Handbook on Accreditation of Educational Programmes for the Purpose of Registration
as Supplementary Medical Professions Practitioners

I.   Preamble

1.   As statutory bodies established under the Supplementary Medical Professions Ordinance ("the SMPO") (Cap. 359), the five Supplementary Medical Professions ("SMP") Boards under the SMP Council are accountable for reassuring the relevant professions and the public that the pedagogical practices in educational programmes in Hong Kong are of distinguished quality and that graduates possess the knowledge and skills enabling them to provide high quality professional services.

2.   To achieve this, accreditation system and procedures are developed to provide the Boards with a mechanism to conduct external evaluation and review of educational programmes.

3.   In addition, it also allows educational institutions a formal occasion to demonstrate that standards, agreed levels of educational and pedagogical practice, and professional conduct are prudently maintained.

II.   Definition of Accreditation

4.   Institutions applying to the Board are required to prove to its satisfaction the standards, levels of educational and pedagogical practices and professional conduct of their educational programmes.   They are required to comply with the accreditation criteria (as mentioned in Part IV), outlining the minimum requirements for accreditation and such other criteria relevant to the profession which Board sees fit and appropriate from time to time, failing which the application will be rejected.   In the accreditation, the Board will in general:-

   (1)   review the educational facilities, environment and processes of the institution;

   (2)   evaluate the curriculum of the educational programme, and assess its comparability with the local and international standards;

   (3)   advise the institution on the areas of strength and weakness and the ways to improve in the future, if necessary; and

   (5)   determine whether the institution and/or the educational programme meets the standards and requirements of the Board for provision of education relevant to the profession.

5.   The Board accredits educational programmes for the purpose of registration under the SMPO.

III. Accreditation Panel

6. In handling applications for accreditation, an independent accreditation panel shall be set up under the Board to assist it to make in-depth assessment :-

    – a Chairman not affiliated with or employed by the educational institutions concerned;
    – at least one expert renowned in education in the relevant field or in accreditation. Overseas experts may be appointed if necessary;
    – two local members of the concerned profession from different employment background;
    – a representative from the relevant specialty college of Hong Kong Academy of Medicine;
    – a lay member.

7. The accreditation panel is required to review the professional standard and quality of the educational programme for the purpose of registration under the SMPO by :-

    (1) clarifying and verifying the congruency between submitted information and the actual practice;

    (2) conducting on-site accreditation visits;

    (3) preparing a written report on its findings in relation to the accreditation criteria to the Board;

    (4) making recommendations for programme improvement if necessary; and

    (5) making recommendations on the suitability for accrediting the programme.

IV. Accreditation Criteria

8. In assessing an application for accreditation, reference shall be made to the following major principles :-

    (1) Governance and administration

    There should be a governing body responsible to ensure that the mission of the institution is properly implemented. An academic board or committee should be in place to ensure sufficient resources available for the sustainable development of the programme.

    Information required
    - Membership of the governing body, academic board or committee;
    - Terms of Reference of the governing body, academic board or committee;
    - Annual reports and minutes of meetings related to the development of the educational programme in application; and
    - Strength of the administrative staff, including full time and part time etc

(2)   Organization structure and decision making

There should be clear organization structure with committees and departments showing the line of authority pertaining to academic decision processes; such as the planning and development of new programmes.

Information required
- An organization structure showing the major committees and departments;
- Membership and terms of reference of major committees and advisory bodies;
- Information on the academic decision-making process; and
- Statements on the role and duties of department heads / course leaders and external advisors / examiners etc

(3)   Programme planning, development and design

The institution should have well-defined policies and regulations governing the award of qualifications.   Educational programmes are developed and designed in accordance to the stipulated procedures endorsed by the institution.   A master plan for the next three to five years should be developed to cover the existing and new cohorts of students.

Information required
- Organization policy for awarding qualification;
- Procedures in approval of new programmes;
- Policy and regulation relating to curriculum design, credit weighting, assessment, graduation, grading award, disciplinary and appeal system; and
- The development and implementation plan of the programme etc

(4)   Curriculum and Syllabus

The curriculum should fully meet the Board's requirements on registration under section 12(1)(a) of the SMPO.   Reference shall be made to the current prescribed qualifications for the purpose of registration under section 12(1)(a) of the SMPO as set out in relevant subsidiary regulations.

