

Professionalizing Forensic Pathology Officers



National Forensic Pathology Service Committee

PHSDSBC Technical Team engagement

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OBJECTIVES OF ADHOC COMMITTEE



- Promote the professional recognition of FPOs within the broader healthcare and legal system.
- To finalise registration with HPCSA
- Finalize the scope of practice and scope of profession for the Forensic Pathology Officer (FPO).
- Develop a plan to integrate professional development and career progression
- Stakeholder engagement and advocacy efforts to promote the professionalization of FPOs within forensic pathology services

Background



- 2015 a Forensic Pathology task team was appointed by the HPCSA Board.
- The task team was comprised of three members of the board Medical Technologist and three stakeholders with Forensic Pathology experience.



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The mandate of the task team was to:



- Draft the regulations relating to Forensic Pathology Officers
- Develop the scope of practice Forensic Pathology Officers
- 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



- The Forensic Pathology Task finalised and submitted the draft of the regulations relating to registration of Forensic Pathology Officers with advice from the Legal Department.
- 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.



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- The Regulations relating to registration of Forensic Pathology Officers and the establishment of the register for Forensic Pathology Officers were submitted to HPCSA council for approval.
- The establishment of the Forensic Pathology register and draft regulations relating to registration of Forensic Pathology Officers were approved by Council in December 2017.
- A recommendation was made to the National Department of Health to publish the Regulations relating to the registration of Forensic Pathology Officers for public comments.



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2018



- The Board of medical technologist appointed two representatives from the **Public Health and Social Development Sectorial Bargaining Council** representatives into the task team.
- 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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The Board after having considered public comments in response to the regulations relating to the registration of Forensic Pathology Officers that the task team should develop the following:

- The requirements for entry in to register by the Forensic Pathology Officers
- Professional designators, registration and annual fees as well as the criteria for registration and grandfathering processes of Forensic Pathology Officers



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2022



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



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- The appointed task team developed a draft **Scope of profession and scope of Practice** that outlined the professional acts that a Forensic Pathology Officer be expected to perform.



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- 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 as the Scope of Practice allows for (except in an emergency), only a professional act
 - (a) for which the FPO is adequately educated, trained and sufficiently experienced; and
 - (b) under proper conditions and in appropriate surroundings.
- The Board developed a draft Scope of Profession .



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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 gazetted
- HPCSA opened the Online Registration System and Training to be conducted during the Roadshows



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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 A structured qualification framework for FPOs will be ranging from a 6-month short course to a 4-year degree. This framework aims to align educational efforts with regulatory bodies.



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Way Forward



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
- Fees: The fee structure for FPOs is adopted from the existing fee structure of medical technologists. This includes both a once-off registration fee and an annual fee.

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.

3. **CPD Compliance:** Continuing Professional Development (CPD) compliance is mandatory for all registered professionals.



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- The professionalization of FPOs will contribute to the overall improvement of forensic pathology services, ensuring that FPOs are equipped with the necessary qualifications, skills, and professional recognition to perform their duties to the highest standards by focusing on defining a formal career structure and pathing, establishing qualifications, and recognizing the role of FPOs as integral to the forensic pathology profession.



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