

Information sheet: Community service placement

1. BACKGROUND

Now that you have completed your studies as a nursing practitioner, you are almost ready to enter the workplace. But, before that happens, you must complete a compulsory year of community service. This document is a short guide on the process to be followed for you to successfully start your community service year.

Please read the annual “Internship and Community Placement Guidelines” on the website of the Department of Health for more information.

General tips:

- Community service is compulsory for every graduate nursing practitioner.
- Remember there are thousands of students who must be placed and there are many communities with a need for your unique skills. Manage your expectations about where the Department might place you. It is true that you may indicate where you would like to be placed in the first round, but the Department is under no obligation to place you according to your choice. The Department is obligated to place you for community service. Prepare yourself to avoid disappointment and frustration.
- Not all students are placed in the first round, the majority is placed in the second round. The third round is mainly used for late applications, special motivations which could not be accommodated in the first and second round and lastly, candidates who rejected their placements on grounds of a reason which does not qualify as an official motivation.
- Stay informed and follow every instruction:
 - Register timeously.
 - Complete all the necessary documents and submit all the necessary supporting documents.
 - Save all correspondence to the Department and the feedback from the Department on your placement (SMSs as well).
- Your training college will **not** communicate with the Department or negotiate on your behalf regarding your community service placement. The college is however involved in supplying information to the SANC. It is important to know that there are two processes, namely information supplied by the college to the Department and your application process for community service with the Department.

- **DEPARTEMENT OF HEALTH'S PLACEMENT GUIDELINES (SUMMARY)**

A) Definition and place of community service

- The Minister of Health is obliged to publish a list of facilities in the Government Gazette to which students may apply for community service.
- Appropriate facilities are defined according to the National Health Act (No. 61 of 2003).
- The Minister of Health is entitled to, after consultation with the provincial health department's executive committee, to take the final decision on the placement of individuals for community service.
- It is compulsory for all graduate nursing practitioners to complete community service for a period of 12 months; this placement can be changed from one workplace to another in this period.

B) Administrative responsibilities of the Department

The following administrative requirements are set according to the Promotion of Administrative Justice Act (No. 3 of 2000):

- Adequate notice on decisions.
- Fair chance for input on decisions.
- Clear information on administrative actions.
- Sufficient information on the right to submit a revision application or to lodge an appeal.
- Clear information on the right to apply for reasons about how decisions were made.

C) Role and responsibility of the Departments:

National Department of Health

- Compile the annual placement guidelines.
- Process applications for placements according to the placement guidelines.
- Manage and maintain the ICSP online system (placement system).
- Consider practical and provincial requirements.

Provincial Health Department, Correctional Services, South African Military Health Services and Local Government Departments

- Prepare a needs assessment regarding posts for community service.
- Supply a list of the available community service posts.
- Confirm the number of bursary holders.

- Supply information on any placement limitations in the relevant provinces.
- Determine and obtain sufficient financing for community service posts.
- Confirm placement of students and supply appointment letters.

D) Communication responsibilities

The Department of Health communicates with:

- Training institutions: Obtain information on students to determine placement needs, communicate with the students on the placement guidelines and the placement process.
- Applicants: The Department must confirm placement, and the province, department or institution where the student will be placed provides a letter of employment.

It is the responsibility of the National Department of Health to notify applicants of their placement per province, after which the relevant provincial department and the employing institution will supply the service offering and will manage the appointment process.

A) Placement Process: The Phases

Please note that every year the Department publishes the timeframe of the three placement rounds in its placement guidelines but, in practice, it has become clear that the placement process often takes longer and that the rounds are therefore not always finalised within the proposed timeframe.

Round 1: Applications: April/May
Placements: June/July

- EVERYONE must apply during round 1. Candidates are personally responsible for registering in time. Nurses who do not register at all will only have an opportunity to register in the subsequent year.
- All late applicants only qualify to be placed during the third round. Students who are dissatisfied with placements on the grounds of special qualifying circumstances must reject their placement and submit motivations to this effect. Their applications will then be reconsidered during round 2.
- Bursars are placed first and all other students follow next.
- Motivations are assessed according to a scoring system. Anyone who does not lodge valid motivations can still reject her or his placement but will only qualify for placement during the third round and those



placements are made last. Therefore, think twice about this option before exercising it.

Round 2: Applications: August
Placements: August/September

- Anyone who has registered in time during round 1 but who could not be placed has to apply again during round 2.
- During round 2 individuals who have submitted special motivations are also assessed, considered and placed.

Round 3: Applications: September 2017 – February
Placements: September 2017 – February

- Candidates who have special motivations and who have not been placed during rounds 1 and 2 are placed first, then those candidates who do not have special motivations and who have not been placed during previous rounds.

Late applicants and those who have rejected their placement without any special motivation are placed next.

