

Akkreditierungsagentur  
im Bereich Gesundheit und Soziales  
Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science



## **Assessment Report**

**for the Application of  
Umm Al-Qura University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia,  
College of Medicine  
for the Accreditation of the Bachelor Study Program  
“Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”  
(Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery, MBBS)**

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## 1 Introduction

The Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences (the AHPGS) is an interdisciplinary, multi-professional organization. Its mission is to carry out quality assurance procedures regarding study programs, as well as Higher Education Institutions, in the fields of health and social sciences and in related domains. By implementing quality assurance procedures, the AHPGS contributes to the improvement of the overall quality of teaching and learning.

Starting from 2009, the AHPGS is listed in the European Quality Assurance Register (EQAR). Since 2004 the AHPGS has been a member of the European Consortium for Accreditation (ECA). In 2006, the AHPGS also joined the European Association for Quality Assurance (ENQA) and became a member of the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) in 2009. Since 2012, the AHPGS has been a member of the Network of Central and Eastern European Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (CEENQA).

Umm Al-Qura University has commissioned the AHPGS to carry out the assessment and accreditation of the bachelor study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”.

Study programs of Umm Al-Qura University, Makkah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are required to be accredited by an international accreditation agency according to the decision of the University.

The accreditation criteria of the AHPGS are the basis for the accreditation decision. These criteria can be found on the webpage of the AHPGS<sup>1</sup>. The accreditation criteria are developed by the AHPGS in close accordance with the existing criteria and requirements valid in the Federal Republic of Germany and based on the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

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<sup>1</sup> <http://ahpgs.de/english/program-accreditation/>

The accreditation procedure is carried out in four steps:

### **I. University's application**

The AHPGS verifies the sufficiency of the application documents submitted by the University, namely the Self-Evaluation Report and its corresponding annexes. These are to fulfill the assessment spheres, as well as the AHPGS standards. As a result, the AHPGS produces a summary (see below), which is to be approved by the University, and subsequently made available for the expert group, together with all other documentation.

### **II. Written review**

Parallel to the first step, the main documents are reviewed by the expert group nominated by the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS. This is done in order to verify the compliance of the study program with the applicable accreditation criteria.

### **III. On-site visit (Peer-review)**

The experts carry out the on-site visit at the University. In the course of the on-site visit, the expert group holds discussions with various members of the University, including the University and college administrative representatives, the program management, teaching staff and a group of students. Such extensive discussions provide the expert group with additional information and a better insight into the structure and content of the program.

The task of the experts during the on-site visit is to verify the rationality of the program's objectives and learning outcomes and their correspondence to the needs of the current and expected labor market situation, to evaluate the sufficiency and effectiveness of the teaching staff, material resources, and methods of assessment (admission requirements, assessment of achievements, students' support), as well as of the program management (program administration, internal and external assurance of study quality).

Following the on-site visit, the expert group issues the expert report for the study program. This is based on the results of the on-site visit, the documents submitted by the University and the experts' considerations based on these documents. The expert reports are made available to the University for it to issue a response opinion.

The expert report, as well as the University's response opinion – together with the application documents – is submitted to the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS for the final decision.

#### **IV. Accreditation decision**

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS examines the documentation made available, namely the University's application documents, the summary comprised by the AHPGS, the expert report and the University's response opinion. These documents represent the basis for the decision of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS, which can be formulated in three ways: accreditation, accreditation with conditions or denial of accreditation.

## 2 Overview

### 2.1 Procedure-related documents

Umm Al-Qura University (hereinafter “the University”) assigned the AHPGS to carry out the accreditation procedure for the following study programs: “Dentistry”, “Bachelor of Pharmacy”, “Doctor of Pharmacy” and “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”.

The University submitted the Self-Evaluation Report and the relevant annexes of the bachelor study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” to the AHPGS in electronic format on 19 April 2015. The contract for the assessment and the accreditation of the study program (without the awarding of the official seal of the Accreditation Council of the Foundation for the Accreditation of Study Programs in Germany) was signed by the University and the AHPGS on 18 January 2016.

On 11 December 2015, the AHPGS forwarded the open questions and explanatory notes (OQ) pertaining to the application documents of the study program to the University. On 8 January 2016, the University submitted the answers to the open questions and explanatory notes (AOQ) to the AHPGS in electronic format.

This document presents the summary for the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” prepared by the AHPGS. The first cohort of students was admitted to the program in the academic year 1996/1997.

The Self-Evaluation Report submitted by the University follows the outline recommended by the AHPGS. Along with the Self-Evaluation Report, the University provided the following documents specific to the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”:

<b>Annex</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>1</b>	Executive summary of the study program
<b>2</b>	Study plan of the study program
<b>3</b>	Course description
<b>4</b>	Brief description of the structure and content of the study program
<b>5</b>	The reformed curriculum of the study program, 2015
<b>6</b>	Competence-based framework for the Saudi medical colleges
<b>7</b>	Academic guidance in the study program
<b>8</b>	Program of academic support for students failed in final exams
<b>9</b>	CVs of the teaching staff of the study program

10	Description of teaching positions at the University, College of Medicine
11	Teaching interdependence matrix
12	Annual program report 2014
13	Administrative structure of the College of Medicine
14	Medical Internship Program Manual, College of Medicine
15	Structural position of the curriculum committee
16	Resolution of the College of Medicine about the formation of an Accreditation and Quality Higher Committee
17	List of conferences and workshops where members of the College of Medicine have participated 2012-2015
18	List of publications by the members of the College of Medicine 2012-2015
19	List of community service activities accomplished by the members of the College of Medicine 2012-2015
20	Types of community services in Umm Al-Qura University, College of Medicine
21	List of research projects accomplished by the members of the College of Medicine 2012-2015
22	Grants allocated for each department of the College of Medicine for research projects within the period 2007-2015
23	Posters of the Medical Research Club of the College of Medicine
24	Calculation of workload hours

Table 1: Documents specific to the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”

Alongside the study-program-specific documents, the following documents pertain to all study programs submitted for the external evaluation:

Annex	Description
A	Executive rules at Umm Al-Qura University; Bylaws organizing academic affairs and study in medical colleges; Regulations of study and examinations of undergraduate phase
B	Program learning outcomes: Guidelines for program development and review of the National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment
C	Guideline of professional classification and registration for health practitioners of the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties
D	National qualifications framework for higher education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment
E	Saudi Teaching Staff Members Employment List in UQU
F	Non-Saudi Teaching Staff Members Employment List in UQU



<b>G</b>	Sample of a general secondary school transcript
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Table2. Documents common for all study programs

The Summary, the Expert Report as well as the resolution of the Accreditation Commission build the basis for the present Assessment Report.

## 2.2 Study program

### 2.2.1 Structural data

University	Umm Al-Qura University
College/Department	College of Medicine
Title of the study program	“Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”, MBBS
Degree awarded	Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery, MBBS
Form of studies	Full-time; from Sunday to Thursday
Language of instruction	English
Period of education	7 years (1 preparatory year + 5 years of studies + 1 year of clinical training)
Total number of credit hours	266 credit hours
Study hours/credit hours <sup>2</sup>	1 lecture = 1 credit hour 2 laboratory hours/practical sessions = 1 credit hour
Workload	Total: 8,778 hours Contact hours: 8,778 hours Practical activity hours: 1,920 hours (are not included (internship hours) into the total amount)
Beginning of the study program	Academic year 1996/1997
Time of admission	Winter semester
Number of available places on the program	260 in total: 130 places in the male and 130 places in the female section
Number of admitted students	in 2013/2014 (to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of studies): 260 in total: 130 places in the male and 130 places in the female section

<sup>2</sup>Credit hours are calculated based on the workload for one week.

