



**GOVERNMENT
OF MALTA**

Government response to the consultation on Health
Care Professions Act (Amendment of Fifth Schedule)
Regulations, 2024

04/03/2024

Ministry for Health and Active Ageing
Palazzo Castellania,
15, Merchants Street,
Valletta

This publication (excluding Logos) may be re-used free of charge in any format or medium provided that is re-used accurately and not used in a misleading context. This material must be acknowledged as Government of Malta and the title of the publication specified.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent at onlineconsultations@gov.mt.

Published by the Ministry for Health and Active Ageing.

CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Introduction and overview	4
Responses to the consultation and process used to seek stakeholder views	5
Summary of responses and decisions.....	5
Implementation.....	5
Contact Details	5

Executive Summary

Introduction and overview

The Medical Specialist Accreditation Committee, within the Office of the Superintendence of Public Health, has requested the inclusion of a new speciality in the Fifth Schedule under Section 'A' MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS of the Health Care Professions Act (Chapter 464) in the Laws of Malta.

To this effect, the Medical Specialist Accreditation Committee presented a draft postgraduate training programme in Medical Oncology. This training programme has the same common pathways for other medical specialization training programmes which are already in place. The programme for Medical Oncology specialisation will include a two-year Basic Specialist Training and a four-year Higher Specialist Training, which includes a mandatory one-year period abroad. The aim of working and training abroad is to gain experience in a different working environment with exposure to specific designated tumour sites. The trainee needs to be in possession of MRCPUK Specialty Certificate Examination in Medical Oncology, or equivalent.

The Medical Specialist Accreditation Committee is submitting that the main reasons for the inclusion of Medical Oncology as a speciality in the Health Care Professions Act is that 'Oncology and Radiotherapy' (Radiation Oncology and Clinical Oncology) is the only speciality currently recognised in Malta. Medical Oncology is the second sub-specialty in Oncology, recognised in Europe under EU Directive 2005/36/EC in Annex V and is an option for physicians, who wish to treat cancer patients without specialising in radiotherapy. In many European countries, Medical and Radiation Oncologists work side by side to deliver a specialised service to patients. Hence inclusion of this sub-speciality will cover the main subspecialities in Oncology.

The Medical Specialist Accreditation Committee is also submitting that the Role of the Medical Oncologist differs from a Clinical Oncologist in the following ways:

- *a significant involvement in research (laboratory and translational cancer research) especially clinical trials, which allows patients to access investigational anti-cancer treatments prior approval by the European Medicines Authority;*
- *possible dual accreditation with General Medicine;*
- *the introduction of Acute Oncology, which is a service yet to be developed in Malta; and*
- *having Medical Oncologists in Malta will allow Clinical Oncologists to further develop the radiotherapy service, including standard of care brachytherapy and stereotactic treatments.*

On 22nd January 2024, the Government proposed the inclusion of the speciality 'Medical Oncology' under the Fifth Schedule to the Health Care Professions Act. This consultation sought views on the introduction of the new speciality 'Medical Oncology'.

Responses to the consultation and process used to seek stakeholder views

The consultation closed on 18th February 2024. The consultation document and the reply form were available online and responses were accepted electronically. There were no responses.

Summary of responses and decisions

In view of the above, the draft regulations shall come into force on such date as the Minister responsible for Health may by notice in the Gazette establish.

Implementation

The draft regulations shall come into force on such date as the Minister responsible for Health may by notice in the Gazette establish.

Contact Details

If you have any questions regarding this response, please contact: *Dr Dorianne Farrugia*

Email address: dorianne.farrugia@gov.mt