

THE NATIONAL SPECIALIST REGISTER REGISTRATION PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

The Medical (Amendment) Act 2012 received Royal Assent on the 5th Sept 2012 and the gazette was published on the 20th Sept 2012. With the amendments, all medical practitioners intending to practice as specialists are required to be registered as SPECIALISTS. Under the Amendment to Medical Act 2012, a National Specialist Register (NSR) has been established. Medical Practitioners who wish to practice as Specialist have to register with the NSR. The Malaysian Medical Council (MMC) has tasked the Academy of Medicine of Malaysia (AMM) to maintain the Register for Specialists. The Academy of Medicine of Malaysia shall display the Register for Specialists on its website for public information.

The criteria for entry in the Specialist Register shall be as follows:

Section 14A: Registered Medical Practitioner Practicing As Specialist

- 14A. (1) No person whose name has not been entered into register shall practice as a specialist in that specialty.
- (2) Any person who contravenes subsection (1) shall be subjected to disciplinary jurisdiction of the Council.

Section 14B: A Person Is Entitled To Be Registered As A Specialist

14B. A person is entitled to be registered as a specialist under this Act if

- (a) He has been fully registered under section 14;
- (b) He has attended specialized training in that specialty in a recognized training institution;
- (c) He holds a recognized specialist qualification;
- (d) He has proven to the satisfaction of the MMC that he is fit and is of good character.

Section 14C: Registration as Specialist

The Council may consider the application made under subsection 18(1) and may require the applicant to produce information or documents in support of the application.

- (1) Where the Council decides to approve the application, the Council direct the Registrar to enter the applicant's name in the Register,
- (2) The Council may refuse to register any such person as it thinks fit,
- (3) Where the Council refuses to register the applicant under subsection (3), the Council shall immediately serve a notice of refusal to the applicant, together with reasons thereof."

2. Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications

The **Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications** will be established by MMC to consider all applications for specialist registration. **Specialty Subcommittees (SSCs)** shall also be established for all specialties to assist the Evaluation Committee in their evaluation. All applications for registration shall be reviewed for consideration by the relevant SSCs which will then make their recommendations to the Evaluation Committee.

2.1 **The functions of the Evaluation Committee** for Specialist Medical Qualifications shall include:

2.1.1 To define the specialties in medicine for purpose of maintaining and keeping the NSR.

2.1.2 To define the qualifications, experience and other conditions deemed necessary for registration of Specialists in the NSR.

2.1.3 To register Specialists in NSR upon recommendation by Specialty Subcommittee.

2.1.4 To evaluate and recommend postgraduate medical qualification for purpose of registering specialist.

2.1.5 To revalidate specialists who have fulfilled required criteria in the NSR.

3. Procedures for Specialist Registration

3.1 Medical practitioners who seek to be registered with the NSR shall apply in prescribed form and submit it to the NSR Secretariat.

3.2 The applicant may request to be registered in a main specialty and/or a related subspecialty.

3.3 The application must be accompanied by relevant certified documents and a fee for registration.

3.4 The NSR secretariat shall vet all applications and **only completed applications** shall be forwarded to the respective Specialty Subcommittees (SSC).

3.5 The SSC will evaluate the applications against the stipulated criteria for registration in the specialty.

3.6 Applicants who fulfill the required criteria shall be recommended to the Evaluation Committee to be registered.

3.7 Where the recommended application is approved by the Evaluation Committee, it shall inform the Council to enter the applicant's name in the Specialist Register.

- 3.8 Where an application is refused, the applicant shall be informed of the reasons for refusal. The applicant may submit an appeal to the Malaysian Medical Council through the NSR secretariat within 6 months of the date of rejection.
- 3.9 The Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications shall validate all documents from the sources e.g. medical regulatory authority, university, referees etc and is at liberty to make all the necessary inquiries with the said sources.
- 3.10 The onus is on the applicant to approach the sources to send the relevant certificates and letter of good standing directly to the Council.