In order to calculate students' the so-called 'points' for one course, their grade for this course is multiplied by the number of credit hours.

Number of graduates	in 2013/2014: 253 total: 113 graduates in the male and 140 graduates in the female section
Particular enrollment Conditions	To be admitted to the preparatory year: - a high school certificate with at least 90% of performance; - at least 90% of performance in such subjects as English, Chemistry, Physics and Biology; - Ability and Achievement test; - Physical and mental fitness. To be admitted to the 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of the program: Completion of the preparatory year with high marks.
Tuition fees	No fees; all students receive monthly financial support of 1000 SAR (Saudi Riyal), which is equal to 245 EUR

Table 3: Structural data of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”

According to the *Guidelines for Program Development and Review* determined by the Saudi Arabian National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA), medical programs must provide theoretical knowledge and practical skills of a general practitioner corresponding to the bachelor’s degree level. Such study programs have to combine academic study, practical training and substantial supervised clinical experience (Annex B, page 28).

According to these national requirements, the bachelor study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” consists of three main stages: 1) the first year of studies called ‘the preparatory year’, 2) the main period of studies, including the pre-clinical and clinical sub-stages, and 3) the internship year. In total, the study program has 50 courses during the studies at the University and six clinical rotations during the internship year.

Students, who want to study in one of the health care-related study programs of the University, have to complete a preparatory year. The University offers a preparatory year, which has been designed specifically for students who want to pursue studies in one of the following specializations: Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Informatics, and Nursing.

Thus, students who want to be in the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” attend a preparatory year in their first year of studies. This year is aimed to develop students’ spoken and written English language skills, to introduce them to the medical profession and medical sciences, to provide them with basic

knowledge in physics and to improve their learning skills as well as computer application skills.

The preparatory year of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” consists of nine courses, which is equal to 18% of the whole curriculum.

The main period of studies in the program lasts from the second to the sixth year and consists of 41 courses, which can be grouped into the following types:

- University requirement courses, which include “Holy Quran”, Islamic Culture”, “Prophet Profile” and “Arabic Language”. The program has ten of such courses, three of which are taught in the preparatory year and seven from the second to the fourth year of studies.
- Program-specific courses, which focus on the learning outcomes and professional objectives of the study program. There are 34 of such courses and they constitute 68% of the curriculum. They are taught during the main period of studies.

After the completion of the third year and thus of the pre-clinical sub-stage of their studies, students are required to complete a summer training in one of the hospitals affiliated with the University. The clinical stage of the program covers the fourth, fifth and sixth year of studies, when students are involved in practical activities in specific courses.

One-year internship is the third and last stage of the program, where students are required to complete a number of clinical rotations. Students can start the internship year after the successful completion of the sixth year. According to the University, one-year clinical training is mandatory to be eligible to practice medical care in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Upon the completion of the internship year, students receive the academic title “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)” as well as the certificate on the completion of the internship (Annex 4).

In Saudi Arabia, all health practitioners are required to pass the licensing examination in their respective specialties in order to have the right to work in the country. The licensing examinations are carried out by the Saudi Arabian Commission for Health Specialties (SCHS).

According to the *Guidelines of Professional Classification and Registration for Health Practitioners*, graduates with a bachelor’s degree in medicine and a certificate of one-year internship can apply for a licensing examination to be acknowledged as general practitioners (Annex C, pages 11-13). For that, graduates of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” submit an application and a

list of necessary documents, which are then reviewed by a specialized consultant and, if necessary, by a specialized committee (Annex C, page 14-15). Upon submitting the documents, program graduates can request a temporary registration for six months until they receive the final registration issued by the SCHS.

The College of Medicine does not offer master's degree study programs.

### **2.2.2 Qualification objectives and employment opportunities**

The curriculum and the learning outcomes of the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” have been revised in 2010 in order to make it more outcome-based. Hence, its main objective is to educate and train competent general practitioners who can provide community-centered health care based on the principles of patient safety. Upon graduation, students must be able:

- to apply their knowledge and skills in basic medical, clinical and social sciences in order to provide appropriate and effective treatment of health care problems;
- to demonstrate appropriate communication skills when interacting with patients and their families, with colleagues and other health care professionals;
- to demonstrate skills of working in a team, as well as leadership skills;
- to learn and work in accordance with the requirements of the Saudi health care system, since the program graduates are expected to find an employment in Saudi Arabia and the city of Mecca.

Furthermore, students of the program are taught to obtain and to document patients' comprehensive medical history, to perform a complete physical examination, to critically analyze and apply the data obtained through medical history and physical examination, to formulate and prioritize a differential diagnosis, to develop a treatment strategy, to recognize and assess life or organ threatening conditions (Self-Evaluation Report 1.3.2).

With regard to professional learning outcomes, graduates must acquire the following skills and competences:

- in terms of knowledge, they must be able to explain the normal structure and function of the human body in relation to its organ systems; to explain the human life cycle and its effect on structure and functioning of a human body; to explain clinical, laboratory, radiological and pathological manifestations of common diseases; to identify the relevant biochemical, pharmacological, surgical, psychological, social and other interventions; to recognize and assess normal and abnormal human behavior as well as the effects of diseases on the psychosocial state of a person; to know the principles of patient investigations

- and recognize common diagnostic tests (biochemistry, hematology, microbiology, pathology, cytology, genetic, immunology, virology, radiology) and to interpret their results and other;
- in terms of cognitive skills, students are trained to make clinical judgements and to take decisions based on the principle of evidence-based health care; to formulate appropriate management plans and to maintain management and follow-up protocols; to recognize and to manage immediate life-threatening conditions as well as common medical and surgical emergencies and other;
  - in terms of interpersonal skills and responsibility, students are trained to be committed to lifelong and self-directed learning as well as teaching; to work effectively in teams of various types; to respect the diversity of roles, responsibilities, and competencies of peers and colleagues in interprofessional teams within clinical and research settings; to participate and collaborate in local, regional, and national projects of public health education, healthcare planning, health screening and disease surveillance and other;
  - in terms of skills of communication and informational technology, students acquire professional competences of listening as well as of verbal and non-verbal communication; they learn to apply good bedside manners and to utilize effective counseling techniques; to maintain comprehensive and confidential documentation in written and electronic forms and other;
  - in terms of psychomotor skills, students train to perform accurate physical examination of patients using different techniques and to demonstrate basic therapeutic procedures (for more details about the learning outcomes and objectives, please see the Self-Evaluation Report 1.3.2).

The Medical College of the University aims to provide health care professionals for the whole area near the city of Mecca. One of the objectives of the college is to raise the level of health care in Saudi society, to provide health care services for pilgrims and to contribute in the progress of medical science. By offering the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”, the University wants to meet the needs of the local community and the growing demand for healthcare specialists in the country, as well as to foster the development of health care sciences in Saudi Arabia (Self-Evaluation Report 1.3.4).

