



STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE ON VOCATIONAL REGISTRATION

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1 INTRODUCTION

The Medical Professional Standards Committee (MPSC) is established and operates under the Medical and Dental Practitioner Act 2010. The MPSC plays a pivotal role in regulating the professional conduct, standards, and continuing education of medical practitioners to ensure high-quality medical care and the safety of the public. The Act provides the legal framework for the registration, regulation, and discipline of medical and dental practitioners in Fiji. As part of this framework, the **vocational registration** of doctors is a critical process that ensures practitioners are qualified to practice in specialized fields, thereby safeguarding public health and maintaining the integrity of the medical profession.

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) outlines the processes and requirements for the vocational registration of doctors in Fiji. It is designed to provide clear guidance to applicants, the Medical and Dental Secretariat, and other stakeholders involved in the registration process. The SOP ensures that the vocational registration process is transparent, consistent, and aligned with the provisions of the **Medical and Dental Practitioners Act**.

2 PURPOSE

This SOP aims to establish a clear standardized framework for the creation and implementation of vocational registration categories for medical professionals in Fiji.

The SOP aims to:

1. **Ensure Compliance:** Align the vocational registration process with the legal requirements set forth in the **Medical and Dental Practitioners Act**.
2. **Maintain Standards:** Ensure that only qualified and competent medical practitioners are granted vocational registration to practice in specialized fields.
3. **Promote Transparency:** Provide clear and consistent guidelines for applicants and stakeholders involved in the vocational registration process.
4. **Protect Public Health:** Safeguard the health and well-being of the Fijian public by ensuring that specialized medical services are delivered by appropriately qualified practitioners.
5. **Streamline Processes:** Facilitate a smooth and efficient registration process, reducing delays and administrative burdens for both applicants and the Secretariat.

3 SCOPE

This SOP applies to all medical practitioners applying for vocational registration as medical specialists in Fiji as defined under the **Medical and Dental Practitioners Act**. The scope of this SOP includes:

1. **Eligibility Criteria:** Defining the qualifications, experience, and other requirements for vocational registration.
2. **Application Process:** Outlining the steps for applying, required documentation, and fees.
3. **Assessment and Verification:** Describing the process for evaluating applications, including the verification of qualifications and experience.
4. **Approval and Registration:** Detailing the procedures for granting vocational registration and issuing certificates.

This SOP is applicable to all medical practitioners, both local and international, who wish to practice in specialized fields in Fiji.

4 KNOWLEDGE and DEFINITIONS

Applicant – Person applying for specialist registration

MPSC – Medical Professionals Standards Committee

FMC – Fiji Medical Council

Peer Reviewer (PR) – Registered Specialist conducting peer review

Annual Practising License – License that is given annually from the FMC

MMED – Master of Medicine is a qualification provided by the Fiji National University

FNU – The Fiji National University

5 PROCESSES

I. Types of Vocational Registration:

Category 1 - Vocational registration in (general discipline)

This category covers those who completed the recognized post graduate specialty training e.g. MMED (FNU) and qualify for vocational registration in a general discipline with no specific sub-discipline training or interest. For example, those who hold vocational registration in general surgery, internal medicine, pathology, anaesthesia and obstetrics and gynaecology. Officers in this category are allowed to practice as specialist in the general discipline.

Category 2 - Vocational registration in (general discipline) with special interest in (sub-discipline)

This category covers those who completed the recognized post graduate specialty training e.g. MMED (FNU) and qualify for vocational registration in a general discipline and hold special interest in a sub-discipline of a general discipline without completing a recognized advanced training course in the sub-discipline. For example, those who hold a vocational registration in surgery with special interest in orthopaedics or urology or neurosurgery, and those who hold a vocational registration in internal medicine with special interest in cardiology. Officers in this category are allowed to practice as specialist in the sub-discipline and in the general discipline if they choose to. They must work for 2 years after receiving their Category 1 registration primarily in that sub-discipline and provide evidence of this with 2 reports from their supervisors.

Category 3 - Vocational registration in (sub-discipline)

This category covers:

i) Applicants who have completed the recognized post graduate training e.g. MMED (FNU) and qualify for vocational registration in a general discipline, and in addition have completed a recognized advanced training course and qualification in the sub-discipline. For example, a doctorate or fellowship, in the sub-discipline, and has been practicing solely in the sub-discipline in the preceding 24 months.

ii) Officers with Category 2 registration who have completed at least 5 years in category 2 and have practiced primarily in the sub-discipline and now choose to practice and be recognized only in the sub-discipline. For example, those who hold Category 2 vocational registration in internal medicine with special interest in interventional cardiology and have been practicing interventional cardiology primarily for 5 years. Similarly, a holder of Category 2 vocational registration in general surgery with a special interest in paediatric surgery, who has been limiting his practice to paediatric surgery for the last five years.

