

Family Medicine 6th Year MBChB Programme

The 6th year Family Medicine programme is entirely community based and is a 4 week rotation. The students are based at community health centres (CHC) in the Western Cape Metropole, namely, Retreat, Hanover Park, Vanguard and Crossroads. Vredenburg was the first rural rotation for Family Medicine and the first group of students was sent there in 2011. This rotation was still voluntary and students were served on a first come basis. Since January 2015, students have to complete a compulsory week at Vredenberg District Hospital. The students live in a fully-furnished house (provided by UCT), which is shared with Health and Rehabilitation and other Health Sciences students. The house has IT facilities and there is a designated site facilitator who attends to the students' needs. Since 2015, a voluntary group of students have been doing their 6th year training in the Eden District. The students doing the 4 week Family medicine training are based at Oudshoorn Hospital and live in UCT flats on the premises. Since 2018 our students are also trained at Knysna Hospital. The students are exposed to a variety of patients while on call, including Obstetrics, trauma and also gain experience in Anaesthetics. They also do outreach at surrounding clinics. The Eden District has a dedicated administrator, who oversees the needs of the Eden and Oudshoorn students. The block usually consists of 18-20 students, so the maximum number of students per teaching site is 4-5. There has been an increase in student numbers, and the number of students per site has increased to a maximum capacity of 6. Four of the CHCs have designated consulting rooms for our students, except Crossroads, which has become a training site since January 2017 and has limited clinical space. There is currently a process in place to improve this. The consulting rooms at the CHCs are all fully equipped. The CHCs also have resource centres (UCT funded) which has computers and an internet connection, which can be accessed by our students.

Students have four clinical morning sessions per week, and these are supervised by an on-site tutor. Each CHC is headed by a Family Physician, and clinical activities are supervised by the Family Physician or another tutor. At the moment our teaching staff consists of 5 Family physicians on joint posts, 1 permanent lecturer (course convenor) and 2 part-time tutors. We also utilize the registrars on our Family medicine programme to teach our students. The students have an opportunity to see a variety of patients, including chronic and undifferentiated patients. They are also exposed to patients on the HIV Wellness program as well as TB clinics. Each group of students has an opportunity to do a surgical slate while at the district hospital (Vredenburg and Oudshoorn hospitals). The Vredenburg students have teaching sessions at the Hopefield clinic as well as at Vredenburg hospital. These students also have an opportunity to do emergency calls twice a week.

As part of the Family medicine block activities, each student has to complete 1 compulsory session at the SHAWCO clinics. Other block activities include class tutorials, which covers Disability Grants, Evidence-based practice, Motivational Interviewing, Surgical skills and Palliative Medicine. The students also participate in a seminar with one of our sessional tutors, a family physician with experience in the financial and Healthcare sector, both public and private. This session is currently on hold until a replacement tutor is found. Some of the topics include:

- The South African Healthcare environment past, present and future including insights and updates relating to NHI proposals.
- Healthcare funding- the international and national challenges and the roles and responsibilities of the providers of service in this regard.

- The principles and legislation relating to medical schemes including the relationships and responsibilities of the various parties and in particular medical professionals.
- Practical insights into financial issues facing the newly qualified doctor including salary packages, insurance (personal and medical malpractice), investments and retirement savings. Medical litigation and the reduction of malpractice risk

Innovations:

- Assessments include a patient study and performance attendance at CHCs. The Palliative medicine program is integrated with the Family medicine programme, and our students visit various palliative care sites throughout the Western Cape, including the Vredenburg sites. They get clinical training at the bedside, and this includes Paediatric Palliative Care which is done at red Cross Hospital. The Palliative care program is run at the Bethesda Hospice in George, with assistance from a Family Physician in Knysna.
- The Vredenburg rotation is the first rural rotation for Family medicine, and it has grown tremendously since 2011. The students have shown a growing interest, and academically they have performed better than most of their peers.
- The first Family medicine OSCE was successfully run in the Eden District in March 2017, overseen on site by the UCT Family Medicine course convenor.
- The OSCE (Objectively Structured Clinical Examination) and the SOO (Simulated Office Oral) was introduced as an assessment method in 2011. Since 2016, the OSCE has become the main assessment method and contributes to 55% of the final mark. The in-course mark constitutes 45%. Prior to 2011, the exam comprised of 2 SOOs only. This has made a significant difference to the course, and we are able to assess the students' competence in various domains, including clinical skills and communications skills. Other assessments include a patient study and performance and attendance at the CHC, which is standardized using the mini-cex evaluations.