

AMC DIRECTORS REPORT

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND DENTISTRY, FACULTY OF MEDICINE, HEALTH AND MOLECULAR SCIENCES, JAMES COOK UNIVERSITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2010

The AMC's *Assessment and Accreditation of Medical Schools: Standards and Procedures* provides for accredited medical schools to seek reaccreditation when a period of accreditation expires. Accreditation is based on the medical course demonstrating that it satisfies the AMC standards for basic medical education. The school prepares a submission for reaccreditation which is assessed by an AMC team that conducts visits to the school and its clinical teaching sites.

The School of Medicine and Dentistry (the School) in the Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences at the James Cook University (JCU) is seeking reaccreditation of its medical course. The course was originally assessed as a new medical school by the AMC in 1999 and was granted accreditation for six years until 31 December 2006, subject to conditions. Follow-up assessment visits were conducted in 2000 and 2002. Following the 2002 visit, the AMC granted accreditation until 31 December 2007, subject to satisfactory annual reports.

Following the School's advice in its 2006 comprehensive report that it planned in 2007 to increase student numbers to 100 (from an initial cohort of 60) and in 2008 to 150, the Medical School Accreditation Committee considered that a short visit by an AMC team was required in 2007. The Team reported on areas of staff recruitment and retention, clinical placements, and strategies to accommodate the increased student load. Following this visit, accreditation of the School was extended until 31 December 2010.

A comprehensive report for re-accreditation of an established medical course was provided by JCU in April 2010. An AMC assessment team was appointed in 2010 to review the School's documentation, and to visit the School and associated clinical teaching sites the week of 19 July 2010. This report presents the Team's recommendation on reaccreditation to the Medical School Accreditation Committee and the detailed findings of the Team against the AMC standards.

Decision on Accreditation

Under the *Health Practitioner Regulation National Law Act 2009*, the AMC may grant accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied that a program of study and the education provider that provides it meet an approved accreditation standard. It may also grant accreditation if it is reasonably satisfied that the provider and the program of study substantially meet an approved accreditation standard, and the imposition of conditions on the approval will ensure the program meets the standard within a reasonable time. The AMC reports its accreditation decision to the Medical Board of Australia to enable the Board to make a decision on the approval of the program of study for registration purposes.

The AMC's finding is that the medical program of the School of Medicine and Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences, James Cook University meets the AMC Accreditation Standards.

The accreditation options for reaccreditation of established medical courses are:

- (i) Accreditation for a period of 10 years subject to satisfactory progress reports. Accreditation will be for six years in the first instance. In the year before the accreditation ends, the medical school will be required to submit a comprehensive progress report. Subject to a satisfactory report, the AMC may grant a further period of accreditation, up to a maximum of four years, before a new accreditation review.
- (ii) Accreditation for 10 years subject to certain conditions being addressed within a specified period and to satisfactory progress reports. Accreditation will be for six years in the first instance. In the year before the accreditation ends, the medical school will be required to submit a comprehensive progress report. Subject to a satisfactory report, the AMC may grant a further period of accreditation, up to a maximum of four years, before a new accreditation review.
- (iii) Accreditation for shorter periods. If significant deficiencies are identified or there is insufficient information to assess if development plans presented by school will result in course that satisfies AMC Accreditation Standards, the AMC may award accreditation with conditions and for a period of less than six years.
- (iv) Accreditation may be refused where the AMC considers that the deficiencies are so serious as to warrant that action or where the school has not satisfied the AMC that the complete medical course can be implemented and delivered at a level consistent with AMC Accreditation Standards.

The November 2010 meeting of the AMC Directors endorsed the accreditation report and resolved:

- (i) That the six-year undergraduate medical program of the School of Medicine and Dentistry, Faculty of Medicine, Health and Molecular Sciences, James Cook University be granted accreditation for six years until 31 December 2016, subject to the submission of satisfactory progress reports to the Medical School Accreditation Committee;
- (ii) That subject to a satisfactory report from the School in its fifth year of accreditation (2015), the AMC grant the School a further period of accreditation, up to a maximum of four years, before the School is revisited for accreditation.

Overview of findings

The findings against the AMC Accreditation standards are summarised below.