4. **General Criteria for Registration.**

- 4.1 An applicant may apply for registration in a main specialty and a related field of practice that is recognized by the Council ([Link-- To List of Specialties](#))
- 4.2 The applicant shall have full registration under section 14 of the Act.
- However, the SSC may evaluate applications under the following circumstances:
- 4.2.1 Application whose full registration is being processed by MMC on condition that their basic qualification is registrable.
- 4.2.2 Applicants (Non-Malaysian) with Temporary Practicing Certificate (TPC)
- 4.3 The applicant shall have post-graduate qualifications recognized by or acceptable to the Council. ([Link-- To List of Recognized Postgraduate Qualifications](#))
- 4.4 The applicant shall prove to the satisfaction of the Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications that he is fit and is of good character.
- 4.5 The applicant shall provide documentary evidence of his specialist training in the country of qualification and his registration with the medical regulatory authority in the country in which specialty training was done.
- 4.6 Training in a basic specialty shall be at least 4 years.
- 4.7 For **registration in the main specialty**, supervised post qualification work experience shall not be less than one (1) year. The applicant shall be provided with a certificate upon satisfactory completion of the assessment.
- 4.7.1 **The post qualification experience that can be considered and the date of commencement above experience are as in Appendix A**

- 4.8 Eligibility for registration in a recognized field of practice (subspecialty) shall include the following:
- (i) Possesses a recognized postgraduate qualification and training in the relevant Basic Specialty. Applicant may or may not be required to be registered in the basic specialty.
 - (ii) Has satisfactorily completed the 3 years “Fellowship” programme of the Ministry of Health in the subspecialty, OR
 - (iii) Has undergone training in the field of practice a recognized field of practice that meets the standards required by the Evaluation Committee. The training programme shall be benchmarked against the local “Fellowship” programme or acceptable International Standards.
- 4.9 **Applicants who have never worked in Malaysia** but deemed to be ‘registration eligible’ **may be required** to undergo an assessment period for a duration to be specified. The period of assessment may be from a **minimum of 3 months and up to one (1) year** in an approved facility.
- 4.10 **For this purpose, those who are** deemed to be **registration eligible, can be given *Conditional Registration as specialist***, restricted to duration not exceeding one (1) year and place of practice. Such applicants shall be required to submit a report on their performance after six (6) months from the relevant facility. Applicants with unsatisfactory report shall have their *Conditional Registration* terminated.
- 4.11 The guideline on the Assessment is as in Appendix B
- 4.12 The SSC may however, in certain situations, exempt the applicant from the above assessment and recommend him for registration.
- 4.13 The applicant shall provide proof of proficiency in Bahasa Malaysia and English.
- 4.14 Where appropriate, the Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications may recommend to the Council such other conditions & restrictions that it deems necessary.

5. **Practitioners with Specialty Qualifications Which Are Not Recognized By the Council**

A practitioner who has a specialty qualification which is not recognized by the Council can be considered for registration to practice as a specialist on a case-by-case basis, according to the experience and standing of the practitioner.

- 5.1 He is regarded to be internationally renowned in that particular specialty or subspecialty; **OR**

- 5.2 The specialty training programme he has undergone meets the standards required by Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications. In evaluating the programme, it shall be benchmarked against the local recognized post-graduate programmes in terms of entry qualifications, duration and standards of training, and examination system. Where there is no local programme, it shall be benchmarked against programmes abroad determined by the Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications. Such programmes are usually those in the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States and Singapore; and
- 5.3 He has met the professional requirements for the relevant specialty as evidenced by portfolios, log books, certificates of completion of training etc; and
- 5.4 He has provided reports from supervisors attesting to the training he has undergone including content, cases managed, procedures performed etc; and
- 5.5 He has at least five (5) years of experience in the specialty after obtaining his specialty qualification, out of which at least four (4) years are in hospitals of adequate size and standing.
- 5.6 Where appropriate, he may be subjected to assessments by the Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications. Assessments may be in the form of interviews and/or formal exit examinations.
- 5.7 There shall be a formal interview panel consisting of members from the relevant Specialty sub-committee. The interview shall be structured to meet its objectives which shall include: **(Link—Interview Guidelines)**
 - (i) Establish if the applicant has attended a postgraduate training programme which is equivalent to the local recognized post-graduate programme;
 - (ii) Has the necessary knowledge, competence and experience to practice as an independent specialist in Malaysia;
 - (iii) Has acceptable referees and recommendations; and
 - (iv) Has attended Continuous Professional Development activities.
- 5.8 Where appropriate, he may be required by the Evaluation Committee for Specialist Medical Qualifications to work initially in an approved practice setting **for a period not exceeding one year.**

6. Documents to be submitted

All applications shall be accompanied by the following documents:

- 6.1 Certified true copies of primary and specialist medical qualifications.
- 6.2 Certified true copy of full registration from medical regulatory authority in which the applicant last practiced.