The University assures that the program graduates can find employment in governmental health care sectors, such as hospitals and primary health care centers, as well as in private hospitals, dispensaries and polyclinics, military and university hospitals. Moreover, they can work as demonstrators, research assistants, and teaching assistants at higher education institutions. Finally, insurance and other

healthcare-related organizations are also considered as prospective employers (Self-Evaluation Report 1.4.1).

In the academic year 2013/2014, there were 113 male and 140 female graduates in the study program (information to the employment statistics for the year 2014 can be found in Annex 12, page 5).

### 2.2.3 Structure of the study program and exam system

The bachelor study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” consists of three main stages: the preparatory year, the main period of studies and the internship year. The program has in total 50 courses, nine of which are taught in the preparatory year and 41 in the main period of studies. Out of these 41 courses, seven are university requirement courses (three of the university requirement courses are taught in the preparatory year) and 34 are program-specific courses.

The preparatory year courses focus on general medical knowledge, learning and computer skills, as well as the English language. They are managed by the Preparatory Year Deanship. The main period of studies in the program consists of the program requirement courses, which are offered by different departments of the College of Medicine, and of the university requirement courses, which include “Holy Quran”, “Islamic Culture”, “Arabic Language” and “Prophet’s Life”.

All courses of the program are mandatory, there are no elective ones. Each semester consists of 14 weeks. The program is offered in a full-time form. Students of the program have to obtain the total amount of 266 credit hours. The program courses are taught in blocks, in other words in rotations within the determined number of week.

The first year, or the preparatory year, of the program consists of the following courses (Annex 2):

Year	Title	Credit Hours
1	Holy Quran (1)	2
	Islamic Culture (1)	2
	Arabic Language	2
	Medical Profession	2
	Learning Skills	2
	Computer Science	2

	Introduction to Medical Physics	3
	English Language (1) and (2)	12
	Introduction to Medical Sciences	8
<b>Total credit units for the 1<sup>st</sup> year</b>		<b>35</b>

Table 4: Study plan of the preparatory year

The main period of studies lasts from the second to the sixth year of studies and contains the following courses (Annex 2):

Year	Title	Credit Hours
2	Holy Quran (2)	2
	Islamic Culture (2)	2
	Prophet's Life	2
	Immunology	2
	Biochemistry	10
	Physiology	12
	Anatomy	14
<b>Total credit units for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>		<b>44</b>
3	Holy Quran (3)	2
	Islamic Culture (3)	3
	Neuroanatomy	4
	Neurophysiology	3
	Parasitology	3
	Medical Statistics and Scientific Research	3
	Medical Genetics	2
	Hematology	4
	Clinical Microbiology	8
	Basic Pharmacology	6
	General Pathology	6
<b>Total credit units for the 3<sup>rd</sup> year</b>		<b>44</b>
4	Holy Quran (4)	2
	Islamic Culture (4)	2
	Clinical Immunology	1
	Internal Medicine (1)	8
	General Surgery (1)	8

	Radiology	3
	Forensic Medicine	3
	Clinical Pharmacology	4
	Clinical Pathology	6
	Clinical Biochemistry	4
	Community Medicine	6
<b>Total credit units for the 4<sup>th</sup> year</b>		<b>47</b>
<b>5</b>	Psychiatry	3
	Dermatology	3
	ENT	3
	Ophthalmology	3
	Pediatrics	18
	Gynecology and Obstetrics	18
<b>Total credit units for the 5<sup>th</sup> year</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>6</b>	General Surgery (2)	3
	Medicine (2)	12
	General Surgery (3)	10
	Primary Health Care	9
	Medicine (3)	8
	Orthopedic and Accident Surgery	6
<b>Total credit units for the 6<sup>th</sup> year</b>		<b>48</b>
<b>Total credit hours for the whole program</b>		<b>266</b>

Table 5: Course overview of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor Surgery”

In the seventh year of their studies students complete an internship year, which consists of the following rotations (Annex 2):

<b>Internship Year</b>		
<b>Year</b>	<b>Title of the rotation</b>	<b>Duration</b>
<b>7</b>	Medicine	2 months
	Surgery	2 months
	Obstetrics and Gynecology	2 months
	Pediatrics	2 months
	Elective Rotation	2 months
	ER/Family	2 months



Table 6: Structure of the internship year of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor Surgery”

The University has provided the description of the program courses, which includes information about the amount of envisaged credit hours, the language of instruction, learning objectives and outcomes, content of studies and examinations (for more details, see Annex 3).

Methods of instruction used in the program include lectures, seminars, flipchart demonstrations, workshops, clinical skill sessions, clinical rotations, bedside teaching and role-playing. The didactic concept of the academic staff is based on problem-based and team-based learning (Self-Evaluation Report 1.2.6).

In the period from 2011 till 2013, there have been considerable changes in the methods of teaching and assessment applied in the study program. Hence, more students-focused learning activities, formative and comprehensive assessments and also enhanced clinical training have been introduced.

Students of the program start their education with a preparatory year designed specifically for medical colleges of the University. It is supervised by the Deanship of Registration and Acceptance. Upon the completion of the preparatory year, students are assigned to one of the following colleges based on their grades and preferences: Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Informatics, and Nursing.

Admission to the College of Medicine means that students continue their education in the second year of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”, where they learn the basic body structure and function on the cellular, tissue, organ and organic system levels. The third year courses focus on pathophysiologic mechanisms of diseases and covers topics from microbiology, parasitology, pathology, hematology and pharmacology. In addition to that, students start participating in laboratory investigations. The fourth year courses envisage introduction of clinical courses into the program curriculum. Thus, students have an opportunity to start acquiring clinical competences and skills of communication through the interaction with patients. The fifth and the sixth years of studies are devoted to learning in clinical settings in various health care institutions, where students are exposed to a variety of health care issues and working in teams (Self-Evaluation Report 1.3.3).

With regard to the integration of electronic teaching methods, the College of Medicine assures that the Deanship of e-Learning has arranged a number of in-class as well as online courses dedicated to the implementation of internet-based education process. Both female and male sections of the college have a computer

room for e-learning. In addition to that, the University provides an online platform “Desire2Learn” (D2L), which enables students and teachers to upload different learning resources to make them available for all participants. Furthermore, D2L serves as online space for experience exchange and interaction between staff members and students, as well as an effective examination and feedback tool.

The College of Medicine emphasizes that research constitutes an essential part of higher education to become a physician. Thus, principles and methods of scientific research are integrated into the content of the study program starting with the third year through the course “Medical Statistics and Scientific Research”. In this course, students are expected to participate in group discussions, to review scientific literature, to use different databases and analyze obtained information, to write questionnaires and to prepare a report (for more details, please see Annex 3).

In addition to that, basics of scientific research are taught as a part of the course “Community Medicine” in the fourth year. Together with the concepts of public health, students learn to choose a research topic, to write a research protocol, to construct a questionnaire, to collect, analyze and present data, and to write a final report about the results they have achieved. Four lectures of the course provide the theoretical background for conducting a scientific research. Students are given two weeks for data collection. The research-related part of the course constitutes 15% of students’ total grade for the course “Community Medicine” (see AOQ Medicine 26).

Apart from the mentioned courses, the College of Medicine has a Medical Research Club, where students can participate in various workshops and lectures prepared by the members of the teaching staff or by invited researchers (please see the posters and brochures of the research club in Annex 23). Every year students of the program participate in Saudi International Medical Education Conference to present their research activities (please see the list of research projects carries out by the college students in Annex 21).

