

Professionalizing Forensic Pathology Officers

National Forensic Pathology Service Committee

17 November 2025



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Mortuary Managers



Category of mortuaries	Body storage and management capacity
M1	Up to 250
M2	Up to 500
M3	Up to 1000
M4	Up to 1500
M5	Up to 2000
M6	More than 2000

- In most our provinces we have all these categories of mortuaries
- The bigger mortuaries are linked to Universities for under and post grad training



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Professionalisation of FPO



- Process that started around 2015
- Main aim: FPOs a professional status in terms of qualification and registration
- Impact on the OSD debate: professionalization will require OSD status
- Intensive process was followed for professionalization
- Other issues: Grandfathering of those who are currently in the system



Roadmap to professionalization of Forensic Pathology Officers



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Sub-committee Mandate



- Professionalization of Forensic Pathology Officer (FPO).
- Finalize the scope of practice for the Forensic Pathology Officer (FPO).
- HPCSA position.
- Carry out legal mandate to register FPOs.
- Not involved in issues related to OSD vs non OSD or any labour related matter.



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2015: FP task team



- Draft the regulations relating to FPOs
- Develop the scope of practice FPOs
- Consult with the Universities to initiate the training of Forensic Pathology Officers.
- Develop the criteria on recognition of individuals who are already in the field to be included into the register
- Visit Universities to ensure that training facilities are accredited for training of Forensic Pathology Officers



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2017: FP task team



- FP Task team finalised and submitted the draft of the regulations relating to registration of FPOs and submitted to HPCSA for approval.
- Professional Board for Medical Technology approved the establishment of the register for Forensic Pathology Officers and the regulations relating to registration of Forensic Pathology Officers in December 2017.



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Slide 7



Update from 2018



- The Regulations relating to the registration of Forensic Pathology Officers were promulgated by the Minister of Health on 23 March 2018 for public comment



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Update: 2022



- Register for the registration of Forensic Pathology Officers was opened.
- Regulations were published on the 25th of March-however, implementation was halted.
- These regulations are still in place.



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Scope of practice



The appointed task team developed a draft **Scope of Practice** that outlined the professional acts that a Forensic Pathology Officer be expected to perform as mandated by the Regulations Regarding the Rendering of a Forensic Pathology Service.

The Board advised that a draft Scope of Profession would be required first and that the Scope of Practice will follow on once a training programme is available and accredited.



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Current Status



- The **Professional Board of Medical Technology** of the HPCSA is the **regulatory authority** identified to regulate the profession of Forensic Pathology Officers.
- **Regulations that outline and govern the registration of FPOs are promulgated.**
- **Register for FPO is active.**
- A draft **Scope of Profession had been developed by the Board.**
- **A draft Scope of Practice** was developed that outlined the professional acts that a Forensic Pathology Officer be expected to perform **as mandated by the Regulations Regarding the Rendering of a Forensic Pathology Service.** This is to be enabled through **accredited training programmes** that will capacitate and enable the professional acts for which the FPO is adequately educated, trained and sufficiently experienced.



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HPCSA Registration



Registration Process

- A registration program to register FPOs has been finalized by HPCSA
- Amounts for both Registration and Annual Fees have been determined
 - The registration of R934 and annual fees of R 789 had been approved by the Council and were awaiting gazetting
- HPCSA has opened the Online Registration System- Training will be conducted during the Roadshows

HPCSA will be conducting Provincial Roadshows

- Visits to all 9 provinces in January / February 2026.
- HPCSA to consult with Public Service Coordinating bargaining council, (PSCBC).
- HPCSA to consult with National Department of Health.



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FPOs Training / academic programmes



- NFPSC and Sefako Makgatho Health Sciences University (SMU) have been in discussions to develop four academic programs for Forensic Pathology Officers (FPOs).
- SMU: structured qualification framework for FPOs will range from a 6-month short course to a 4-year degree. This framework aims to align educational efforts with regulatory bodies like the HPCSA and DHET.



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Way Forward



Resolution to advance the professionalisation and registration of FPOs, ensuring a structured and standardized approach to their roles and responsibilities.

1. Registration and Fees

- Registration Process: Grandfathering .? New appointees
- **OSD or OSD will need to be discussed**

2. Training and Collaboration

- Training Programs: Collaboration with Sefako Makgatho University (SMU) is ongoing to develop training programs for FPOs. Two academic programs have been proposed: SMU's curriculum and an earlier framework from Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT) to be revisited. These programs need to be standardized and aligned with the service delivery platform.



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3. Scope of Profession and Scope of Practice

- Scope of Practice: Job roles will be aligned with the defined Scope of Practice for each category of FPOs.
- Professional Pathways: Formal career pathways for FPOs will be established, ensuring alignment with other regulated professions to avoid perceptions of discrimination.

4. Additional Resolutions

- CPD Compliance: Continuing Professional Development (CPD) compliance is essential for all registered professionals. Engagement with HPCSA's Professional Practice Division will be sought for clarity and support regarding CPD requirements.
- Workforce Profiling: Registration and roadshows will help establish a clear profile of the current FPO workforce, aiding in planning for training, career development, and transition strategies for old and new cohort of FPOs.



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Thank you



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