



MINISTRY OF HEALTH
SINGAPORE

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All registered medical practitioners

MOH CIRCULAR: 19/2011

APPLICATION FOR ENTRY INTO THE REGISTER OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

We would like to thank you for your valuable feedback during the several rounds of public consultation on the Register of Family Physicians (FPs), with the most recent one being conducted this month. The Register will be formally established on 1 July 2011. The Register serves to recognise medical practitioners with relevant qualifications and set the standards of practice for Family Medicine (FM). It is our aspiration that this will result in better patient care in the community.

2. Although entry into the Register is purely on a voluntary basis, we have adopted an inclusive approach to facilitate the entry of all interested General Practitioners (GPs) into the Register. We have also taken your feedback into consideration and refined the entry requirements of the Register.

3. There are two routes of entry (Please refer **to Annex A** for more details):

- (i) **“Degree or Diploma Route”** - This route is for doctors with relevant postgraduate academic qualifications and experience that are specific to Family Medicine (FM). In addition, GPs who have Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) and have been in active FM practice can qualify through this route.
- (ii) **“Practice Route”** - This route is for experienced GPs with 5 or more years of relevant FM practice experience but without the relevant postgraduate academic qualifications. Depending on their years of experience, GPs need to complete between 2 to 4 Accredited Modular Courses (AMCs) conducted by the College of Family Physicians (CFPS)¹. However, entry by the “Practice Route” will end by 31 Dec 2013, after which only entry via the degree or diploma route will be accepted.

4. All eligible doctors can apply from **1 July 2011** but the names of doctors accredited as FPs will only be listed in the Register from **1 January 2012**. Those who wish to enter the Register by the “Practice route” will need to complete all training requirements and practice experience by **31 Dec 2013**.

¹ The Accredited Modular Courses (AMC) are adapted from the Family Medicine Modular Course designed for Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine and are specifically tailored to suit GPs' needs and schedules. For example, each module typically consists of 4 workshops covered over 4 Saturday afternoons.

5. Doctors who are not registered as a FP, will not be allowed to use the title of a "Family Physician" after **1 July 2012**. However, there is no restriction on the practice of doctors as GPs.

HOW TO APPLY

6. Doctors may apply for entry into the Register after 1 July 2011 through the following ways:

i) For **accreditation** as a FP by the Family Physicians Accreditation Board (FPAB), doctors can apply online at http://www.hpp.moh.gov.sg/HPP/FPAB_Home.html or download a hardcopy of the application form on the same website. **AND**

ii) For **registration** as a FP with the Singapore Medical Council (SMC), doctors can apply online at <http://www.smc.gov.sg/html/1150880211414.html> or download a hardcopy of the application form on the same website.

7. Although FPs can only be registered with SMC after being accredited by FPAB, doctors can submit their applications concurrently.

FOR CLARIFICATIONS

8. If you require any clarifications regarding this circular, please email us at fpab_enquiries@smc.gov.sg.

9. I look forward to your support of the Register of FPs. Thank you.

Yours sincerely



A/PROF CHEW SUOK KAI
Ag DIRECTOR OF MEDICAL SERVICES
MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Cc:

President, Singapore Medical Council
Chairman, Family Medicine Residency Advisory Committee
President, College of Family Physicians Singapore
President, Singapore Medical Association
CEOs, Singhealth and NHG Polyclinics

ENTRY CRITERIA FOR THE REGISTER OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