Information required
- Programme details including title, objective, award, admission requirement, length, mode of teaching, medium of instruction, pattern of attendance and assessment methods;
- Curriculum and syllabus of the programme including subjects, learning hours, mode of delivery and teaching methods;
- Samples of teaching and learning materials; and
- Samples of study projects and assessment records etc

(5)   Staff

The institution must have an explicit staff recruitment policy and selection criteria for the programme leader, lecturers and clinical teachers; including formal qualifications, professional experience, research output, teaching experiences and

peer recognition. There should be sufficient provision for different teaching setting and at least 50% of staff employed should be full time. In addition, the minimum teacher to student ratio for classroom teaching, clinical teaching and clinical mentoring should be maintained at a level stipulated by the Board.

Information required
- Profile and curriculum vitae of all teaching staff, including clinical teachers; and
- Teaching capacity and student load for each teaching staff and clinical teacher etc

(6)   Staff development, research and scholarly activities

There should be explicit requirement for teaching staff to maintain their clinical proficiency including knowledge and skills. Provision should be made to enhance the teaching staff's competencies. The academic output of individual staff should be closely monitored to ensure that matches with the institution's requirement.

Information required
- Clinical expertise and updating of each teaching staff;
- Development programme for teaching staff; and
- Report on academic achievement etc

(7)   Student admission, assessment and support

The institution should provide a student admission policy which includes the selection process and the entry requirement. A record of student profile together with the overall academic attainment of the students upon admission to the programme should be made available. The institution should also define and state the methods used for assessment of its students, including the criteria for passing examination.

Information required
- Student admission and selection policy;
- Student profile, academic and achievement record;
- Assessment methods, passing criteria and appeal system; and
- Policy for weak performing students etc

(8)   Clinical practice

Clinical practicum is a key component of the curriculum and should be arranged to match with the educational programme.

Clinical teachers and mentors are important resources for the students. They should be trained and appointed to provide clinical skills training and on-the-job coaching for students. The number of clinical teachers to student and clinical mentors to students should be maintained at a level stipulated by the Board.

To ensure sufficient learning opportunities and resources provided to students during their clinical practice, formal communication should be established between the institution, practical settings and students for operational issues, trouble-shooting and quality improvement. A system to assess the students' clinical knowledge, skills and problem solving ability and professional attitude should also be established.

Information required
- Profile of clinical training grounds;
- Clinical expertise and updating of each teaching staff;
- Profile of the clinical instructors;
- Preparation of clinical instructors and clinical mentors;
- Clinical learning handbook;
- Clinical assessment record;
- Clinical practice performance assessment system; and
- Channel of communication between the institution and clinical practice organizations etc

(9) Programme evaluation

The institution should have stipulated policies and procedures to monitor the quality and effectiveness of its programme and operations. There should be committee structure set up for the approval, validation and re-validation of educational programmes and their monitoring. External bodies from renowned universities or institutions or those recognized by the profession are invited to advise on quality issues. Profile of the serving members and their contributions should be maintained as on-going basis.

Information required
- Committee structure such as advisory committee or academic board involved in the approval, validation and re-validation, and monitoring of educational programmes;
- Terms of reference of any external bodies invited to advice on quality issues of the institution;
- Appointment criteria of external advisors, external examiners, advisory committee, consultant, etc; and
- Evidence of the work of the external bodies; such as programme review reports and records of meetings etc

(10) Educational resources and facilities

The institution should provide sufficient resources such as lecture rooms, library, practical rooms, laboratories, student amenities and other equipment to support the programme at an acceptable level of quality. The facilities should be increased to match with the increased number of student intake. Computers and internet access to clinical databases are made available for both clinical teachers and students for evidenced based practice, learning, teaching and professional development.

Information Required
– Class size and numbers of lecture rooms and practical rooms;
– Library holdings including journal subscription and e-learning access;
– Facilities to support clinical practice and skills training etc; and
– (For institution which organizes more than one educational programme) A comprehensive plan on the utilization of the facilities, specifying details such as the number of programmes and students using the facilities and the utilization schedule, so as to satisfy the Board that the facilities are sufficient to cater for all the programmes

(11) <u>Programme leadership and management</u>

A programme leader who provides academic and professional leadership is crucial to ensure continuity in the development of the programme. He/she should have the demonstrable commitment and leadership to implement the programme systematically according to the design and development plan. A system should be in place to ensure an annual review and updating of the structure, policies and functions as part of the programme administration.

Information Required
– Profile of the programme leader and head of the department;
– Formal involvement of stakeholders including students in the review process;
– Quality improvement strategies, action plan and outcomes; and
– Annual review report etc