



**Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council**

**Final Report
on Accreditation Inspection of
Allianze University College of Medical
Sciences
Medical School**

**Partner Universities:
University College Cork
National University of Ireland, Galway**

27th February 2013

THE DECISION OF THE MEDICAL COUNCIL IS THAT:

- 1. The programme which comprises two and a half years spent at either University College Cork or National University of Ireland, Galway and two and a half years spent at Allianze University College of Medical Sciences, Malaysia, and which leads to the award by the National University of Ireland of an MB BAO BCh degree, should be approved with conditions under the terms of Section 88(2)(a)(i)(I) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.**

The conditions are as follows:

- (a) The AUCMS, UCC and NUIG programme successfully completes its full first cycle (due in 2016)**
 - (b) There should be both formal and informal evaluation of the learning experience of this first student cohort throughout their clinical training in Taiping and this should involve qualitative and/or quantitative methods**
- 2. The University College Cork, National University of Ireland, Galway and Allianze University College of Medical Sciences should be approved with conditions for a period of eighteen months under Section 88(2)(a)(II) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 as the bodies which may deliver that programme.**

The conditions are as above.

The Medical Council should undertake a further monitoring visit of the AUCMS programme and the AUCMS as a body in autumn 2014, by which time the first student cohort will have spent over six months in clinical training in Taiping. The primary purpose of this visit will be to assess progress in addressing the conditions as outlined above and to monitor the progress of the first cohort of students after they return to Malaysia and hence the delivery of the programme.

A. Summary and General Assessment

1) The Decision of Medical Council

The Alliance University College of Medical Sciences (AUCMS) is a university college established in 2002 on a campus in Kepala Batas, Penang, which specialises in medicine and allied health sciences courses. The primary clinical training site is at Taiping Hospital, Taiping. The partnership with University College Cork (UCC) and National University of Ireland, Galway (NUIG) is in the form of a twinning programme which will see students spend the first two and a half years in Ireland, either in UCC or NUIG, and will provide graduates with a medical degree awarded by the Irish universities on completion of the programme in Malaysia.

The Decision of the Medical Council is that:

1. The programme which comprises two and a half years spent at either University College Cork or National University of Ireland, Galway and two and a half years spent at Alliance University College of Medical Sciences, Malaysia, and which leads to the award by the National University of Ireland of an MB BAO BCh degree, should be approved with conditions under the terms of Section 88(2)(a)(i)(I) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007.

The conditions are as follows:

- (a) The AUCMS, UCC and NUIG programme successfully completes its full first cycle (due in 2016)
 - (b) There should be both formal and informal evaluation of the learning experience of this first student cohort throughout their clinical training in Taiping and this should involve qualitative and/or quantitative methods
2. The University College Cork, National University of Ireland, Galway and Alliance University College of Medical Sciences should be approved with conditions for a period of eighteen months under Section 88(2)(a)(II) of the Medical Practitioners Act 2007 as the bodies which may deliver that programme.

The conditions are as above.

The Medical Council should undertake a further monitoring visit of the AUCMS programme and the AUCMS as a body in autumn 2014, by which time the first student cohort will have spent over six months in clinical training in Taiping. The primary purpose of this visit will be to assess progress in addressing the conditions as outlined above and to monitor the progress of the first cohort of students after they return to Malaysia and hence the delivery of the programme.