The College of Medicine has two research chairs: Alzaidi chair of research in rheumatic diseases and Shiekh Jameel Khogair chair for research in colon and rectum cancer. They are funded by private sector. The University emphasizes that research activities and publications are considered as one of the main criteria for the promotion of the academic staff of the University (Self-Evaluation Report 1.2.9).

Practical activities are integrated into the program curriculum starting with the fourth year of studies. Clinical departments of the college prepare a list of core

clinical competences and clinical cases that students must acquire and deal with. Most of the courses consist of theoretical and practical parts (see the course descriptions in Annex 3).

The last stage of the program is the *Medical Internship Program* (IP) that lasts for one year. During the sixth year of studies, students apply for the internship program. As the University explains, students are provided with a number of placement tracks based on the order of medical specialties and the list of hospitals for each specialty (AOQ Medicine 22). Thereby, students' preferences and GPA scores are also taken into account. Students can carry out their clinical training at general and specialized hospitals under the management of the Ministry of Health, armed forces and the National Guard as well as King Faisal Specialist Hospitals, which are recognized by the College of Medicine for their training credentials. The internship program leads to the full medical registration of the program graduates by the Saudi Council for Health Commission and Specialties (Annex 14).

The internship year consists of seven rotations lasting from one to two months: Medicine (two months), Surgery (two months), Obstetrics and Gynecology (two months), Pediatrics (two months), Emergency Medicine (one month), Family Medicine (one month) and an elective rotation chosen out of the previous ones (two months). Students are considered to have completed the internship program if they 1) attain the minimum of 60% in the Intern Assessment Form after each rotation, 2) complete the interns' Portfolio and logbook with the minimum performance of 60% and 3) do not have the record of discipline violation or similar concerns. The objectives, evaluation methods, and training procedures of each rotation are described in detail in the Internship Program Manual (see Annex 14, pages 8-12 and 24).

The *Internship Program Manual* provides the description of general competencies and skills obtained by the end of training, interns' right and responsibilities, education and training requirements, teaching activities, rotation descriptions and assessment methods applied in the internship year (Annex 14).

Students carry out their clinical training under the supervision of clinical supervisors, hospital coordinators, and the program associate director. Clinical supervisors support interns at work place, locate education resources, explain students their duties and responsibilities and communicate current issues to hospital coordinators and the hospital's academic office. Hospital coordinators ensure attendance, assess the adherence of the training process to the program objectives, facilitate education activities and communicate the concerns of the hospital staff. The program associate director is responsible for the management of the training

procedure, orientation of medical interns and communication with clinical supervisors (for more details about the organization and administration of the internship, see Annex 14, page 13 and 19-20).

Interns' performance during the internship is evaluated through *formative* and *summative assessments*. Formative assessments include mini-clinical evaluation exercise, direct observation of medical procedural skills, case-based discussion, team-assessment of behavior and self-assessment, which all constitute parts of the education portfolio. Clinical supervisors review interns' portfolios at regular intervals, primarily at the end of each rotation. Hence, the education portfolio reflects interns' performance, achievements and development throughout the training program. Summative assessment is conducted at the end of the internship year and is also a part of the education portfolio. It demonstrates whether an intern has achieved the necessary level of proficiency in medical care in order to receive the certificate of a registered physician (Annex 14, pages 38-42).

The college evaluates and maintains the quality of the internship program through the system of feedback from students and educators. Non faculty members involved in the implementation of training act as external reviewers. Every three years, the Medical Internship Unit prepares a report about the ongoing quality improvement of the training program. The report covers such aspects as the work of training staff, organization and delivery of the program, provision of appropriate clinical and non-clinical education opportunities, provision of resources, and methods of supervision and internal assessment. At the end of their training period, students are required to submit an evaluation report, where they give feedback about the quality of support by clinical supervisors, the effectiveness of the education activities, the degree of collaboration between the college representatives and clinical supervisors, their positive and negative experiences during the rotations, and the level of support in addressing their concerns and questions during the training program (see AOQ Medicine 25).

With regard to the internationality of the curriculum content, the University informs that the College of Medicine signed international collaboration contracts with the University of Leeds, UK, and the UCL Medical School, UK. With the help of these collaborations, the college aims develop and enhance the learning content of the program and, thus, make it more clinical skills-oriented. There are no student exchange possibilities in the program.

All courses of the study program are taught in the English language, except for the university requirements courses (Holy Quran, Islamic Culture, Arabic Language and Prophet's life), which are offered in the Arabic language.

Examination procedures are determined and regulated in the program by the executive rules of the University, which are described in the document *Bylaws Organizing Academic Affairs and Study in Medical Colleges* (Annex A). Students' final grade for a course is calculated based on students' grades in class work assignments and laboratory sessions (approx. 30%), mid-term examinations (approx. 20%) and final examinations (approx. 50%). The number of final examinations depends on the number of courses foreseen for any given semester.

Students' performance assessment procedures and examinations implemented in the program can be divided into the following groups:

- continuous assessments, which include various forms of home assignments, classwork, presentations and quizzes;
- mid-term and mid-year examinations, which are usually carried out in the form of written assignments, OSPE<sup>3</sup>, OSCE<sup>4</sup> and practical tasks;
- final examinations, which are carried out in the form of case studies, written assignments, OSPE, OSCE and practical tasks.

Continuous assessments take place throughout the semester, mid-term examinations are usually carried out in the middle and final examinations at the end of the semester. The departments of the college are required to inform the Deanship of Admission and Registration about the examination dates two weeks before the beginning of each semester.

Course instructors are responsible for the preparation of all examination questions and also for the evaluation of students' answers. According to the University regulations, the college council may assign another instructor to carry out the above-mentioned procedures (Annex A, Art.33, page 33).

According to the University regulations, students can be allowed to complete the requirements of the course in the following semester; in this case, they receive a temporary grade IC (incomplete), which is later replaced by the actual grade or, in case of failure, with the letter F (fail). If a course lasts for more than one semester, it is designated in students' record as IP (in-progress) and, upon the completion of the course, substituted by the obtained grade (Annex A, Art. 25, 27).

According to the University regulations, students have to obtain at least 60% of performance in clinical tasks and tests in order to successfully complete the

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<sup>3</sup> OSPE means 'objective structured practical examinations', which is carried out for the assessment of laboratory exercises in preclinical circumstances.

<sup>4</sup> OSCE means 'objective structured clinical examination', which is carried out for the assessment of students' performance in clinical circumstances.

courses containing practical assignments (Annex A, Art. 26). Students whose attendance rate is lower than 75% are not allowed to take the final examinations. When students miss a final examination without an adequate excuse, they are considered to have failed it. They should then take a reset examination, for which they will be given the grade not higher than 60 (out of 100), which is a 'pass' grade. Reset examinations take place before the beginning of the next academic year. Students who failed in reset examinations have to repeat the respective course.

If students cannot attend the final exam due to an acceptable reason, they are allowed to take a make-up examination, for which they will be given the grade they have earned. Make-up examinations take place in the following semester. The University organizes the second round examinations (reset and make-up) for students who did not pass the final exams in the first attempt, but who failed in not more than 50% of the final examination taught in the given semester. If students failed in more than half of final examinations, then they have to stay in the same year and repeat the respective courses (Annex A).

