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Guideline for Accreditation of Training Courses

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Table of Contents

1	List of Abbreviations and Acronyms	3
2	Introduction	3
2.1	Legal Basis	3
2.2	Purpose.....	3
2.3	Scope	4
3	Eligibility Criteria	4
4	Process of Accreditation.....	4
4.1	Pre-Application Consultation	4
4.2	Application for Accreditation	5
4.3	Assessment of Application	5
4.4	Accreditation	6
4.5	Withdrawal or Suspension of Accreditation	7
4.6	Appeal of Accreditation Status	7
5	Requirements for Accreditation	8
5.1	Physical Resources	8
5.2	Human Resources	8
5.3	Entrance Criteria for Students.....	9
5.4	Mode of Programme Delivery	10
5.5	Governance of Training Courses	10
6	Final Provisions.....	10
7	Attachments.....	11
8	References.....	11
9	Document History	11

1 LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CPD	Continuing Professional Development
ESC	Examination and Standards Committee
GCE	General Certificate Examination
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
PCG	Pharmacy Council of The Gambia
UTG	University of The Gambia
WAHO	West African Health Organization
WASCE	West African School Certificate Examination
WASSC	West African Senior School Certificate

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Legal Basis

- 2.1.1. The regulation of the practice of pharmacy in The Gambia is governed by the provisions and requirements of the Pharmacy Council Act, 2014, by which the Pharmacy Council of The Gambia (PCG) was established as the regulatory body for the practice of pharmacy.
- 2.1.2. Part II, Section 6 (a), (b) and (j) of the Act requires that the Pharmacy Council
- determines the standard of knowledge and skill to be attained by persons seeking to become members of the pharmacy profession;
 - evaluates and monitors the standards of courses and training for registered persons, and
 - establishes standards and provide guidelines for continuing professional development and training of registered pharmaceutical personnel.

2.2 Purpose

- 2.2.1. This guideline sets out the requirements and procedures for the accreditation of training courses for students of pharmacy to become pharmacists or pharmacy technicians in The Gambia and of training courses provided to pharmaceutical personnel for their Continuing Professional Development (CPD).
- 2.2.2. The purpose of accreditation is to assure the quality of the education and training provided and to promote further development in the quality of pharmacy degree, certificate or diploma programmes, or renewal of registration. The accreditation of training programmes is intended to safeguard the public by ensuring the graduate students achieve and pharmaceutical personnel maintain the required competence to practice pharmacy

and contribute to the achievement of enhanced health outcomes for consumers.

- 2.2.3. The focus of the accreditation process is therefore on both the training programmes and the training providers.

2.3 Scope

- 2.3.1. This guideline applies to pharmacy courses provided by institutions of higher learning (e.g. universities or recognised equivalent) awarding a degree, diploma or certificate in pharmacy (e.g. BPharm or PharmD) and to pharmacy courses provided by institutions of professional education (e.g. colleges or recognised equivalent) awarding a degree, diploma or certificate as Pharmacy Technician or Pharmacy Assistant ("institution").
- 2.3.2. It applies also to training courses provided by institutions, organisations or otherwise recognised providers offering on-going training courses at least once a year for Continuing Professional Development of pharmaceutical personnel.

3 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 3.1. An institution providing pharmaceutical training courses in The Gambia must obtain institutional accreditation by the National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority (NAQAA) or evidently pursuing such accreditation except for training providers offering short term CPD programmes only.
- 3.2. An institution must be regularly incorporated, legally empowered, and authorised to award such a degree in accordance with Gambian laws and regulations.
- 3.3. The training programme must be consistent with the aims and objectives of the institution, as applicable.

4 PROCESS OF ACCREDITATION

4.1 Pre-Application Consultation

- 4.1.1. Prior to the formal submission of an application the institution or training provider shall undergo an informal consultation by a representative of the PCG to ensure training courses and events are suitable.
- 4.1.2. The representative of PCG will inquire about the proposed structure of the training, how it will be delivered and the groups of expected attendees; he/she will inform the applicant about the requirements for course accreditation-and the self-assessment report that must be submitted with the application for accreditation.
- 4.1.3. The consultation should occur sufficiently in advance of the submission of the application for accreditation to ensure that the

institution or training provider have adequate time to comply with the requirements of the PCG.

