

Postgraduate Diploma in Rural Medicine

Programme description

The programme is intended to provide doctors wishing to work in rural district hospitals in South Africa and elsewhere in Africa with the necessary knowledge, skills and approaches for practice in these contexts. After completing the course, you will have the clinical skills to manage a range of patients at a rural district hospital with limited specialist support, be able to work with the local healthcare team and maintain effective healthcare delivery systems, understand appropriate public health interventions and participate in community-oriented primary healthcare and use reflective practice to enable continuous development as a rural health practitioner.

This Postgraduate Diploma is presented by the Ukwanda Centre for Rural Health, based on the Stellenbosch University Worcester campus. You must spend an initial period of at least six months in a regional hospital and then at least one year in a rural district hospital.

Specific admission requirements

For admission to the Postgraduate Diploma in Rural Medicine, you must hold a bachelor's degree (e.g. MBChB) and be qualified as a medical practitioner, with at least two years' post-qualification practical experience as a medical intern or in an equivalent position. You must provide proof of registration with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) or demonstrate that you will be able to meet the requirements of the HPCSA. You must apply in writing for admission, accompanied by a CV and a motivation letter, which should include evidence of your clinical competency and experience, and of your sustained interest in rural health in Africa and in leadership and management. Selected applicants may be invited to an interview. Community service doctors are also eligible to enrol in the programme.

Duration of programme

The programme extends over a minimum of 18 months.

Programme content

You must pass all four modules:

Clinical Skills for District Hospitals	775(55)
Major Infectious Disease Challenges	775(15)
Clinical Governance in District Health Services	775(25)
Delivering Healthcare in Rural Communities	775(25)

The major clinical module, Clinical Skills for District Hospitals, focuses on high-risk areas (the emergency centre, the labour ward and the operating theatre). The module is presented in two formats: as an intensive, structured six-month programme at Worcester Hospital or a similar institution with which Stellenbosch University has a formal arrangement, where you will work as a supernumerary registrar; or as a longer programme at a regional hospital where there is appropriate supervision by experienced practitioners accredited with the Stellenbosch University Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences. Following demonstration of competence in the skills required for this module, you must spend a minimum of one year in rural district hospitals, where the remainder of the programme will be completed.

The other three modules will be offered as blended learning and will include e-learning, guided self-study, assignments, logbook entries, self-reflection tasks and formal seminars.

Assessment and examination

The assessment of each module will depend on its learning content, which includes the following:

- Clinical Skills for District Hospitals: competency assessment, logbook entries and reports by the supervising doctor where you have been placed.
- Major Infectious Disease Challenges: online tests consisting of multiple-choice questions.
- Clinical Governance in District Health Services: participation in online discussion groups, a report on your quality improvement project and a reflective report on learning.
- Delivering Healthcare in Rural Communities: participation in online discussion groups, a synoptic report on local healthcare needs and services, and a report on community-oriented primary care interventions.

The pass mark is 50% and a mark of 75% is required to pass with distinction.

If you wish to obtain credits for any clinical competencies, in particular for the clinical domains in the module Clinical Skills for District Hospitals, you must demonstrate your competence in the specified areas through an appropriate assessment.

Enquiries

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