According to the University regulations, in case of a student complain about examination results, the college council can re-evaluate an examination paper before the beginning of the next semester. The University has a regulated procedure for the submission of such complains and academic issues. The following units of the University are responsible for dealing with students' complains: the department/college council, the faculty committee for protecting students' rights, the academic office and the deanship of student affairs (for more details see Annex A, Arts.39, pages 37 and AOQ General Questions, 6).

Students' performance in the program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" is evaluated according to the following grading system applied at the University (Annex A, Art.28):

<b>Letter code</b>	<b>Description of the grades</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>	<b>Grade point (out of 4)</b>	<b>Grade point (out of 5)</b>
A+	Excellent – High	95 – 100	4.0	5.0
A	Excellent	90 – 95	3.75	4.75
B+	Very good – High	85 – 90	3.5	4.5
B	Very good	80 – 85	3.0	4.0
C+	Good – High	75 – 80	2.5	3.5
C	Good	70 – 75	2.0	3.0
D+	Pass – High	65 – 70	1.5	2.5

D	Pass	60 – 65	1.0	2.0
F	Fail	<60	0	1.0

Table 7: Grading System

Each score corresponds to a specific letter code and a certain amount of points as well as a grade description.

Concerning the aspect of special assistance for disabled students, the University informs that it has entrance facilities for wheelchairs as well as special provisions for students and college members with disabilities and special needs (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.10).

#### **2.2.4 Admission requirements**

There are two admission procedures in the program. First, students apply for the preparatory year. Admission to the preparatory year is managed by the University Deanship of Admission and Registration, the college is not yet involved in this stage. After the successful completion of the preparatory year, students can apply to one of the following colleges: Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Informatics, and Nursing. Admission to a colleges means that students continue their studies in the second year.

Admission to the College of Medicine and, thus, to the second year of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” is determined by the University Council based on the recommendation issued by the respective college together with the Deanship of Admission and Registration (Annex A, Art.2 and 3).

In order to be admitted to the preparatory year at the University, applicants have to fulfill the following requirements:

- they or their mother should be of Saudi nationality; according to the University, only applicants of Saudi nationality are admitted to the program;
- they should have obtained a grade with at least 90% of performance in high school certificate;
- they should have obtained grades with at least 90% of performance in such subjects as chemistry, physics, biology and the English language;
- their high school certificate should have been obtained maximum two years before the application;
- they have to pass the General Aptitude Test (GAT) as well as the Educational Achievement Test required for medical colleges;
- they should successfully pass an interview set for medical college applicants;
- they should be physically and medically fit;

- they should be well-mannered and well-behaved; this is determined based on applicants' General Secondary School Transcript, which shows their grade for the subject "Conduct" (see Annex G).

Applicants are admitted to the preparatory year based on their individual score calculated out of the secondary school certificate grade (40%), GAT (30%), Educational Achievement Test (20%) and an interview (10%) (Annex A, Art.4). The General Aptitude Test (GAT) measures applicants' analytical and deductive skills, as well as their learning capacities, e.g. reading comprehension, recognition of logical relations etc. Educational Achievement Test covers the general and key concepts of biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and English.

According to the by-laws of the University, applicants have to do medical tests after primary acceptance; after the ultimate admission to the University, they are covered by health insurance (AOQ, General 1). Moreover, applicants should not be employed in any governmental or private institution since they will be required to study full-time (Annex A, Art.3).

After the completion of the preparatory year, students are distributed among colleges based on their desires and their academic ranking, which is to 60% determined by their GPA for the preparatory year and to 40% by their cumulative grade of the secondary school certificate. Students should obtain the grade point at least 3.5 out of 4, in other words 85% of performance, in each subject of the preparatory year. The number of available places in each study program is determined by the University Council based on the suggestions of the college councils. Consequently, not every student will automatically be admitted to the college and, hence, to the second year of studies, because every program has a limited number of places as well as high requirements to students' ranking (AOQ, General Questions 5).

The University has a set of regulations defining internal and external transfer procedures (Annex A). According to these regulations, students transferring from other higher education institutions have to meet the following criteria in order to be admitted to medical colleges of the University:

- they should have attended a university or college recognized by the Saudi Ministry of Higher Education;
- they should not have a record of dismissal from another university for disciplinary reasons;
- they should have the recommendation from the University's Unified Academic Office as well as the approval of the respective college council;



- transfer candidates must meet the admission and registration conditions of medical colleges of the University;
- they should have studied in a similar medical study program, e.g. pharmacy or medicine;
- they should have passed the most recent academic year in the previous higher education institutions without any fail or reset examination and they should have obtained the grade B (very good) or at least 80% of performance in that year.

Transferring students address their request to the University's Deanship of Admission and Registration. If they fulfill the above-described requirements, their request is then submitted to the respective college. Courses completed at the previous university will be equated and registered in students' academic record, though they will not be counted into their cumulative grade (Annex A, Art.43). In case of internal transfer from one medical college to another, students forward their request to the Unified Academic Office of the University.

Concerning the aspect of special assistance for disabled students, the university underlines that physical and medical fitness is one of the main admission requirements of the program.

In the academic year 2013/2014, there were 130 students admitted to both female and male sections of the study program, thus 260 students in total. The table with the number of all admitted and graduated students is provided in the Self-Evaluation Report, section 1.6.6.

## 2.3 Study conditions and quality assurance

### 2.3.1 Human resources

The College of Medicine has female and male teaching staff working in the respective campuses of the University. The full-time teaching staff of the study program consists of 216 male and 96 female members.

Full-time teaching staff			
Position	Total	Male	Female
Professor	25	20	5
Associate professor	42	34	8
Assistant professor	115	84	31

Demonstrator currently on scholarship studies	90	56	34
Demonstrator	9	5	4
Lecturer	31	17	14

Table 8: Full-time teaching staff of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”

Currently there are in total 704 male and 766 female students in the program. Hence, the ratio of students to full-time teachers constitutes three male students and eight female students per one teacher.

Part-time teaching staff of the program includes 63 male and 29 female assistant professors, one male associate professors and one male full professor. Further human resources include ten male and three female technicians as well as 19 male and eight female administrative staff members (AOQ Medicine 18).

According to the University, the average amount of teaching hours for different members of the teaching staff is the following: for professors 10 hours/week, for associate professors 12 hours/week, for assistant professors 14 hours/week, for lecturers 16 hours/week and for laboratory assistants 16 hours/week (AOQ General Questions 7).

A considerable number of the teaching staff is said to have received their education or training in recognized international institutions (for more details, see the CVs of the full-time teaching staff members in Annex 9). More than 80 demonstrators of the college are currently on scholarship trainings abroad in different specialties and are expected to join the faculty within the next five years.

Selection of teaching staff is conducted at the University according to a regulated procedure and requirements for the employment of Saudi, non-Saudi, as well as academic and non-academic staff. These regulations are designed and administered by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. The University announces about vacant positions on its website, as well as in local newspapers and through various media sources. The University and college representatives conduct candidate interviews; the departments of the College of Medicine can also contribute their recommendation in the decision making process. The University indicates that qualified applicants for teaching positions of Saudi Arabian nationality will have the priority in the recruitment process than applicants of other nationalities (see AOQ General Questions 8; Self-Evaluation Report 2.1.3; Annexes E and F).

