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THE CARIBBEAN ACCREDITATION AUTHORITY FOR EDUCATION IN MEDICINE AND OTHER HEALTH PROFESSIONS

Standards for the Accreditation of Medical Schools in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Section 6 (Internship)

The standards in Section 6 are only relevant to medical schools offering educational programmes in which a specified period of internship is a requirement for completion of the programme and award of the MD/MBBS Degree.

For further information, contact:

The CAAM-HP Secretariat
Suite # 7, Pinnacle Pointe
53 Lady Musgrave Road
Kingston 10, Jamaica

or P.O. Box 5167
Kingston 6, Jamaica
Tel: (876) 927-4765
E-mail: info@caam-hp.org

<https://caam-hp.org/>

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Section 6

Internship (IT)

IT-1: Provision of the Internship

The medical school offers, as an integral part of its medical education programme, a period of supervised practice/internship for all its students, which must be completed satisfactorily prior to award of the MD/MBBS Degree and graduation from the programme.

Notwithstanding the inclusion of such a provision, graduates of such schools who wish to practice independently in CARICOM countries are required to successfully complete an additional approved internship and/or to sit the Caribbean Association of Medical Councils (CAMC) examination or its equivalent, prior to registration/ licensure by the respective Medical Council.

IT-2: Duration of the Internship Period

The medical school provides a period of internship for all its students comprising at least twelve (12) months of supervised practice and training in approved positions in hospitals and community centres prior to their graduation from the educational programme.

Such positions and institutions should be approved within or outside member countries, provided that they meet the same criteria as those approved in the country/region in which the school is located.

IT-3: Structure and Required Disciplines of the Internship

The internship period designated by the school includes periods of at least six weeks of supervised training (excluding periods of leave) in each of the disciplines of medicine, surgery, psychiatry, obstetrics/gynaecology, and primary care, and should encompass the care of adults, children, and emergency cases.

Some requirements may be combined, for example, paediatric surgery may count as both experience in surgery and caring for children while primary care can be fulfilled in community/family practice or in an emergency department.

IT-4: Approval of Internship Positions

The medical school, in consultation with the government of the country in which it is located, identifies, approves and regularly reviews positions and institutions that meet the educational and supervisory requirements of the internship period for its students. Approved positions are reviewed no less frequently than once every five years or upon receiving adverse information that may affect the approval of such positions.

IT-5: Guidelines for Students undertaking Internship

The medical school develops written objectives and policy guidelines for internship, which includes workload, clinical supervision, patient encounters and, following due process, student assessment, during each required rotation. (Note IT-13 below)

IT-6: Contractual Conditions of Internship

The medical school, in collaboration with the clinical facility has written agreements/contracts for its students who are assigned to approved internship positions that include suitable accommodation with ready access for interns to carry out emergency tasks and to rest and sleep between patient care duties as well as established stipulations on leave including the following:

- Provision for a minimum of four weeks' vacation leave per year, with at least one week taken within the first six-month period and a portion of which must be taken at least every 6 months.
- Approved sick leave, which is not deducted from vacation time but is taken into account when evaluating the internship period for a particular discipline.

IT-7: Required Facilities and Services for Approval of Internship Positions

All hospitals or clinics that are approved for undergraduate internships have, or have ready access to, basic facilities for patient care, including pathology, diagnostic laboratory and imaging services.

IT-8: Educational Activities for Interns

Departments/disciplines in hospitals or clinics that are approved to supervise undergraduate interns provide, at least twice per month, scheduled educational activities that include case management reviews, and ethical issues around health care provision.

IT-9: Educational Resources for Interns

The medical school ensures the provision and ready availability of basic textbooks and other relevant educational materials for its undergraduate interns in each of the required disciplines.

IT-10: Appointment of Qualified Supervisors

The medical school in conjunction with the clinical facilities provides an adequate number of appropriately qualified supervisory staff for its undergraduate interns. On any particular service at any given time, the numbers of undergraduate interns to experienced supervisory staff does not exceed a ratio of 3 to 1.

Internship supervisors:

- have appropriate training, postgraduate credentials, and/or experience in the discipline.
- have ultimate responsibility for patient care in the discipline.
- may receive support in their supervisory tasks from other staff/residents.

IT-11: Assessment of Interns

Undergraduate interns are provided with written evaluations, signed by the authorised supervisor for each segment of the undergraduate internship. These evaluations include evidence of formative, mid-rotation assessment for students in each segment/discipline of the undergraduate internship. Evaluations are communicated to the institution where the undergraduate internship takes place, to the dean of their medical school and are made available for discussion with the undergraduate intern. A signed summary evaluation of completed disciplines is provided to the dean of the medical school and to the school's grading authorities.

IT-12: Policies for Addressing Unfavourable Internship Evaluations

In the case of an unfavorable evaluation, the undergraduate intern receives a written warning with sufficient time for the intern to take remedial measures to address shortcomings identified.

IT-13: Interns' Rights to Appeal Adverse Internship Reports

In the case of an adverse report, i.e., a segment of the undergraduate internship has not been completed satisfactorily, the medical school has written policies governing the right to appeal to the institution where the internship took place and to the medical school. On completion of the appeals process, the dean/academic director of the school and the employing authority make appropriate arrangements for satisfactory completion of the undergraduate internship.