4.2 Application for Accreditation

- 4.2.1. The institution or training provider applying for accreditation of training courses shall complete the application form for accreditation (Attachment 01) available from the PCG website: www.gpc.gm.
- 4.2.2. The applicant shall submit the completed application form and supporting documents to the Registrar of the Pharmacy Council of The Gambia at 112, Kairaba Avenue, P.O.Box 4527 Bakau, Fajara, KMC, The Gambia.
- 4.2.3. The PCG charges non-refundable accreditation fees as determined by the Council. The fee is due with the application for accreditation. The fees are applicable to all private and public institutions.
- 4.2.4. The following information and documents shall be provided with the application:
 - The curricular of the training programme describing the training courses in detail including levels of courses;
 - A complete list of the lecturers including information about their qualifications, what posts they hold indicating full-time and part-time staff, where they are based and what lecturing/teaching/speaking experience they have in relation to the topic to be presented;
 - A self-assessment report and required documentation (Attachment 02); and
 - Evidence of payment of the non-refundable accreditation fee.
 - For new application, please refer to *PCG-GL-402_ Questionnaire for New Programme Application* for the format of application

4.3 Assessment of Application

- 4.3.1. Receipt of the application will be acknowledged within ten days of submission.
- 4.3.2. The Examination and Standards Committee (ESC) of the PCG will evaluate the materials and review the structure of the programme.
- 4.3.3. The PCG may visit the facility to assess the training courses.
- 4.3.4. The PCG may request for additional documents, as applicable. Applications remain live for up to six months from submission.
- 4.3.5. Once all issues have been resolved and the complete application was reviewed by the ESC, the decision on the outcome will be communicated by PCG to the applicant within three (3) months after receipt of the submission to allow for proper scrutiny.

- 4.3.6. A programme that has been determined to be partially compliant with a requirement may be given the status of Provisional Accreditation for two years. During this time the PCG will monitor the progress to full compliance. Six weeks before the end of the provisional accreditation the institution or training provider shall submit a written report summarising the progress and achievements made by the programme and provide evidence of compliance with the requirements.
- 4.3.7. Denial of accreditation will occur when there is evidence that the programme applying for accreditation exhibits substantial deficiencies that prevent compliance with the PCG requirements. Programmes denied accreditation may re-apply for accreditation after a minimum period of twelve (12) months from the date of denial by PCG.
- 4.3.8. Programmes granted full accreditation must continue to comply with the accreditation requirements.

4.4 Accreditation

- 4.5.1. Once accredited, the institution or training provider must submit to a regular monitoring process involving data returns, assessment visits and payment of a non-refundable fee as determined by the PCG.
- 4.5.2. The institution or training provider shall report to the Council details of any significant changes in ownership, management, premises or training programme within one calendar year.
- 4.5.3. The monitoring process requires the submission of the following information and documents every three (3) years following the initial-accreditation:
- Completed Data Return form (Attachment 03);
 - Evidence of payment of the non-refundable reaccreditation fee as determined by PCG.
 - Details of courses offered in the past three years, including numbers enrolled on each course, numbers completing and pass rates in any examinations taken;
 - Completed feedback forms from participants; and
 - An outline of planned developments.
- 4.5.4. PCG may request for further information or documents or perform an assessment visit at any time.
- 4.5.5. The training programme will be evaluated by the ESC and the outcome of a monitoring process communicated by the PCG to the institution or training provider in due time.

4.5 Withdrawal or Suspension of Accreditation

4.6.1. Reasons for withdrawal or suspension of accreditation can be for example:

- Findings of non-compliance during an assessment visit conducted by PCG;
- Substantiated complaints;
- Failure to meet the requirements for continuing accreditation including non-payment of the applicable fees; or
- Any other reason the PCG deems to be serious enough to suspend or withdraw the accreditation.

