

Certificate Course in  
**Wheelchair Technology**

TATCOT, Moshi, Tanzania



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Tanzanian Training Centre  
for Orthopaedic Technologists

## Introduction

Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre (KCMC) is an institution of the Good Samaritan Foundation of the Evangelic Lutheran Church of Tanzania. It is a consultant and referral medical centre for the Northern Zone of Tanzania.

TATCOT – The Tanzanian Training Centre for Orthopaedic Technologists – was founded at KCMC in 1981 with material, financial and human resource support from the Government of Tanzania and the Federal Republic of Germany. The centre represents one of the first supra-regional training centres in orthopaedic technology in Africa. The different courses offered at TATCOT are accredited and recognised by both the International Society of Prosthetics and Orthotics (ISPO) and the World Health Organisation (WHO). Students are enrolled from across Africa and other interested nations.

TATCOT comprises a well-equipped training centre with classrooms, training workshops, and a resource centre. It has access to an extensive and well-established orthopaedic department within the hospital. The link with the hospital guarantees a 'hands-on' approach to training and education.

KCMC is only 4km from Moshi town centre, 55km from Kilimanjaro International Airport (KIA) and 430km from Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, in Nairobi, Kenya. There are reliable bus connections from both airports.

The Certificate Course in Wheelchair Technology was established through a joint co-operation and partnership between TATCOT and Motivation UK. It is managed and carried out through the Directorate of Allied Health Science Schools of KCM College of TUMAINI University.



Different wheelchair designs fabricated by students

## **Certificate in Wheelchair Technology**

In October 2000, TATCOT launched the world's first one-year certificate course in Wheelchair Technology. The aim of the course is to qualify wheelchair technologists who have the practical skills and knowledge needed to fabricate and prescribe appropriate wheelchairs and to manage a self-financing workshop.

The broad objectives of the one-year certificate course are to qualify wheelchair technologists:

n who are equipped with practical skills and knowledge enabling them to appreciate the design, selection of devices, and prescription of wheelchairs to people with different disabilities

n who are equipped with the practical skills and knowledge to select locally available materials, parts and other resources suitable for the fabrication of wheelchairs

n who are able to fabricate wheelchairs which provide the intended function, are durable, easily maintained, cosmetically acceptable and affordable by users

n who are equipped with the skills and knowledge required to develop appropriate designs, assemble parts, and set up procedures for wheelchair fabrication to meet the requirements of the local community

n who are competent to serve within a rehabilitation clinical team and participate in improving quality, service delivery and community-based rehabilitation

n who are knowledgeable, motivated and capable of educating technicians working in a wheelchair workshop with the aim of maintaining and continuously improving the quality achieved

n who are able to show understanding of professional ethics and can appreciate the individual social, cultural, psychological and economic factors which influence the process of production, provision and utility of wheelchairs

n who are capable of managing, co-ordinating and supervising the daily working activities of the technicians engaged in a wheelchair production workshop.

## **The need for wheelchairs**

The provision of an appropriately made wheelchair that suits the local conditions can facilitate a change in the quality of life of a poor or disadvantaged person with a disability. Such a device can enable an individual to gain independence, confidence and dignity.

It is estimated that over 20 million people around the world who would benefit from the use of a wheelchair do not have one. Many of the wheelchairs that are available are either donated from overseas, or if locally made, are copies of western design and not usually appropriate to the local environment.

## The course

The duration of the course is one academic year, commencing in October. The course has a capacity to admit eight students each year.

Course time is split between theoretical training (20%), practical training (70%) and examinations (10%). Core subjects include: Material Technology; Workshop Technology; Technical Drawing; Workshop Management; Therapy; and Wheelchair Modules.

## Entry qualifications

To qualify for admission, applicants must possess either an Ordinary level education or equivalent certificate, with at least three credit passes in any of the subjects: Physics, Biology, Mathematics or Chemistry.

Or candidates may be admitted with lower academic qualifications provided they have two years experience of wheelchair production or repair in a recognised workshop, and pass an entry examination.

In all cases candidates must present their original certificates and other relevant documents.

### Interviews and entry examinations

Apart from meeting the above criteria, candidates will be required to appear and pass an entry examination and interview.

**Age:** 18 years and above

**Sex:** both male and female students are admitted

**Health:** candidates must present a medical certificate showing they are fit for the course.

## Accommodation

There is accommodation within the centre campus and outside the campus. Students are strictly forbidden to accommodate their family or friends within the campus.

## Course fees

<b>Outline of course fees</b>	<b>US\$</b>
Tuition fees	6,733
Uniforms	150
Hostel rent	1,000
Catering utensils	38
Resident permit	120
Medical insurance	250
Education excursion	150
Total	8,441

The fee is payable in US dollars or its equivalent and can be paid once a year or by instalments - twice a year.

The monthly allowances for students during the period of the course will depend on their parents or sponsoring institutions. However, it is proposed that for foreign students, the monthly allowance should be not less than US\$150. This amount should be used to cover the student's daily expenses.

## Sponsorship

Several organisations offer study grants to TATCOT programmes. Those intending to join the course should process their requests for grants in their own countries through the appropriate institutions, for example, the Ministry of Health. The following organisations are recommended as possible sponsors:

- Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung gGmbH (inWent)
- β Ministry of Health (MoH)
- β International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- β British Council (BC) or British High Commission (BHC)
- β World Health Organisation (WHO)
- β Commonwealth Secretariat (CS)
- β United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- β Swedish Organisation of Handicapped Int'l Fdn. (SHIA)
- β Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD)
- β Episcopal Organization Cooperation (MISSERIOR)
- β United States Agency for International Development (USAID)

## Other courses

- β B.Sc. Course in Prosthetics and Orthotics (3 to 4 years) – KCM-College
- β Diploma Course in Orthopaedic Technology (3 years)
- β Certificate in Lower Limb Orthotic Technology (1 year)
- β Certificate in Lower Limb Prosthetic Technology (1 year)

Other short courses of up to six months are offered at the centre.

## Applications

Applications should be submitted to the Principal of TATCOT by 31<sup>st</sup> January each year, for admission the following October.

- β Candidates must write to the Principal to confirm their place no later than 31<sup>st</sup> March.
- β Applications received after this time will be considered for the next academic year unless a place is available.