B) Appointments

Appointments are made by the provincial health departments, Correctional Services, the South African military health services and local government. Appointments must be finalised within four weeks after the date of final placement.

C) Other important points

Provincial Health Departments

- May not limit the number of positions in a province to accommodate only bursars;
- Must consider and confirm all placements. If a candidate's placement is referred back or is reallocated it must be motivated in writing. Note, therefore, that a notice from the national Department of Health must be treated as provisional until the provincial department has confirmed the placement as final *and* a letter of appointment has been received.

D) Guidelines and responsibility of applicants

- The ICSP Online platform must be used for applications.
- The applicant must apply in time; late applications will only be considered during the third round.
- Conditions of service may differ depending on where the candidate is placed:
 - Those placed as public service appointees will be considered as contract workers for 12 months while the facility in question will determine the hours of work. Remuneration is according to the Occupation Specific Dispensation scale. The term for medical internships is 24 months and must comply with the requirements of the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).
 - The working hours of non-governmental appointees (those who have placements at private institutions) are determined by the institution itself. Remuneration is according to the Occupation Specific Dispensation scale. Candidates do not receive medical and pension benefits from GEMS and the GEPF but they are entitled to receive the monetary equivalent of those benefits.
- A placement is not final unless a letter of appointment has been received.
- Candidates must start work on the appointment date stipulated. If not, the department can withdraw the letter of appointment.
- The National Health Department does not communicate with anyone else except the candidate unless written permission has been given for such.
- Placements cannot be exchanged for another person's placement.

E) Complaints and enquiries

- All complaints and enquiries must be made on the official [ICSP-portal](#).
- Frequently asked questions and answers are available on the department's website. [Click here](#).
- The full placement guidelines can be read here: [Click here](#)

2. REGISTRATION AT SANC

Candidates must be registered at SANC (South African Nursing Council) when they are students (in the case of nursing students). Students' SANC registrations must be adjusted once they start with their community service.

Full guidelines below. Please take note of the following:

- Once studies have been completed, the students must personally apply for registration at the SANC within 30 days.
- The application form is available on the SANC website and must be signed by the candidate and the Head of the training institution, and it must be stamped by the institution.
- The training institution must assist students with the registration process.
- The candidate must inform the SANC as soon as the candidate starts with community service.
- When community service has been completed, the SANC must again be notified within 30 days.

A) SANC requirements for registration

- Applicants must be South African citizens.
- Applicants must have completed the full course successfully in accordance with the minimum requirements prescribed by the Department of Education and Training.
- The Department of Health must place the applicant where community service is to be performed.
- The registration for community service must be submitted to the SANC.
- If you studied through a South African training institution, the institution must submit applications to the SANC within 30 days.

B) Registration process

1. Application forms

- Application forms are available on the SANC website at www.sanc.co.za
- Make sure that you complete the correct form. SANC-4-22 is for applicants who have completed their studies in South Africa, and SANC-4-23 is for foreign applicants.
- Please print clearly when completing the application forms.
- The training institution must also complete the following information:
 - Institution's number
 - Name of the institution
 - Name of the qualification
 - Name and institution's SANC registration number.
- Both the applicant and the institution must sign the application, and it must be stamped by the institution.

2. Documents that must accompany the application:

- A certified copy of your ID document or passport
- A certified copy of your marriage certificate, if applicable
- Your complete academic record
- The proof of payment that had been submitted

3. Presentation of the application

- Applications should reach the SANC within 30 days after training was completed.
- The Head of the training institution is responsible for reviewing each application for its correctness and to ensure that all accompanying documents are attached.
- The registration form must be accompanied by a cover letter from the training institution that contains the details of all the applicants and the SANC reference number.
- The Head of the training institution is responsible for ensuring that all the applicants' fees have been paid.

C) Registration for community service

- If the application is complete, the SANC will issue a registration certificate to the practitioner for performing community service.
- This certificate is valid for two years from the month in which it was issued.

D) Commencement of community service

- The practitioner should notify the SANC immediately once they have accepted service and started to work, from the date on which work commences. The full details of where they are performing their service should be provided.
- This notification takes place on [SANC-4-24](#).
- [This](#) form should be signed by both the practitioner and the Head of the institution where service is performed.

E) Period of community service

- Community service is performed for a period of 12 months.
- Any interruption in the service period should be made up within two years, calculated from commencement of community service.
- If the practitioner cannot complete their service within this period, all service performed will be invalid and the practitioner will have to perform community service from the beginning.
- Once the period of community service has been completed, the Head of the employment institution should submit a report to the provincial community service coordinator, within 30 days after completion of service.



- This report should be submitted with the proof of payment for SANC membership.
- If all the reports are submitted and all the requirements are met, the SANC will register the practitioner as a professional nurse.