4.6.2. Withdrawal or suspension of accreditation status by PCG will occur when there is documented evidence that an accredited programme exhibits on-going deficiencies in achieving or maintaining compliance with the requirements and that the deficiencies are sufficiently serious to raise concerns regarding overall programmatic quality.

4.6.3. If the accreditation is suspended, PCG will carry out appropriate investigations and set a deadline until when the requirements are to be met. If the institution or training provider fails to cooperate satisfactorily the accreditation will be withdrawn.

4.6.4. If the institution or training provider decides to withdraw voluntarily from accreditation, the PCG shall receive at least one month's notice.

4.6 Appeal of Accreditation Status

4.7.1. An institution or training provider that believes a decision was unwarranted may appeal to the PCG.

4.7.2. Reasons for appeal may be based on the following decisions by the ESC:

- provisional accreditation;
- denial of accreditation, or
- suspension or withdrawal of accreditation status.

4.7.3. The appealing institution or training provider must submit a statement in writing setting out the grounds for the appeal and pay a non-refundable fee for appeal as determined by the PCG.

4.7.4. The statement must be delivered to the Registrar within 30 days of receipt of the notification.

4.7.5. The Registrar shall forward the appeal to the ESC without delay for investigation based on the appeal.

4.7.6. The ESC shall, within 30 days of receiving the appeal, furnish the Registrar with the reasons for the decision.

- 4.7.7. The Registrar of PCG shall, in writing and within 10 days of the ESC's decision inform the person who lodged the appeal of this decision and the reasons.

5 REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCREDITATION

Note: Not all of the following requirements apply to individual training providers

5.1 Physical Resources

- 5.1.1. The institution or training provider uses teaching facilities either within its own premises or in external premises which have been selected for the particular timetable and requirements of individual programmes.
- 5.1.2. There are sufficient lecture rooms available for the lecturers and students and academic and administrative offices.
- 5.1.3. There must be laboratories with facilities for effective learning as adequate for the curricular (e.g. chemistry laboratory, dispensing laboratory, etc.).
- 5.1.4. Students must have access to a library with seating capacity and with appropriate collections of books, newspapers and periodicals for reference in all areas related to pharmacy and access to IT facilities including access to the Internet.

5.2 Human Resources

- 5.2.1. The institution should have professionally qualified lecturers. Ideally, the lecturer-student ratio should be 1/20 for institutions of higher learning and 1/10 for institutions of professional education.
- 5.2.2. Institutions of higher learning must have
- A Head of Department should be registered with PCG as Superintendent Pharmacist or holding a post-graduate degree in Pharmacy (e.g. MSc degree or equivalent) or at minimum BSc/BPharm or PharmD with five (5) years pharmacy practice;
 - Lecturers having a degree as BSc/BPharm or PharmD and at least three (3) years pharmacy practice in an area related to the training provided. These are in addition to any other standards the training institution may impose.
- 5.2.3. Institutions of professional education must have
- A Head of Department having a degree as BSc/BPharm or PharmD and at least five (5) years pharmacy practice;
 - Lecturers holding a degree in BSc/ BPharm or PharmD. This is in addition to any other standards the training institution or university may impose.

- 5.2.4. CPD training course providers must have a degree and/or professional qualification as follows:
- for Pharmacists: Post-graduate degree in the area provided or a professional degree and at least 3 years practice in the area related to the training provided;
 - for Pharmacy Technicians/Nurse Dispenser: BSc/BPharm or PharmD or equivalent professional degree in the area provided;
- 5.2.5. The institution shall have appropriate policies and effective procedures/policies for the recruitment, retention and continuing professional development of suitably qualified and experienced lecturers, as applicable, and for the verification of their experience and qualifications claimed before employment.
- 5.2.6. There shall be an effective system in place for regularly reviewing the performance of lecturers and clear channels of communication between the institution or training provider management and those working at the delivery venue/s, as applicable.
- 5.2.7. Any external training providers are properly selected, briefed, monitored and evaluated by the training institution.