2) Recommendations additional to the conditions above

1. That progress should continue in the area of assessment, to include:
 - A. The convening of an Assessment Sub-Committee
 - B. Assessment of professionalism across the different years of the programme, along with opportunities for reflection, e.g. in the form of a Reflective Journal
 - C. Greater emphasis on Workplace-Based Assessment (WBA) or In-Training Assessment (ITA) in the formative and summative assessment of its students in clinical training
2. That all parties continue to evaluate and monitor the academic progression of their students both in Ireland and Malaysia
3. AUCMS should continue to ensure awareness among students of the following:
 - A. The Medical Council's *Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice*
 - B. The Medical Council's *Guidelines for Medical Schools on Ethical Standards and Behaviour appropriate for Medical Students*, particularly on affiliated sites and in general practices used for teaching
 - C. The revised *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* guidelines in Ireland before students have attachments in paediatrics
 - D. The World Health Organisation *Patient Safety Guidelines*
4. AUCMS should continue to ensure that defined learning outcomes are disseminated to students and staff, particularly staff on clinical training sites
5. AUCMS should ensure that clinical training site staff are offered incentives to teach, such as the opportunity to be involved in curriculum development, assessment and access to electronic journals
6. AUCMS should ensure that the teaching environment incorporates high standards in hygiene and infection control including ensuring that students are trained in hand-washing techniques and have access to the necessary facilities.

3) The Team commend AUCMS for:

1. The enthusiasm of the staff and the quality of the academic and administrative appointments to date
2. The significant work in curricular development and curricular delivery that has already been undertaken since the Medical Council evaluation in February 2012, and the evident progress that has resulted
3. Their aspirations for the future

4. The manner in which a joint curriculum between University College Cork and National University of Ireland, Galway has now been developed
5. The Curriculum Committee that enables clinicians to contribute to the development of the programme
6. The honorary contracts for all the clinicians in the hospitals and the financial and other incentives proposed by the medical school
7. The impressive plans for the medical school building at Wisma Palaniappa
8. The staff development programme including the distance learning programmes in Medical Education
9. The establishment of a Board of Governors or "Joint Oversight Committee" to be inaugurated in September 2013
10. The profile given to ethics both in the interview and selection process, and in the programme itself
11. The plans for student involvement on Committees such as the Curriculum Committee and the Student Affairs Committee
12. The Medical English Course which has been designed to ensure students will understand specific medical terminology while in Ireland
13. The Memoranda of Understanding with the clinical sites which have been signed to date.

4) The Team request the following information/clarification from AUCMS:

1. A six-monthly progress report on the recruitment to further key academic, administrative and technical staff appointments
2. Reports of regular quality assurance activities relevant to the clinical placements of the various years of the programme
3. Sight of the Memoranda of Understanding signed with Taiping Hospital and Klinik Kesihatan
4. Information on the Student Fitness to Practise procedures which are to be replicated from the programme in University College Cork
5. Sight of any existing or future reports of relevant Malaysian Medical Council inspections to the Irish sites or the Malaysian site
6. The opportunity to meet with the first and second year AUCMS students who are already in University College Cork and National University of Ireland, Galway, to discuss their experience of the programme thus far.

B. Evaluation of the programme based on WFME standards

WFME AREA 1

Mission and Objectives

The mission and objectives are in line with those already established at the partner universities.

A Memorandum of Agreement was signed in 2009. The Team was updated on plans for a building to include staff offices, seminar rooms, and clinical skills laboratories at a location 200-300 metres from Taiping Hospital. It is intended that the majority of the teaching will take place at Taiping Hospital, with rotations to Kulim Hospital, as and when student numbers demand, once the programme is in steady state.

The Team wish to praise AUCMS, UCC and NUIG on the clear advances that have been made over the last year. There was a palpable sense of enthusiasm and commitment among the academic leads and the clinicians who are engaged and who are knowledgeable about the programme.

WFME AREA 2

Educational programme

It is clear that significant work has been undertaken by AUCMS, UCC and NUIG and this is reflected in the joint submission which has been received following the Medical Council evaluation inspection in 2012. The Team was particularly impressed with the alignment of the curriculum planning and delivery which has been developed.

The clinical staff in the hospital and the clinic that the Team visited all highlighted the positive impact that a partnership with the Irish medical schools has brought. They believe that this will improve the quality of patient care through the personal professional development of staff and the contribution of the clinical academic staff of the medical school to the care of patients.

The Team commend the AUCMS, UCC and NUIG on establishing the Board of Governors. The Team also commend the establishment of honorary contracts for all the clinicians in the hospitals along with the financial and other incentives to be offered. The Team note the fact that the academic staff will be involved in teaching on the clinical sites as much as possible.

