

# **GUIDELINES TO FACILITATE THE APPLICATION OF FOREIGN QUALIFIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TO SERVE IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR: JUNE 2005**

## **ELECTRONIC MESSAGE**

Dear Applicant

Thank you for expressing your keen interest to work in the South African Public Health Sector and it is trusted that, should you be successful in your endeavour your stay will be a rewarding and enriching experience.

In order to proceed with your application you will need to complete the following documents (attached for your convenience). Please note: always keep notes on what you have done, whom you have spoken to and keep copies of all documents and forms. We recommend you give the whole process 1-2 months from first written enquiry.

**Step 1:** Please communicate directly to the Foreign Workforce Management Program (FWMP) of the National Department of Health, electronically at [smiths@health.gov.za](mailto:smiths@health.gov.za) or [pienal@health.gov.za](mailto:pienal@health.gov.za) or by fax at +27(0)12-3120535 or +27(0)12-3120635. You will have to present yourself in detail in a letter of introduction and will later have to complete an application form (attached hereto). You may courier or post or fax or electronically submit your presentation with copies of the relevant documents listed (Courier address in step 4 below). NOTES: Letter of introduction (covering letter) should INCLUDE who you are, what area you are applying for i.e. where you want to work, some background on your employment history, experience, etc. Please indicate if your spouse is a S.A. citizen. If you have children joining you please include their birth certificates to determine availability of schools in the allocation process.

Step2: The FWMP will consider your employability in terms of current policy and issue a letter of support towards your candidature. This initial letter will allow the relevant Professions Health Council (i.e. Medical-, Nursing- or Pharmacy Council) to accept your application to sit for prescribed examinations (where applicable). Without this initial letter, either the councils or prospective employers may not consider your candidature. Should you have a written job offer/invitation already at this stage, you will have to declare it to the FWMP to endorse.

Step 3: Upon receiving an endorsement letter from the FWMP, you should proceed to apply to the relevant Professional Health Council to initiate the registration process. If you are a medical practitioner, this is a good time to proceed with the prescribed application to the ECFMG in America for verification of your credentials (you do not have to await the outcome, but you need to submit proof that you have applied. If you are a professional nurse, you may now initiate the required evaluation process to SAQA. For all professional categories, there are various certifications required from the home country, please ask for clear guidelines from the relevant council.

Verification of credentials by ECFMG is to be obtained by the applicant at own cost. This is for Medical Doctors only. You can, however, start work in SA without the Council having received the verification, but the HPCSA will need proof that you have applied for it. Applicants who can prove in writing to have applied to the ECFMG will be allowed a time waiver, not exceeding six months for the ECFMG to forward verification directly to Council.

Step 4: Please duly complete the application forms supplied by the relevant Council. For medical practitioners, the HPCSA forms for registration in the category Medical Practitioner: Public Service is attached:

- In the case of medical doctors/specialists, please note that the copy of your degree certificate and passport will only be accepted if certified by an attorney in his/her capacity as a notary public and bearing the official STAMP. Copies certified by a Commissioner of Oaths only **will not be accepted.**
- Please make sure that all your documents are duly endorsed by a Commissioner of Oaths where so required.
- Please make sure a registered translator seals/stamps all your personal and educational translated documentation (to English).

As and when you deal with/communicate directly with Councils, it is recommended that all your communication with Council be via Courier services or registered mail, in order to have record thereof. You may also courier directly to the FWMP to deliver by hand on your behalf. Add a cover note with clear instructions.

#### DOCUMENTS TO COMPLETE (when so required)

1. Application for employment in the Public Health Sector
2. Application for endorsement by the Foreign Workforce Management Programme (FWMP) of the National Department of Health - List
3. Application for registration with the Health Professions Council of SA: Form 12
4. Application for verification of credentials: Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG)
5. Application for a work permit: Temporary Residence Application: Form BI-1738

Medical Practitioners: Having qualified at an institution and obtained a primary foreign qualification of which the education and training-standard is approved by the HPCSA as being equivalent to the education and training standard of approved South African educational institutions (mostly identified developed countries), you may qualify for registration as a medical practitioner without having to sit for an exam, i.e. direct registration in the 'non exam' route. This route is purely by discretion of the Council and the FWMP will have to support and endorse each application on a case-by-case basis.