With regard to the opportunities for further professional development, the University informs that the College of Medicine organizes regular training courses dedicat-

ed to the improvement of teaching skills, curriculum development, assessment methods and creation of portfolios. There are also professional improvement trainings for the administrative staff of the University, which focus on communication and computer skills, secretarial tasks and, for example, on the aspect of equal chances at work. On the institutional level, the Deanship of Development and Quality offers many workshops and seminars targeted at the development of a wide-range of technical and specialty-related competences, as well as administrative, communication and leadership skills. The University indicates that all faculty members are expected to participate in some form of career development activities every year (please see the list of workshops and conferences where the representatives of the College of Medicine have participated in Annex 17).

With regard to the research activity of the teaching staff, the University presents a list of research projects accomplished by students and the teaching members of the college (see Annex 21). Furthermore, the University demonstrates the amount of research grants allocated to the departments of the College of Medicine in the recent years (see Annex 22).

The College of Medicine acknowledges the importance of the continuous professional development and therefore actively encourages the members of the teaching staff to take part in various workshops and training opportunities.

### 2.3.2 Facilities

The College of Medicine has 26 teaching halls, five seminar rooms, three meetings rooms, 44 teaching and research laboratories and five PBL (problem-based learning) rooms, which are simulation rooms used for small group discussions. The type and number of study premises available for male and female students as well as the capacity of these premises is the following:

Halls and Labs	Number in total	For male students	For female students	Capacity (number of seats or work stations) in total
Teaching halls	26	10	16	2,943
Seminar rooms	5	3	2	350
Meeting rooms	3	2	1	120
Teaching and research labs	44	23	21	1,320
PBL rooms	5	Shared by both sides		150

Table 9: Study premises of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”

According to the University, every meeting room, teaching and research laboratory as well as staff and administration room is equipped with a computer. The College of Medicine has 83 data show equipment, 75 whiteboards and eight smart boards divided between the male and female sections of the college. Furthermore, there are e-learning rooms with 20 and 25 computers in the male and female sections, respectively. The laboratories of the program are quipped according to the content and purpose of training sessions and experiments conducted in them. For instance, the college has a power lab machine, a safety cabinet, a virtual lab for pharmacology and other. The Clinical Simulation Center (CSC) has been recently expanded and equipped with additional training objects (AOQ Medicine 20, 29).

Students of the program can use the resources of the college library, which is open from 8:00 till 15:30 and which consists of a male and a female part. The college library contains about 7,000 books and serves more than 1,400 medical students. In addition to that, students of the program have access to the central library of the University named "King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Library". The opening hours of the central library are from 8:00 till 20:00 for the male section and from 8:00 till 16:00 for the female section of the library (AOQ General Questions 9).

The total number of books (hard copy) available at the central library is 860,392 and it is subscribed to 68 electronic databases accessible online; all students can access the digital library of the University 24 hours a day by means of their username and password. There is an internet hall within the central library, which is open from 8:00 till 20:00 in the male section and from 8:00 till 14:00 in the female section. The University underlines that there are workshops offered for students and members of the teaching staff on how to access and use different databases (AOQ General Questions 10).

The College of Medicine prepares a financial planning in agreement with the Financial Department of the University and it can also ask for financial support for individual projects. Besides, the college can obtain additional funding from research support units of the University (Self-Evaluation Report 2.3.4).

### **2.3.3 Quality assurance**

The University follows the regulations and accreditation standards of the Saudi National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA), which is an independent body directly cooperating with the national council of higher education. According to the principles of the NCAAA, higher education institutions are primarily responsible for the quality of the study program they de-

liver and the aspect of quality pertains to all functions and activities an institution implements. The structure of the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” has to comply with the standards of the National Qualification Framework of the NCAAA (Annex D).

The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the college functions under the supervision of the University Deanship of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation. The QAU is responsible for the organization of all quality assurance mechanisms, which include setting the necessary Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators within the college, and also the application of different surveys for the analyses of teachers’ and students’ satisfaction with education process and college services.

The College of Medicine implements a number of periodical reviews, which follow the requirements and standards determined by the NCAAA. Based on these reviews, the Quality Assurance Unit of the college prepares an annual program report and a self-study report at the end of each academic year. In the annual program report the college records academic achievements as well as various administrative and educational activities of its members (Annex 12). The self-study report serves to evaluate and demonstrate the college’s success in the implementation of learning objectives, quality assessment procedures, improvement plans, and the overall quality of the education process in the study program.

The relevance of the objectives and learning outcomes of the program to the requirements of professional practice is assured through the activity of the Medical Education Committee of the college. This committee reviews the competences covered by the program curriculum and assures that they correspond to the learning outcomes listed in the competence-based framework for Saudi medical colleges (Annex 6). In addition to that, the University is planning to carry out more questionnaires for students, graduates and employers in order to determine the compliance of the education process with demands of the labor market (AOQ Medicine 32).

The College of Medicine has an Executive Curriculum Committee, which coordinates the program together with its sub-committees for each year of studies. The main responsibility of the Executive Curriculum Committee is to ensure that the program offers the competencies required by the University and national standards, to provide the alignment between the planning and actual implementation of the curriculum.

At the end of each academic year, each curriculum subcommittee presents an evaluation of the successful experiences and aspects of further consideration to the central Executive Curriculum Committee of the college. Afterwards, the Executive Curriculum Committee issues a common decision about necessary modifications and forwards it to the college council for approval.

Among the most prominent improvements related to quality assurance, the college names the revision of the program curriculum as well as continuous improvements in the teaching and learning methodologies. Furthermore, the college encourages the department and college staff members to document their experiences of success in improving the quality of education process.

Course instructors are responsible for monitoring the respective courses, preparation of examinations, collection of evaluation grades, and assurance of equality between female and male students. At the end of the course, they have to produce a course report, which is then submitted to the Quality Assurance Unit for the annual revision of the college activities. The course report contains full analyses of the course, obstacles experienced in the process of studies and further improvement recommendations, as well as the results of students' evaluations of the course. Revision results and modification proposals are discussed with the responsible program coordinator, the Curriculum Unit and the Exam Assessment Unit before they are forwarded to the dean of the college. Hence, any significant alterations in the course curriculum are based on continuous evaluation procedures.

Students of the program are required to submit their feedback and evaluations at the end of each course and after the completion of the internship year. The University applies the DREEM (the Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure) questionnaire in order to measure the educational environment from students' perspective. Furthermore, students are expected to evaluate their teachers' performance at the end of every academic year. The results of these surveys are then included into the course reports (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.3).

The University informs that the first international assessment and development plan of the program curriculum was carried out by experts from Dundee Medical Education Centre, UK in 1998 using the Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure (DREEM), which is a tool for the assessment of the educational environment from students' perspective. In 2000-2001, the college established its own Executive Curriculum Committee. The second international evaluation of the program curriculum was implemented in February 2013 and March 2014 by experts from the University of Leeds, UK. Consequently, there have been considerable

changes and improvements introduced to the curriculum. As the most recent development, the College of Medicine made an agreement with the University College of London in 2015, which pertains to the revision of the curriculum and the teaching staff as well as the advancement of teaching and evaluation methods.

Evaluations of the teaching staff and its performance are carried out by means of annual students' feedback and peer review. If the obtained results reveal a certain concern regarding the sufficiency of professional competencies of a teacher, it is communicated to the head of the department or the vice-deanship of the college. At the same time, the University acknowledges with certificates of distinction those teachers, who receive high rates of evaluation among students (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.3).