It is apparent that the AUCMS, UCC and NUIG have built on the transition programme which was commenced last year and much credit is due to all concerned for developing this programme. It is also evident that all partners recognise that integration of the students back to Malaysia following their placements in Ireland will be a challenge, but it is clear that all partners are cognisant of this and are actively addressing the challenges. This is a critical time in the twinning programme for the transition from Ireland to Malaysia and the Team would be very keen that the experience be comprehensively assessed and evaluated. At present, plans for evaluation seem to be unclear and therefore, the Team set the condition that there should be both formal and informal evaluation of the experience of this first student cohort throughout their clinical training in Taiping and this should involve qualitative and/or quantitative methods. The Council should be notified of the outcome of all formal evaluation processes, in the form of amalgamated cohort statistics, within six months of the evaluation being undertaken. Information on the processes for the quality assurance of clinical placements is also sought by the Team.

The Team note the Curriculum Committee has now been founded and the Team acknowledge the significant work that has been undertaken to set up Memoranda of Understanding with the teaching sites.

The Team was pleased to see the inclusion of ethics, both in the interview and selection process, and in the programme itself, and wish to commend all parties on this. The Team also congratulate AUCMS on the roll-out of the student selected modules in humanities and heard with interest about a proposed 'History of Medicine in Malaysia' module.

In common with the programmes already delivered in UCC and NUIG, the Team wish to commend AUCMS for their plans to include student involvement on Committees such as the Curriculum Committee and the Student Affairs Committee. The Team was also reassured that Malaysian students are well-integrated into the programmes in UCC and NUIG both at an academic level and socially. The Team congratulate AUCMS on their plans to support student societies in Taiping and for their ongoing efforts in attempting to negotiate discounted rates at a local sports club.

WFME AREA 3

Assessment of Students

The Team was informed about the plans for student assessment, where the continuous assessment strategy has been replicated from the National University of Ireland, Galway programme, including Multiple Choice Questionnaires, Objective Structured Clinical Examinations and modified essay questions.

However, in the pre-inspection documentation, the focus is on the second semester of Year 3 and less so on Year 4, with only a basic overview of Year 5. In all of the pre-inspection documentation, there appears to be an over-emphasis on end-of-year summative assessment, with a disappointing level of emphasis on continuous assessment in the form of workplace-based assessment (WBA) or in-training

assessment (ITA). The Team recommend that the AUCMS consider the introduction of a far greater emphasis on WBA or ITA in its summative assessment processes for clinical training.

In the pre-inspection documentation reference is made to an Assessment Sub-Committee and the Team recommend that this be convened as soon as possible.

Finally, the Team note that little reference has been made to the assessment of professionalism across the different years of the programme and recommend that this be included in the curriculum along with student reflections such as might be contained in a Reflective Journal.

WFME AREA 4

Students

The Team was given an overview of the selection criteria which are in place for determining students' eligibility for the programme. Once a candidate is determined to have met the academic criteria, the candidate is then interviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from UCC and NUIG. The gender balance in the AUCMS medical programme is approximately 60:40 female to male, in common with other medical programmes.

The Team was informed of the orientation and induction programmes which have been developed to prepare the students for the cultural differences and the transition between Ireland and Malaysia. Student support appears to be well-established and integration is encouraged.

Due to the fact that the students of the twinning programme are currently based in either UCC or NUIG, the Team was not able to meet any students at the Taiping site. However, the Team would welcome the opportunity to meet a representative group of the students in Cork and Galway to discuss their experience of the twinning programme thus far and to establish their views of the programme prior to their return to Malaysia. It is intended to arrange this, and the reports from these meetings will form an addendum to this report.

The Team commend the medical school on the translation into the Malaysian context of the Student Fitness to Practise Committee processes which are already in place in University College Cork and request additional information on this. The Team also wish to commend all parties on the introduction and ongoing development of a course in Medical English.