Officers in this category are only allowed to practice in the sub-discipline and cannot practice in the general discipline at any time.

II. Qualification to apply

As stated in the categories above, officers who have completed the following criteria can apply for any of the three categories of vocational registration:

Category 1

- MMED Graduate or international equivalent
- Has completed 2 years post MMED in the respective specialty
- Has satisfactory peer review reports from 2 peer reviewers appointed by FMC
- Has no ethical or conducts conviction for the last 5 years of practice

Category 2

- Already possess Category 1
- Has a minimum of 2 years work primarily in that subspecialty post registration of Category 1
- Has provided evidence with 2 supervisor reports

Category 3

- Qualifies for Category 1
- Holds a post graduate fellowship or doctoral qualification in the subspecialty or has completed a recognized training course by the MPSC and qualification in the sub discipline
- Practises exclusively in the subspecialty for at least 2 years
- Possess Category 2 and has worked primarily in the sub discipline for 5 years.

III. Application Submission:

The applicant submits a complete application to the Fiji Medical Council (FMC), including all necessary documentation:

- o FMDS Application form
- o Cover Letter
- o Submit 2 peer reviewer reports
- o Confirmation of Employment and Place of Practice or Business License where applicable
- o Current Annual Practising License from local or approved International Medical Council
- o Letter of good standing from Local or approved International Medical Council

- Primary & Advanced Qualification from local or approved international university or college
- Work Permit if non-Fiji Citizen
- Indemnity Cover
- Passport Biodata Page or Valid Photo ID
- Any other supporting documentation requested by the Council

The FMC MPSC uses information from the Australian Medical Council Limited website to check eligible medical schools. Use this [link](#)¹ to access information on the approved medical universities.

The MPSC also reserves the right to reject the application if it determines that the university qualification is not on par with local university standards.

The application must include proof of master's qualification (or international equivalent) and a letter of completion if the 2-year post-qualification duration precedes the graduation date.

IV. Initial Vetting by MPSC Secretariat:

The FMC MPSC Secretariat reviews all submitted documents to verify completion of the required two-year post-qualification duration.

If the applicant does not meet the 2-year post-qualification requirement, they are informed and advised on when they will be eligible to reapply.

V. Peer Reviewer (PR) Selection:

The applicant must also provide an assessment from 2 peer reviewers who meet the following criteria:

- Must be vocationally registered in the specialty that the applicant is wishing to enter.
- For overseas peer reviewers they must be recognized as specialists by the appropriate authority and must have had contact time for at least 6 months with the applicant.
- If the vocation is a new one without the respective peers, the MPSC will decide on the most appropriate speciality and peer reviewers for the applicant.
- They (PR) must have an active Annual Practising License throughout the period of the applicant's review
- The Peer Review period is for at least 6 months during the post master's 2 years period
- The PR must declare any conflicts of interest and the MPSC will determine the appropriateness of the PR.

VI. Fiji Graduates Training Overseas applying for Category 1

For Fiji graduates who have gone overseas for a clinical attachment, they must also provide a PR with the same criteria as above i.e.

¹ <https://www.amc.org.au/check-eligible-medical-school-medical-degrees-and-graduation-years/>

- that PR must hold a valid practicing certificate
- the peer reviewer must be a registered specialist in the field that the doctor being reviewed has graduated from
- the peer reviewer must be with the doctor for a minimum of 6 months (peer review period)
- upon return to Fiji, the applicant is required to complete an additional 6-month supervisory period under a local specialist and may apply for vocational registration after completing the 2 years mandatory post master's period AND having 2 positive peer reviews from both the international peer reviewer and the local peer reviewer.

VII. Overseas Registered specialists

For overseas specialists intending to be registered and practice in Fiji, they must demonstrate their recognition as specialists in their country. The MPSC will decide on the appropriateness of the registering body conferring the registration.

The candidates need to provide evidence of their membership of these colleges and a letter of good standing in addition to their valid practicing certificates.

They will be assigned a local to be their local peer reviewer for a minimum of 4 months.

6 RESPONSIBILITY

Responsibility for this SOP rests with the Registrar of the Fiji Medical Council as approved by the Fiji Medical Council.

7 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Responsibility for monitoring the implementation and compliance to this SOP rests with the MPSC of the Fiji Medical Council.

Responsibility for reviewing this SOP lies with the FMC in collaboration with the MPSC. This SOP ensures the consistent, transparent, and timely processing of vocational registration applications for medical specialists in Fiji.