The College distributes also periodical surveys for graduates and employers six months after the completion of the program in order to determine the employment percentage and to monitor the level of satisfaction with the program graduates.

As can be seen from the University statistics, the number of graduates in the program has been continuously increasing: if in the academic year 2011/2012 there were 70 male and 90 female graduates, in 2013/2014 their number increased up to 113 and 140, respectively (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.6).

Information about the program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery", study plan, description of the courses, enrollment and study regulations, students guide and other program-related facts is available on the website of the College of Medicine<sup>5</sup>. Students are informed about the objectives, regulations, requirements, attendance sheets, assessment methods and other details of the program courses through the college website, the training guide as well as in the University libraries (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.8).

With regard to the aspect of student support, the University indicates that there are two orientation programs for the students of the College of Medicine: the first one takes place at the beginning of the preparatory year and the second one at the beginning of the second year. The college administration organizes also summer trainings in clinical practice for the fourth year students, who are only starting their clinic-based education. Furthermore, the college arranges the so-called 'Career Day' for senior students.

The Academic Office of the college is responsible for academic counselling and guidance of students. The Academic Office includes a Students Affair Unit that

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<sup>5</sup> <https://uqu.edu.sa/medicine-en>

deals with official procedures between a student and the University and also with the questions of financial support. Besides, there is one academic advisor for each year of studies who monitors, for instance, students' attendance and complains. Finally, the Academic Office has a Mentoring Unit that assigns one mentor per 4-5 students in order to hold individual sessions with them, to maintain full observation of students' progress and to support them in social and psychological matters. Mentors have to prepare a report after each semester. Every member of the teaching staff has from four to six office hours per week. Students can communicate with teachers also through students leaders appointed for each year of the program or through the website of the college.

The University assures to provide equal education process for both female and male students. The same course specifications, lecture forms, timing and content of examinations, as well as equipment and learning material, are available for both sections of the program (Self-Evaluation Report 1.6.9).

## **2.4 Information about the University**

Umm Al-Qura University was established in 1981 according to the royal decree of the same year. The University offers bachelor, graduate diploma, master, and PhD degrees in Islamic Studies, Arabic language, Applied Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Medicine and Engineering. In general, the University has 32 colleges, one central library and three research institutes including the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques Institute for Hajj Research, the Institute of Scientific Research and Revival of Islamic Heritage, and the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques.

Approximately 30,000 students are currently studying in the University premises located in Makkah and its provinces. At the moment, the University has three campuses in Makkah and a branch campus in the city of Taif, which contains the College of Education and the College of Natural Sciences.

Regarding its special strengths, the University underlines that it fulfills the requirements of students and the teaching staff in terms of learning resources and facilities. Furthermore, it organizes various training programs to improve teaching skills and to encourage the research activity among its members.

The College of Medicine was established in 1995. It consists of 15 departments: Biochemistry, Physiology, Anatomy, Microbiology, Parasitology, Pathology, Pharmacology, Hematology and Immunology, Community Medicine, Medicine, Surgery, Pediatrics, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Genetics, and Medical Education



(Self-Evaluation Report 1.1.6). All of these departments are involved in implementation of the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”.

The first batch of students has been admitted to the program in the academic year 1996. At the moment, there are 766 female and 704 male students in total enrolled in the College of Medicine (Self-Evaluation Report 3.2.1).

The mission of the College of Medicine is to become one of the leading higher education units in the field of medical studies, research and healthcare in the Middle East by the year 2017. Hence, the college is planning to reach 100% in all national performance indicators, which include, for instance, preparation of graduates to pass the national licensing examination, increase of publications among the academic staff, improvement of the satisfaction rates among students, teachers, and employers, application of various questionnaires for quality assessment, increase in self-financing, development of outcome-based curriculum, development of local and international research partnerships and other. The college works on the development of the curriculum committee in order to better coordinate its numerous departments and to organize a complementary and integrated education process for its students (Self-Evaluation Report, page 7).

### 3 Expert Report

#### 3.1 Preliminary remarks

The study programs of Umm Al-Qura University, Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, are required to be accredited by an international accreditation agency based on the study program of the University. The accreditation criteria of the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Science (AHPGS) are the formal basis for the accreditation decision. These criteria are documented and regularly updated on the AHPGS<sup>6</sup> website. Any accreditation criteria applied by the AHPGS are in accordance with criteria and requirements previously established throughout the Federal Republic of Germany, which are based on the “Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area” (ESG) as established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Seven major criteria exist, which are structured as follows:

- 1) Aims and implementation,
- 2) Structure of the study program,
- 3) Admission and feasibility,
- 4) Examination system and transparency,
- 5) Teaching staff and material equipment,
- 6) Quality assurance,
- 7) Gender equality and equal opportunities.

The central focus of the accreditation procedure is the assessment of the learning outcomes and objectives of each individual study program, the structure of the study program, the examination system and transparency, availability of adequate equipment and facilities, study conditions, implementation of the results of quality assurance in terms of the further development of the study program and the implementation of equal opportunities for all University members involved.

The following specific study programs at the following colleges were subject of the accreditation procedure:

- a) “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” (Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery, MBBS; College of Medicine)
- b) “Dentistry” (Bachelor of Dental Medicine and Surgery, B.D.S; College of Dentistry)
- c) “Bachelor of Pharmacy” (Bachelor of Pharmacy; College of Pharmacy)
- d) “Doctor of Pharmacy” (Bachelor of Pharmacy; College of Pharmacy)
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<sup>6</sup>[http://ahpgs.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Criteria\\_AHPGS\\_englisch.pdf](http://ahpgs.de/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/Criteria_AHPGS_englisch.pdf)

The evaluation of the above listed study programs and subsequent decision taking through individual accreditation procedures by the AHPGS was carried out according to the informed step-wise procedures below.

As the first step, the documents submitted by the University were reviewed by all nominated experts based on the above specified criteria as well as disciplinary and substantive aspects.

As the second step, a selected group of experts carried out the on-site visit at Umm Al-Qura University, Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia, with the focus of clarifying any open questions as well as on-site verification of major statements provided in the application documents of the University.

The third step was the preparation of the expert report by the expert group. The report is structured in compliance with the accreditation criteria approved by the AHPGS. The documents of the University, the feedback from the experts about the documents and the results of the discussions with the representatives of the University during the on-site visit serve as the basis for the statements made in the expert report.

The fourth step of the procedure concerns the final decision regarding the overall accreditation and for each of the study programs. This decision step is formally executed by the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS.