WFME AREA 5

Academic Staff/Faculty

The Team commend the enthusiasm of the staff which was evident during the visit, at University level, at the teaching hospital and at the clinic. The staff are committed to delivering the same quality of experience between the two sites in Cork and Galway and the programme will focus on the defined learning outcomes. The Team recommend that all parties keep evaluating and monitoring the students' progress on the two different sites.

The Team note that staff recruited in Malaysia will go to UCC or NUIG for training in evaluation methods and where possible, staff will continue to undertake clinical work so as prevent de-skilling. The Team commend the proposal to issue honorary contracts and also wish to compliment UCC and NUIG on their the distance learning programmes in medical education and overall staff development programme, including a workshop to be run by Professor Peter Cantillon later in 2013.

The Team will require a progress report on the recruitment and appointment of the professors of four specialties intended to be in place by September 2013, supported by one senior lecturer and one lecturer per specialty.

WFME AREA 6

Educational Resources

The Team visited the proposed new facilities at Wisma Palaniappa which look very impressive with clear, well-developed plans and initial construction underway. The Team understand that the Wisma Palaniappa facilities are due to be completed during the summer of 2013. The facilities are located approximately 200-300 metres from the Taiping Hospital site and lecture space is also to be made available at the hospital site.

The Team note the virtual learning environment is to be based on the National University of Ireland, Galway platform. Currently, all lectures are video-broadcast and recorded, therefore the quality of teaching may be easily compared with that in the Irish sites. There are well-developed plans to build on this learning platform and all parties are looking at ways to best maximise information sharing. The Team note the proposal to appoint a Professor of Technology and Advanced Learning and look forward to receiving an update on this appointment in due course.

WFME AREA 7

Programme evaluation

The Team welcome confirmation that the AUCMS is applying to be recognised by the relevant national and international medical education authorities and competent bodies, such as the Malaysian Medical Council, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency, the Avicenna Directory and the International Medical Education Directory (IMED) of the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER).

The Team request sight of any existing or future reports of relevant Malaysian Medical Council inspections to the Irish sites or the Malaysian site.

The Medical Council will also need to be reassured that the medical school will have systems in place for regular quality assurance of the clinical placements of the various years of the programme.

WFME AREA 8

Governance and Administration

The Team note the governance structures, which include student involvement, in UCC and NUIG. The Team commend AUCMS on the establishment of a Board of Governors which includes the Governor, the Chief Finance Officer and the Dean. The Team commend the initiative where representatives from the three institutions will sit on a Board for Examination Results.

The Team note the one-month-on and one-month-off arrangements of the two Vice Deans, Professor Tom Pierce and Professor Patrick O'Sullivan, and suggest that this arrangement be monitored on an on-going basis to ensure continuity and stability. The arrangement that has been put in place whereby the Vice Deans will have regular contact with the students studying in Ireland is to be welcomed.

WFME AREA 9

Continuous Renewal

The Team acknowledge that the medical curriculum is already well-established and is currently delivered in University College Cork and National University of Ireland, Galway, and will be subject to existing quality assurance and quality improvement initiatives.

It is evident to the Team that substantial work has been undertaken since the previous evaluation by the Medical Council in 2012 and the progress which has been made is commendable. Recruitment of suitable staff, in particular in Psychiatry, will be key to the long term success and sustainability of the programme and the Team request an update on a six-monthly basis in this regard.

The Team note that the Human Biology building in NUIG is due to be completed in 2015 and look forward to inspecting this facility at a future date.

Inspection of Clinical Training Sites

Meeting with consultants at Taiping Hospital, Taiping

The Team met a number of representatives of Taiping Hospital and the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of the clinicians responsible for education and training was admirable.

The clinicians have received preliminary timetables for the student placements commencing in 2014 and reassured the Team that there is sufficient capacity and appropriate case-mix at the training site for the proposed student numbers. The clinicians have access to a library and electronic journals and also welcome the programme of visiting academics that are scheduled to come to Taiping Hospital over the coming months. The clinicians' role will mostly consist of informal teaching at the bedside. The hospital already has some medical students in place and so the clinicians believe they are well-placed and well-prepared to accept additional students. The clinicians would like to be involved in the assessment process and already act as assessors for other local universities. The Team support this.