*(Note that you should never send your original documents but only the certified (or notary certified where applicable) copies, and make sure you have COPIES of EVERYTHING!)*

These should be couriered direct to the Council or the FWMP at:

Mrs T Nkosi / Mr Danie Kotze  
for The Registrar  
Health Professions Council of SA  
P.O. Box 205  
0001, PRETORIA

Mr S-A Smith  
FWMP – National Health  
Room 1125, Fedlife Building  
corner/o Church and Prinsloo  
Streets, PRETORIA, 0002

Mark your parcel “URGENT”. Do not rely on the post – check that documents have been received.

Step 5: Upon passing the prescribed examinations (where so required) conducted by the relevant Council, you will receive formal communication to that effect. The notification will have to be a duly signed document. At this stage, applicants may not explore employment opportunities by applying to prospective employers (unless directly recruited to a rural health institution under the auspices of RUDASA or by an Employer that liaised with the FWMP in writing). It is the primary aim of recruiting from abroad to staff traditionally rural areas and the FWMP is therefore assigned to allocate successful applicants to identified positions in the Public Service. A copy of the letter from the Council indicating your success in the examinations should now be forwarded to the FWMP to initiate the allocation process or to explore employment opportunities on your behalf.

Step 6: Following step 5, the FWMP will issue a letter of endorsement towards employment, support towards issuance of your registration certificate and a FWMP-certificate to Home Affairs in support of your work permit in SA. Only upon receiving a letter of allocation/endorsement from the FWMP, i.e. a letter allocating you to a specific institution in a specific Province, you should proceed to apply to Home Affairs for a work permit in terms of section 19 of the Immigration Act. The letter from the FWMP will serve to support your application, to be submitted at the SA Embassy in your home country. Attached to the letter will be a FWMP-certificate. This document will serve as the Health Department's full support and certification of employment.

The staff at the Embassy is well informed of the crisis within Health in South Africa and will gladly assist you. Normally the applications for doctors, nurses and pharmacists are treated as a priority and the FWMP reported swift issuance of permits to fast track the departure to this country.

Notes:

You may apply for an initial three-year work permit. This will give you temporary residency status in South Africa for three years and allow you to take up employment. It is recommended that prospective Employers and

Employees agree on three years as an initial period of engagement or allow for maximum first entry.

Regarding your police clearance certificate. This can usually be obtained from your local police station and does take a little time – so please apply in good time (remember: it is for all countries where you previously resided). If you does not have it by the time you apply following step 6, you will have to submit proof to the Embassy that you have applied for it and you can proceed with your work permit application. You will have to submit any outstanding document within a certain period of time, normally not exceeding three months. If you reside in the UK Gerhard Meder or a Mr Menisi in the London Embassy are your contact people. They can be reached at tel no: 0944-207-925-8902 or fax number 0944-207-930-1510/3/9. The Embassy staff will most certainly support you in guiding you through the process. Contact them first to get the right forms as it can be confusing – the forms are generic.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

This is a working document and will be updated from time to time. Its primary purpose is to support you throughout the processes and to guide you step by step. Remember not to depart to South Africa before securing an initial letter of endorsement from the FWMP. With this initial letter you can duly inform the SA Embassy abroad of your intentions to seek employment in SA to endorse your visitors permit with a suitable note. Many applicants, especially from developing countries, abuse the visitors' permit-allowance and depart to SA primarily to seek employment. Play open cards with the Embassy staff and rather seek recognition from the FWMP prior to departing for SA.

Should you be successful in your endeavour, you are wished a happy and prosperous career opportunity in South Africa.

Yours sincerely