- 6.3 Letter of good standing from medical regulatory authority in which the applicant last practiced.
- 6.4 Fitness to practice declaration.
- 6.5 Updated curriculum vitae which include:
- (i) Summary of hospitals/institutions worked in,
 - (ii) Summary and evidence of training received in the specialty and competencies attained,
 - (iii) Professional work experience in the specialty (clinical, research and/or academic where available),
 - (iv) Continuing Professional Development activities or updating of skills in the specialty or subspecialty,
- 6.6 Reports from two referees who are professionally acquainted with the applicant for at least five years. Except in unavoidable circumstances, the referees shall not be the applicant's subordinates or relatives.
- 6.7 **Referees should** be NSR Registered with the exception of those from overseas
- 6.8 Certified true copy of passport, where applicable.

POST QUALIFICATION SUPERVISED WORKING EXPERIENCE

1. **Applicants can** only apply for registration on satisfactory completion of at least one (1) of supervised work experience after obtaining post graduate qualification.
2. Each specialty shall draw up the relevant training requirements expected such as the skills, knowledge and range of competencies to be assessed during the period.
3. **Duration** of post qualification working experience shall not be less than one (1) year. Supervisors shall issue a report / certification on satisfactory completion of the supervised working experience. Candidates who failed to fulfill the requirements may have their period extended.
4. **Post qualification experience that can be considered includes:**
 - (a) Level of work/ designation of applicants should be that of a specialist/clinical specialist;
 - (b) Working experience should be supervised;
 - (c) Consideration for those undergoing advanced/subspecialty training (after completion of training in basic specialty).
5. **Date of Commencement of post qualification working experience** shall be on completion of four (4) years postgraduate training as follows:
 - (a) Masters Programme – after completion of MMED Programme.
 - (b) Membership/Fellowship Programmes (MRCP/ MRCPCH/FRCR - on completion of four (4) years of training **of which one (1) year of training must be post qualification** before undergoing the minimum of one (1) year supervised working experience. (Eligibility for NSR registration will be 4+1= 5 years)
 - (c) MRCPCH/FRCS/FRCR **with CCT** – do not require post qualification experience
6. **Approved Facility (hospital/institution)**

The supervised work experience can be undertaken in a public or private facility which fulfills the following criteria:

- (a) The facility must be sufficiently well established, and have all the necessary support facilities to the satisfaction of the SSCs;
- (b) The facility must have sufficient workload and spectrum of cases/ adequate casemix/ to provide for adequate training/exposure of the candidate.
- (c) The supervising consultant must be registered with NSR and of sufficient seniority to supervise and make an objective assessment.
- (d) The facility must have an effective system to identify and act upon concerns on competencies and practice behavior, provision of relevant teaching or continuing professional development, and systems for providing regulatory assurance.

GUIDELINE ON CLINICAL ATTACHMENT IN LOCAL FACILITY

1. Applicants who have never worked in the country as a specialist may be required to undergo an attachment in a local facility from a minimum of 3 months up to a maximum of 1 year.
2. **The main objective** of the attachment:
 - i. To familiarize applicant with the local healthcare system
 - ii. To assess whether the applicant has the level of knowledge and skill consistent with independent practice as a Consultant
3. The attachment can be undertaken in an approved public or private facility. The facility must have sufficient workload, case mix and adequate facilities to enable a proper assessment of the candidate.
4. The supervisor must be of sufficient seniority to oversee and give an appropriate assessment on the applicant
5. The SSC must detail out to the applicant and the supervisor the expectations of the attachment
 - Objective of attachment,
 - Duration - Full time or part-time
 - Expected outcome of the assessment period
6. The facility must provide sufficient clinical privileges to allow for sufficient assessment of the clinical competence of the candidate.