1. Context (governance, autonomy, course management, educational expertise, budget, health sector, research context, staff)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Areas of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the partnership that exists between the School of Medicine and Dentistry and the many sections of the health system, both public and private • the Dean’s leadership and long-term vision for the School • the academic, professional and technical staff that support the School and the Dean <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the governance structure as the School moves to a new phase of development, with a doubling of student numbers and a substantial growth of new clinical placement sites (AMC standard 1.1) • indigenous health representation on Cabinet and Indigenous staff recruitment across the School and Faculty (AMC standard 1.1) • the management of the budget deficit in 2010 and 2011 (AMC standard 1.5) • the engagement with all clinical sites about new developments in the medical course and facilitating shared clinical appointments (AMC standard 1.6) • the academic and professional workforce plan to support students across all clinical sites (AMC standard 1.8) • the mechanisms to communicate learning objectives and assessment requirements to clinical teachers (AMC standard 1.8) 	
2. Outcomes (mission, course outcomes)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Area of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the robust strategic plan with a set of logical and appropriate strategies that aligns with the School of Medicine and Dentistry’s mission <p><u>Area for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the promotion of the School’s vision to graduate undifferentiated medical practitioners with particular training in rural, remote, tropical and Indigenous health (AMC standard 2.1) 	

3. Curriculum (framework, structure, content, duration, integration, research, choices, continuum)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Areas of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the strong focus on providing training for the delivery of quality health care in rural and remote settings • the ongoing commitment to training doctors who are competent to provide quality health care to Indigenous peoples • the Honours program which offers exciting opportunities for students to engage in substantive research concurrently with their medical studies • the revised clinical skills program that strengthens the early years of the curriculum <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the completion of the curriculum database and ensuring its utility for staff and students (AMC standard 3.1) • the curriculum model (which was implemented 10 years ago) to ensure it adequately reflects the current and planned horizontal and vertical integration of the course (AMC standard 3.2) • the Indigenous health curriculum to ensure its alignment with the curriculum database and the MDANZ Indigenous Health Curriculum Framework (AMC standard 3.2) • the integration of emergent issues in basic sciences into the later years of the course (AMC standard 3.3) • ensuring that students have obtained all necessary ethics approvals for their research projects and are well informed about these requirements (AMC standard 3.4) 	
4. Teaching and learning methods	Meets the standards
<p><u>Area of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the continuing use of a wide range of contemporary teaching and learning methods that are appropriate for a regional and rural medical school with a disseminated program <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the mechanisms to communicate learning objectives and assessment requirements to clinical teachers • the recruitment and professional development of small group facilitators and home group tutors to sustain the current teaching model • strategies to facilitate the learning experience in Year 4 in all clinical settings to enhance integration in the clinical environment 	

5. Assessment (approach, methods, rules and progression, quality)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Areas of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the resources and effort expended to design, implement, and score assessment to reflect the integrated nature of the course, especially in Years 1 to 3 • the wide variety of assessment methods used to capture the broad thematic structure and the aims and objectives of the course • the vigilance of the School in detecting and remedying under or borderline performance • the considerable efforts to ensure equivalence of assessment at the different teaching sites <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the blueprinting process to ensure assessments provide an accurate reflection of the aims and objectives of the course (AMC standard 5.2) • the sustainability of the current and planned assessment strategy across all years as student numbers increase (AMC standard 5.4) • the feedback to students about their examination performance is increased to meet James Cook University policy (AMC standard 5.4) • the efficacy of recording completion of observed clinical performance tasks (AMC standard 5.4) 	
6. Monitoring and evaluation (ongoing monitoring, evaluation, feedback and reporting, educational exchanges)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Area of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the five-year plan to evaluate the school-wide curriculum which has, importantly, identified annual reporting priorities <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the implementation of curriculum or process modifications identified through the evaluation process (AMC standard 6.2) • the involvement in the University's continuous evaluation and quality assurance processes (AMC standard 6.2) 	
7. Students (intake, admission, support, representation)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Areas of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the increased physical infrastructure for Years 1 to 3 at the Townsville campus • the significant achievements in the recruitment, retention and graduation of Indigenous students 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the successful recruitment of students from rural and regional backgrounds the pastoral care available for students via the home group program, and the Year, site and senior academic advisors <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the resourcing required to meet the rapid increase in student numbers, particularly during Years 4 to 6 (AMC standard 7.1) the support for the increasing number of international students (AMC standard 7.3) 	
8. Resources (physical, IT, clinical teaching)	Meets the standards
<p><u>Areas of strength</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the clinical skills facility and staff at the Townsville campus and other sites the partnership with the private hospital sector, particularly the Mater Misericordiae Hospitals the strong commitment of clinical teachers to student learning across all sites the medical education registrar position at the Townsville Hospital, which is beneficial to the School and its students across all years of the course <p><u>Areas for improvement</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the reliability of IT infrastructure to ensure an adequate learning experience at all sites (AMC standard 8.2) the pursuit of opportunities for further collaborative development of clinical teaching and learning with MICRRH (AMC standard 8.3) the lack of facilities for Year 4 students on the Cairns Base Hospital site (AMC standard 8.3) the relationships to help build the capacity of Indigenous organisations across all sites for clinical teaching (AMC standard 8.3) the appointment of clinical academics to facilitate communication between the School and hospitals, and support further clinical training capacity (AMC standard 8.3) 	