns upon submission of evidence of MCM registration as intern practitioners. It is illegal to commence internship without internship registration. The MCM will impose penalties or may not recognise internship training conducted prior to registration.

3. **Assessment of Interns**
    - The head of institution plays an important role in ensuring that internship training requirements are met.
    - The head of institution shall be supported by HoDs, internship coordinators, DMOs, and other senior personnel in supervising the training of interns.
    - The internship coordinator shall ensure that the training of interns is conducted according to the prescribed guidelines.
    - Assessment forms shall be duly completed bearing scores for each rotation and must be signed and stamped by the designated HoDs or other assigned senior personnel at the end of each rotation.
    - Assessment forms must not contain overlapping dates between departments, as an intern cannot be present in two departments simultaneously. Such overlaps raise serious

concerns about the validity of the internship period. Arrangements for remedial training shall be communicated in writing to the MCM, and remedial assessment forms shall be submitted together with the initial assessment forms.

- Transfer of internship from one site to another shall only occur upon clear justification and with written communication to the MCM through the head of institution of the current site. The internship site may provide the transferring intern with duly signed and stamped assessment forms and a cover letter for the completed rotations.
- The internship site shall issue the intern a duly signed and stamped transfer letter from the facility head to facilitate continuation of internship training at the subsequent site.
- The internship site shall be responsible for submitting internship reports to the MCM. All assessment forms shall be accompanied by a duly signed and stamped cover letter on headed paper from the head of institution, internship coordinator, DMO or other assigned senior personnel.
- Submission of internship reports by the interns themselves is strongly discouraged, as this may result in inaccurate or falsified records being submitted to the MCM.
- The MCM will not accept internship reports whose details are suspected to have been tampered with.

4. **Registration after Internship**
   - Upon successful completion of internship, the practitioner may apply for permanent registration with the MCM, having satisfied all requirements.

5. **Employment of Interns**
   - Interns are legally restricted to practicing under supervision in facilities approved to offer internship programs.
   - Employment of interns for part-time, full-time private practice is illegal and may result in disciplinary action against the intern and/or any employer found to be engaging an intern for such practice.

6. **Interns' Records**
   - The internship site shall keep records (logbooks) of interns' rotation progression through various departments. These records must be made available to the MCM upon request.

7. **Internship Rotation Program Duration**

Category of Practitioner	Qualification	Internship Duration	Approved Internship Site
Medical Practitioners	MBBS or its equivalent	18 months	16 (or 18) months at a central hospital
			2 months district management where 16 months are spent at a central hospital
Dentists	Bachelor of Dental Surgery	12 months	Central hospital and other approved ancillary private hospitals with specialized dental services
Professional Officers	Bachelor's Degree	12 months	Central hospital
Technical Officers	Diploma	12 months	Central or district hospital

Technical Assistants	Certificate	12 months	First 9 months at a district hospital
			Last 3 months at a health centre for management



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