

**Consensus Statement issued by the Hong Kong Academy of Medicine (“HKAM”), the Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (“CUMed”) and the LKS Faculty of the University of Hong Kong (“HKUMed”) with respect to the education and training of medical students and specialist trainees requiring special accommodation due to disability or special educational needs (“SENs”)**

1. This Consensus Statement aims to provide (a) prospective students who are interested in reading a medical degree, (b) medical students, (c) medical graduates who are interested in pursuing specialist training, and (d) specialist trainees with a better understanding of the common principles to be adopted by HKAM, CUMed and HKUMed in considering the requests for special accommodation from medical students and specialist trainees with disability or SENs.
2. As the hosting institutions of medical students and specialist trainees, each of HKAM, CUMed and HKUMed is entrusted with the responsibility to ensure, inter alia, that the medical curricula, training and schemes of assessment are well-planned, properly managed and in line with the prescribed teaching principles.
3. Consideration of the special accommodation requests from medical students and specialist trainees with disability and SENs should be governed by two overriding principles. Firstly, the hosting institution must comply with the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (“DDO”; Cap 487 of Laws of Hong Kong). Secondly, the hosting institution must meet the standards and requirements expected in the cognate education and training, as medical students and specialist trainees have duties and responsibilities unique to the medical profession and are obliged to attain and maintain adequate standards.
4. The hosting institution should endeavor to promote positive educational outcomes and meet the objective of equal opportunities of persons with disabilities and SENs.
5. The hosting institution should consider requests for special accommodation on a case-by-case basis taking into consideration the unique circumstances as presented.
6. The hosting institution should note that all medical students and specialist trainees need to meet the competencies set out for different stages of their education and training in order to ensure patient safety and that they are fit to practise, regardless of whether they have a disability or SENs. Hence, any special accommodation granted by the hosting institution should be reasonable<sup>1</sup> and should not compromise the standard and level of

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<sup>1</sup> “Reasonable accommodation” is defined in Article 5 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as meaning “necessary and appropriate modification and adjustments not imposing a disproportionate or undue burden, where needed in a particular case, to ensure to persons with disabilities the enjoyment or exercise on an equal basis with others of all human rights and fundamental freedoms”. Section 12.2 of the Code of Practice on Education (applicable to "educational establishment" as defined in the DDO, which includes HKU and CUHK) also sets out the relevant considerations in determining what accommodations are to be made.

the professional education and training, including assessment that a medical student or specialist trainee should receive. Otherwise, such special accommodation should be considered disproportionate, or as imposing an unjustifiable hardship or undue burden on the hosting institution.

7. In considering a special accommodation request, the hosting institution should also take into account of the needs and expectations of the public towards medical students, medical graduates, specialist trainees and qualified medical specialists. In this regard, the hosting institution should note that “*Medicine as a profession is distinguished from other professions by a special moral duty of care to save life and to relieve suffering. Medical ethics emphasizes the priority of this moral ideal over and above considerations of personal interests and private gains*”<sup>2</sup>.
8. The hosting institutions should adopt the section titled “*Core Competences and Skills expected of Medical Graduates*” in “*Hong Kong Doctors (October 2017)*” issued by The Medical Council of Hong Kong<sup>3</sup> (as may be varied, updated or replaced from time to time) as the competencies required for medical students (so far as applicable and appropriate). For specialist trainees, the hosting institutions should refer to the principles enshrined in the “*Position Paper on Postgraduate Medical Education (2023)*”<sup>4</sup> issued by HKAM (as may be varied, updated or replaced from time to time) and the competencies stipulated by different colleges under HKAM in the relevant specialist training, curriculum and/or examination guidelines (if any).
9. Without prejudice to point 5 above, each of the hosting institutions should endeavor to promote intra- and inter-institutional consistency in decision-making with respect to requests for special accommodation of similar background and nature.
10. Each of the hosting institutions should develop their own written policy with respect to requests for special accommodation due to disability or SENs and the policy should be consistent with the common principles enshrined in this Consensus Statement. The policy should cover the standard procedures to be adopted when considering a special accommodation request. Such procedures should accord procedural fairness and, inter alia, provide for a mechanism for applicants to appeal against the decision of the hosting institution in relation to their special accommodation request.

28 June 2024

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<sup>2</sup> “Introduction” section of The Medical Council of Hong Kong’s Code of Professional Conduct for the Guidance of Registered Medical Practitioners (October 2022)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mchk.org.hk/english/publications/files/HKDoctors.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> <https://online.hkam.org.hk/pdfviewer?file=https://online.hkam.org.hk/filex/dhjRjvmH/pdfview>