Meeting with consultants at Klinik Kesihatan, Taiping

The Team met a number of representatives of Klinik Kesihatan and the enthusiasm, commitment and dedication of the clinicians responsible for education and training was palpable. Klinik Kesihatan is a primary care clinic treating 900–1200 patients per day in specialties which include a Tuberculosis clinic, a Chronic Disease Management clinic, a Warfarin clinic, a Respiratory Care Clinic and a Diabetes Clinic. The clinicians believe they can accommodate ten students at any one time in their clinic and they are satisfied that there is ample capacity for students to become involved in managing patients who are representative of all age ranges. The clinicians would like to play a role in student assessment – and the Team support this - and would like to become involved in postgraduate training, should such an opportunity arise at a future date. The Team was also informed that AUCMS plan to put some additional resources in place at the clinic, to express their gratitude and appreciation for the work that the clinicians will be undertaking.



Comhairle na nDochtúirí Leighis
Medical Council

**Addendum to Report
on Accreditation Inspection of
Allianze University College of Medical
Sciences
Medical School**

**Meeting with Students
at Partner Universities
University College Cork
National University of Ireland, Galway**

5th April and 10th April 2013

WFME AREA 4

Students

Addendum

The Team welcomed the opportunity to meet a representative group of the students in University College Cork and National University of Ireland, Galway to discuss their experience of the twinning programme thus far and to establish their views of the programme prior to their return to Malaysia. The students volunteered to meet with the Medical Council Team (Dr Anna Clarke and Ms Katharine Bulbulia) and were all assured of confidentiality and that no comments made would be attributable to any individual.

Meeting with AUCMS Students at University College Cork

Year One

The Team met with 13 Year One students who arrived in Ireland in September 2012. The students were very complimentary about the programme in UCC and the lecturers were reported to be excellent and approachable. In particular, they praised Dr Anne Harris for her support and their sponsors in Dublin. The students also remarked that they have received some support from the AUCMS students currently in Year Two and that they are in regular contact with their AUCMS peers based in Galway.

The students were very positive about the Medical English course that has been organised for them. The students were finding biochemistry somewhat difficult but had organised their own study group to help address this. In common with the Year Two students, the Year One students have integrated well into the programme and the Irish students were very supportive of their cultural events. The students were aware of the student health services that are open to them.

The Year One students expressed a desire to have the option to participate in a graduation ceremony in Ireland. While this may or may not be a feasible option, the Team would certainly suggest that UCC at least give consideration to holding a ceremony in Ireland (similar to a White Coat ceremony) prior to their transition back to Malaysia.

Of particular concern to the Year One students was the cost of accommodation in Victoria Lodge which they judged to be approximately €1,000 per annum more expensive than other accommodation options. While they appreciated the convenience of Victoria Lodge when they first arrive in Ireland, they wondered about the possibility of having a six month contract rather than a one year contract there.

The Year One students also noted that there are no Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) in First Year and they would like to have these reinstated.

Finally, in common with the Year Two students, the Year One students also expressed concern that the standards in Taiping should be as high as those in UCC (see below).

Year Two

The Team met with 16 Year Two students who arrived in Ireland in September 2011. The students stated that they are enjoying their experience in Ireland that the programme is of a very high standard with lecturers who are both helpful and accessible. The students have also found that their seniors have been very supportive to them and that they have integrated well into the class, sharing some social occasions with the Irish students. The students also felt their induction programme was well organised. The students particularly praised the Student Selected Modules, many of which were in the humanities and they too found the Medical English module to be very useful. The students praised Dr Katie Quane in the Anatomy department. The students were satisfied with the feedback and support that they receive after examinations.