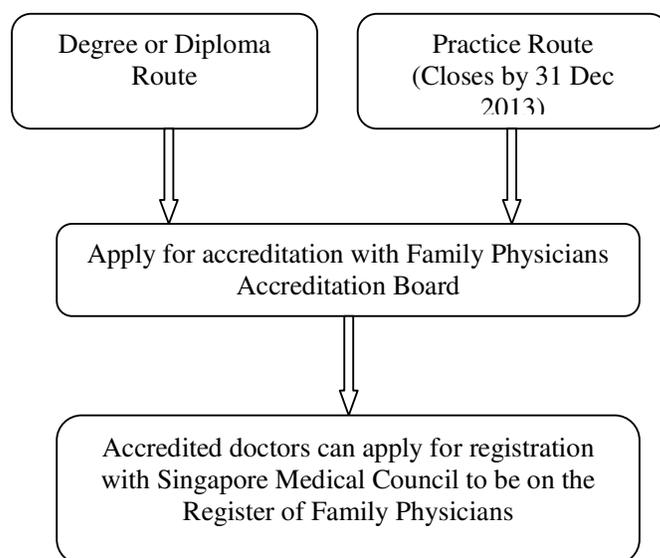
I. Routes of entry

1 There will be two routes of entry into the Register of Family Physicians (FPs) (Figure 1):

- (i) **“Degree or Diploma Route”**. This route is for doctors with relevant postgraduate academic qualifications and experience that are specific to Family Medicine (FM). The postgraduate academic qualifications include Graduate Diploma in Family Medicine (GDFM), Master of Medicine (FM) or other equivalent degrees/ diplomas. These qualifications must be matched with 3 years of post-registration (post-housemanship) relevant clinical experience. In addition, GPs who have Master of Medicine (Internal Medicine) and have been in active FM practice can qualify through this route.
- (ii) **“Practice Route”**. This route is for experienced GPs with 5 or more years of relevant FM practice² experience but without relevant postgraduate academic qualifications. GPs who wish to enter the Register of FPs via the practice route are required to complete between 2 to 4 Accredited Modular Courses (AMCs) (see details in section (II) below). Selected local or foreign graduate diplomas that are relevant to Family Medicine can also be recognised as AMC-equivalent.

2 Entry by the “Practice Route” will end by **31 Dec 2013**, after which only entry via the degree or diploma route will be accepted.

Figure 1: Routes of Entry to the Register of Family Physicians for a Doctor via either the (i) Degree or Diploma Route or (ii) Practice Route



² Family Medicine (FM) practice refers to practice which provides comprehensive, continuing, preventive and personalised primary health care for the individual and family in an outpatient community setting. Such practice settings generally refer to polyclinics, private GP clinics, continuity care clinics and homecare services. Up to 6 months of community hospital experience can be considered for the purpose of entry to the Register of FPs.

II. Accredited Modular Course (AMC) Requirement

3 The College of Family Physicians (CFPS) has been appointed as the AMC provider. AMCs are adapted from the Family Medicine Modular Course designed for GDFM and are tailored to suit GPs' needs and schedules. For example, each module typically consists of 4 workshops covered over 4 Saturday afternoons. Please refer to the website at <http://www.cfps.org.sg> for more information on AMCs.

4 For experienced GPs who wish to enter the Register of FPs via the practice route, they are required to complete up to 4 AMCs. The minimum number of AMC that needs to be completed will be pro-rated according to years of relevant FM practice. For example:

- a. A GP with 5 and up to 10 years of FM practice will need to complete 4 AMC modules;
- b. A GP with 10 and up to 20 years of FM practice will need to complete 3 AMC modules;
- c. A GP with 20 years or more of FM practice will need to complete 2 AMC modules.

III. Diploma recognised as AMC-equivalent

5 Selected local graduate diplomas³ can be recognised as AMC-equivalent. Some examples of these diplomas include: Graduate Diploma in Family Practice Dermatology, Graduate Diploma in Geriatric Medicine, Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy, Graduate Diploma in Mental Health and Graduate Diploma in Occupational Medicine. Foreign graduate diplomas that are relevant to FM can also be considered and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by SMC. An example would be Diploma in Child Health from UK Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons.

IV. Currency of Practice

6 The medical practitioner should be in FM practice either full-time or part-time **(minimum 30 hours per month for at least one of the years during the preceding 3 years)** at the time of application, regardless of the route the practitioner undertakes. Otherwise, the medical practitioner can still be accredited once he fulfills a minimum 30 hours of FM practice per month over the next 1 year.

7 Doctors who are registered as FPs will be required to maintain currency of FM practice for a minimum average of 30 hours per month over 2 years and complete their Continuing Medical Education (CME) requirements in order for their Practising Certificate (PC) to be renewed.

³ For the purpose of entry via the practice route, each local diploma can be considered as one to two AMC-equivalent modules depending on the diploma's course curriculum, up to a maximum of 4 diplomas,

Table 1: Examples of Recognised Academic Qualifications for Entry to the Register of Family Physicians by the Degree / Diploma route

Degree / Diploma route
GDFM
M Med(FM)
MCGP(S)
MRCGP(UK)
FRACGP(Australia)
ABCFP/DABFP(US)
Other qualifications can be considered on a case-by-case basis by FPAB i.e. M Med (Internal Med) for doctors who have been actively practising FM

Table 2: Examples of Recognised Accredited Modular Course Equivalent for Entry to the Register of Family Physicians by the Practice route

Practice route
AMC (pro-rated by years of experience)
<u>The following can be considered as ONE to TWO AMC-equivalents (subject to FPAB review):</u>
Graduate Diploma in Geriatric Medicine
Graduate Diploma in Mental Health
Graduate Diploma in Family Practice Dermatology
Graduate Diploma in Psychotherapy
Graduate Diploma in Occupational Medicine
Overseas qualifications relevant to FM practice will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis by FPAB. For purpose of entry to the Register of FPs by practice route and be recognised as AMC equivalent, the following are considered relevant to FM practice: O&G, paediatrics, mental health, palliative care, occupational medicine, dermatology and public health. Examples include : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diploma in Child Health, Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons (UK) • Diploma in Dermatology, John Hopkins University (US) • Diploma in Psychological Medicine, Royal College of Physicians & Surgeons (Ireland)