5.3 Entrance Criteria for Students

Entry requirements for each course shall be set at an appropriate level and clearly stated in the course descriptions and at the minimum, in conformity with standards agreed by NAQAA or national standards authority

- 5.3.1. seen by prospective students/attendants.
- 5.3.2. The minimum admission requirement for higher learning institutions is a West African Senior School Certificate (WASSC) or General Certificate Examination (GCE) Advance (A) Level.
- 5.3.3. The minimum admission requirements for institutions of professional education are five (5) General Certificate Examination (GCE) Ordinary (O) Level or West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) credits preferably in the following subjects:
- English Language (core)
 - Mathematics (core)
 - Biology (elective)
 - Chemistry (elective)
 - Physics or Science (elective).
- 5.3.4. The admission requirements for mature students enrolment at institutions of professional education are:
- Age \geq 25yrs;
 - At least five (5) years working experience in an institution recognised by PCG;
 - Three credits in English, Mathematics and a science;

- A certificate of character; and
- A good work record or recommendation from employer.

5.3.5. There should be a formal application process ensuring that students/attendants meet the entry requirements and that any claimed qualifications are verified, as applicable.

5.4 Mode of Programme Delivery

5.4.1. The information on the courses shall be made available and be comprehensive according to the students/attendants level, accurate and up-to-date.

5.4.2. The teaching and learning methodology should consist of lectures, seminars, practical exercises, home studies and others including problem solving case studies in order to instill in the students the self-directed learning attitude that promotes the ability to learn throughout life required by the environment and the challenges of the future.

5.4.3. Students/attendants should be evaluated by written, oral and practical presentations and examinations, as applicable.

5.4.4. The attendance of students/attendants should be documented and used as part of the continuous evaluation.

5.5 Governance of Training Courses

5.5.1. Institutions shall have a five-year rolling plan indicating the steps to be taken towards the realisation of the aims and objectives and a ten-year long plan indicating the required resources.

5.5.2. Institutions shall have rules and regulations governing students/attendants and staff conduct and discipline.

5.5.3. There shall be policies, procedures and systems in place including evaluation, monitoring and review measures that are well documented and effectively disseminated across the providers.

5.5.4. Feedback from students/attendants should be obtained, recorded and analysed on a regular basis and actions taken where necessary.

5.5.5. Reports on performance should be compiled at least annually which should include analysis of year-on-year results on student/attendant satisfaction, retention, achievement, examination results and completion rates, as applicable.

5.5.6. Proposed fees and payment modalities shall be clearly communicated to students/attendants.

6 FINAL PROVISIONS

6.1. This guideline is the first version. It will become effective on 15 October 2018 and be published on the PCG website.

- 6.2. The document will be reviewed within 3 years of becoming effective.

7 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment No	Title (as referenced on the attachment)
01	Application for Accreditation - Form
02	Self-Assessment Report – Template
03	Data Return - Form
04	Requirements for Training of Pharmacy Technicians - Guide
05	Requirements for Pharmacist Training Programme as Doctor of Pharmacy - Guide
06	Requirements for CPD Training - Guide

8 REFERENCES

- Pharmacy Council Act, 2014
- Pharmacy Regulations 2018
- Fee Schedule
- Pharmacy Council Accreditation Policy for Pharmacy Programme(s) in Ghana 2013
- British Accreditation Council, Accreditation Handbook, 2015
- British Accreditation Council, Short Course Provider Accreditation Scheme, 2015
- WAHO, Harmonized curriculum for Doctor of Pharmacy Degree (PharmD.) training in the ECOWAS Region, 2015
- WAHO, Harmonized curriculum for training of Pharmacy Technicians in the ECOWAS Region, 2014

9 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version:	Issue Date:	Reasons for Change:
1.0	01 October 2018	New document
2.0	18 October 2019	Updated following a review by a consultant