Primarily, the issue that most concerns the Year Two students is their impending transition back to Malaysia in January 2014. The students are concerned about the standards and systems that will be in place in Taiping, particularly as they are the first cohort. While the Team found no evidence to validate such concerns during its visit to Taiping, the Team respect the students' perspective and suggests that UCC do everything possible to ensure a high quality experience at Taiping and ensure effective communications on the issue with the students. They have also heard reports that the transition itself will happen over a weekend and they feel this will not give them sufficient time to organise everything and is not enough time to see family in Malaysia prior to commencing in Taiping. Some Year Two students are also worried about the opportunities for and structure of postgraduate training in Malaysia.

The students from both Year One and Year Two complained that the Prayer Room is too small to accommodate their growing numbers and while they have raised the matter, the only solution that has been offered is use of the Chaplaincy which is too far away.

The students also raised the issue that some of the lectures in the Public Health module are not uploaded to Blackboard in a timely manner and they would like this to be addressed.

The students expressed a desire to have more experience in the general practice module prior to returning to Malaysia and also expressed a desire to have more anatomy dissection. They also suggested having more clinical placements prior to their return.

Meeting with AUCMS Students at National University of Ireland, Galway

Year One

The Team met with 21 Year One students who arrived in Ireland in September 2012. The students were very complimentary about the programme in NUIG and reported that they are enjoying the programme so far and that the Irish students were very supportive of them. The students each have a mentor and participated in an induction programme. They reported that the Medical English programme was particularly useful.

While the Year One students are enjoying the Student Selected Modules, the modules all appear to be medicine-related and the students would very much like the opportunity to participate in some humanities modules run by faculties campus-wide. In addition, there were reports of quite a disparate workload between the different modules, with one module reportedly writing a brief paper while another module had a number of presentations associated with it. Some students also suggested the development of a 'Family Cultural and Social Module' to further enhance links between Malaysian and Irish students.

The students raised the issue that there is not enough choice of Halal food in the student cafeteria and also raised the issue that the university gym is quite expensive for them and wondered if the cost could be reduced or if it would be possible to take out a six month membership instead of a 12 month membership.

The Year One students seemed unclear about the policy for presenting medical certificates if they were absent due to illness. They were of the belief that a medical certificate must be presented on the first day of absence, despite the fact that they cannot get an appointment in the Health Student Unit. The Team would recommend that the policy for presentation of medical certificates be clarified to the students.

Finally, the students were satisfied that they received good support after examination results were issued although they were concerned that the pass mark in NUIG is allegedly higher than in other medical schools.

Year Two

The Team met with 16 Year Two students who arrived in Ireland in September 2011. The students were very complimentary about the programme in NUIG and said that while second year is more challenging, the tutors and lecturers have been superb. The students did suggest that possibly some consideration could be given to balancing the workload between Semester One and Semester Two which is apparently quite busy.

One point that the students raised was that they feel that the student numbers (10-12) in the Pathology tutorials is too large although they acknowledged the logistical difficulties in reducing the student numbers.

The students reported that they had the option to participate in Student Selected Modules, however again, all these modules appear to be related to medicine in some way. They would very much welcome the opportunity to have the option of taking modules in the humanities and the Medical Council would very much encourage that NUIG rolls this out.

In common with the students in UCC, the students in Year Two also have some concerns around their transition back to Malaysia. There is a large degree of uncertainty about when they are going back, what they will be doing when they get there, and the integration of the two cohorts of students from NUIG and UCC into one programme in Taiping. These concerns are exacerbated by the fact that Irish students already have details about their placements in Ireland in Year Three. The Team recommend that NUIG need to ensure that appropriate information in these areas is provided to students.

The Year Two students suggested that they would very much welcome a more formal link with their peers in UCC. They suggested that a yearly event be held.

Finally, the Year Two students also expressed a desire to have the opportunity to participate in a graduation ceremony in Ireland and again, the Team would suggest that NUIG at least give consideration to organising a ceremony (such as a White Coat Ceremony) to mark their transition back to Malaysia.

End of report