

AbstractID: 11900 Title: Current status of medical physicist certification in Poland and neighbouring regions

Qualifications of medical physicists in the clinical environment are regulated in Poland but the regulation is not unified throughout the EU. If a medical physicist with a certificate from another EU country wants to work in Poland, he has to undergo not only certification but also evaluation of educational background against the national standard.

The speciality of medical physics covers radiotherapy, diagnostic and nuclear medicine. Regulations come from: (1) Law by the Minister of Health in which qualifications, residency programme and process of certification are described; (2) Atomic Law which regulates work with the use of ionising radiation and which enforces the employment of medical physicists for certain jobs.

Prior to a residency programme a master's degree in physics is required. Graduates of disciplines other than physics can enter a residency programme after an additional process of evaluation. A final exam (practical and theoretical) ends the three years of the residency programme.

At national level a Centre for Medical Examination (CEM) organises exams and formally supervises training for all medical specialities (physicians, medical physicists, physiotherapists). A representative of CEM is present during recruitment to residency programmes and exams.

Hospitals that want to hold a residency programme have to prove the ability to provide the full spectrum of training or to subcontract a missing part to another hospital.

The residency programme is based on a concept of full time work under the supervision of a tutor. Residents can also attend courses on different parts of the programme but the completion of courses is not mandatory. The residents have to pass interim exams before their tutors. Different institutional policies apply on whether the tutor is solely responsible for checking interim progress or selected staff members examine the residents.

Professional guidance is organised. A national consultant in medical physics appointed by the Minister of Health advises CEM in all issues. The role of the national consultant goes beyond the process of specialisation and certification as he is on the official list of institutions which have to be consulted before new regulations addressing radiotherapy, nuclear medicine and diagnostic imaging are approved.

The national consultant is supported by a committee of medical physicists appointed by the Minister of Health to revise the residency programme and to evaluate hospitals that provide the training. The final exam is held by the CEM sub-committee which includes 3-4 medical physics specialists including a national consultant and a representative of a scientific society. Exams are held twice a year. The certificate has the form of the title of specialist in medical physics and formally comes from the state. The continuing education programme for medical physicists is not mandatory yet and a process of periodical revalidation of the certificate is not present.

Educational Objectives:

1. Know the current status of certification of medical physicists in Poland.
2. Understand the role of different institutions in the process of training and certification.
3. Know the content of the undergraduate curriculum and residency programme prior to certification.