The following experts were appointed by the accreditation commission of the AHPGS for the evaluation of Bachelor study programs:

As representatives of academic and health care institutions:

**Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Arnold**

Professor of biological and material-scientific basis of dentistry, Faculty of Dental Medicine, Witten/Herdecke University, Witten, Germany; former Dean of the Faculty of Dentistry, former President of the Craniofacial Group of the International Association for Dental Research, former Head of the Department of Biological and Material Sciences in Dentistry;

**Dr. Rolf Heusser**

Director of the foundation NICER, National Institute for Cancer Epidemiology and Registration, Zurich, Switzerland; former Chairman at ECA, European Consortium for Accreditation in Higher Education; expert with broad knowledge of national and international accreditation procedures, policies, quality assurance regulations in medical sciences, as well as of internationalization in higher education;

**Prof. Dr. Ulrike Holzgrabe**

Professor and Chairperson of Pharmaceutical and Medicinal Chemistry, Institute of Pharmacy and Food Chemistry, University of Würzburg, Germany; former President of the German Pharmaceutical Society; expert in the development of anti-infectives, development of selective ligands of muscarinic receptors, bioanalytics and analysis of drugs using capillary electrophoresis and NMR spectroscopy;

**Dr. Adrian Kasaj<sup>7</sup>**

*Professor at the Department of Operative Dentistry and Periodontology, University Medical Center of the Johannes-Gutenberg-University Mainz, Germany; expert with broad experience in complex periodontal treatment, regenerative periodontal surgery, periodontal plastic surgery, local antimicrobial therapy in periodontology and application of laser in surgical periodontics treatment;*

**Prof. Dr. Stephan Lehnart**

*Professor of Translational Cardiology and principal investigator of the German Center for Cardiovascular Research (DZHK), Heart Research Center Göttingen, Department of Cardiology and Pulmonology, University Medical Center Göttingen, Germany; expert in translational sciences from the bench to bedside, cellular and organ remodeling mechanisms, molecular function and nanoscopic organization of intracellular calcium signaling;*

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<sup>7</sup> The experts shown in italics have participated in the on-site visit of the University. All experts mentioned in the expert report accomplished the written evaluation of one of the study programs based on the documents submitted by the University.

**Prof. Dr. med. Gerd Mikus**

*Professor and Deputy Medical Director of the Department of Clinical Pharmacology and Pharmacoepidemiology at the University of Heidelberg; Deputy head of the Ethics Committee of the Landesärztekammer Baden-Württemberg, Member of the Expert Committee of controlled substances of the Federal Ministry of Health, Germany; expert with broad experience in clinical and experimental Pharmacology, drugs-in-pain therapy and drug addiction therapy;*

**Prof. Dr. Gerhard Karl Eduard Scriba**

*Professor of pharmaceutical chemistry and former managing director at the Institute of Pharmacy, University of Jena, Germany; member of the German Pharmaceutical Society (DPhG), Association of German Chemists (GDCh) and American Association of Pharmaceutical Scientists (AAPS); expert in drug analysis, peptide analysis, stereoisomer analysis, capillary electrochromatography and CE-based enzyme assays;*

**Univ.-Prof. Dr. Dr. Ralf Smeets**

Professor for maxillofacial surgery and oral surgery at the Medical Faculty of the University of Hamburg, Germany; executive senior physician and research director, Clinic and Policlinic for Oral Medicine and Maxillofacial Surgery at the Hamburg-Eppendorf University Hospital, Hamburg, Germany; expert in oral and maxillofacial surgery, tissue engineering of bone tissues, testing of bone replacement materials, periimplantitis, expression analyses of human pulp cells;

**Dr. Ulrich Stößel**

Assistant Professor at the Department of Medical Psychology and Medical Sociology, Albert-Ludwigs-University, Freiburg, Germany.

As a student representative:

**Martha Hofmann**

Student of medicine and further professional certification studies, as well as of advanced education in psychiatry and psychosomatics, at Witten/Herdecke University, Witten, Germany.

For the document-based written evaluation of the study programs and the on-site visit of the University, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS nominated the above listed group of experts. In February 2016, the relevant documents were forwarded to the experts to review the available information, to determine particular strengths and weaknesses, and to identify any open questions regarding the four study programs in writing. The experts' statements based on these evaluations were used for preparation for the on-site visit of the University.

Any open questions regarding the application documents were forwarded to the University on 11 December 2015. After the University representatives submitted their responses to these open questions by 8 January 2016, the AHPGS incorpo-

rated the answers by summary into each study program record. On 30 March 2016, the AHPGS forwarded the Self-Evaluation Reports, their annexes and the summaries of the study programs to the members of the expert group assigned for the on-site visit.

### **3.2 Basic information about the study program**

The main objective of the Bachelor study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” at the College of Medicine is to educate and train competent general medical practitioners in order to provide community-centered health care services and based on the principles of patient safety. It is a full-time study program with a regular duration of 6 years/12 semesters followed by one year of clinical training. To be more exact, the structure of the program consists of the preparatory (first) year, the main study period of five years, and one year of clinical training. Thus the entire study program is seven years long. The program curriculum consists of 50 courses, nine of which are taught during the preparatory year and 41 during the main study period.

The study program requires students to obtain 266 credit hours according to the national credit system applied at institutions of higher education throughout Saudi Arabia. One credit hour is calculated based on the number of theoretical and practical hours per week; precisely, one credit hour equals one theoretical hour and two laboratory hours. The total workload of the program consists of 8,778 contact hours and 1,920 hours of internship. The internship year and respective hours are not included into the total amount of credits.

Students’ performance is evaluated based on the results of a Grade Point Average (GPA) and the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). GPA is calculated by dividing students’ total sum of points for one semester by the total amount of credit hours for all courses they attended in that semester. CGPA is calculated by dividing students’ total sum of points since their enrollment by the total amount of credit hours for all courses they have attended for the whole education period in the program.

According to University regulations, the minimum pass grade for each course is 2.00 out of 5.00, which is equal to 40% of performance. Similarly, students’ CGPA should also be at least 2.00 out of 5.00 in order to complete their studies and obtain the respective academic degree.

There are two distinct admission steps in the study program: 1) initial admission to the preparatory year, and 2) subsequent admission to the study program itself. Both admissions take place once per year before the winter semester. Admission

requirements to the preparatory year at the University include Saudi-Arabian nationality, a high school certificate, or the equivalent with 90% of general performance as well as 90% of performance in the following subjects: chemistry, physics, biology and the English language. Besides, applicants have to pass a General Aptitude Test (GAT) and the national Educational Achievement Test required for all Medical Colleges. In addition, students should be physically and medically fit.

Upon completion of the preparatory year, students are admitted to a study program depending on choice and ranking. Students are ranked based for performance in the preparatory year (60%) and cumulative grade in the secondary school certificate (40%). Admission to the study program depends also on the number of available places at the college. The admission capacity of the program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” constitutes 130 places for female and 130 places for male students annually. In the academic year 2013/2014, there were 130 female and 130 male students admitted to the study program, meaning to the second year of studies after the completion of the preparatory year.

The second and the third years of study constitute the pre-clinical period, whereas the fourth, fifth and sixth years of study constitute the clinical period of the program. After the completion six years of study, in the seventh year students enter the practical clinical training period in the *Medical Internship Program* (IP) in one of the teaching hospitals affiliated with the University. The training lasts for one year and includes seven rotations. According to the University, clinical training is mandatory to be eligible to practice medicine in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Upon the completion of the internship year, students receive the academic title “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS)” as well as the certificate upon completion of the Medical Internship Program.

### **3.3 Expert Report**

The on-site visit took place on 2 and 3 May 2016 according to a previously agreed schedule. Representatives from the central office of the AHPGS accompanied the expert group during the on-site visit.

Prior to the on-site visit, the expert group met on 1 May for the initial discussion and briefing by the APHGS. They discussed the submitted application documents and the results of the written evaluations, as well as any accreditation-related questions and foreseeable issues. Furthermore, the group finalized the plan for the on-site visit of the University.

During the on-site visit, the experts had transparent, productive and in-depth discussions with the representatives of the University management, college repre-

sentatives, program directors and teachers, as well as with a group of female and male students currently enrolled in the study programs under evaluation. Furthermore, the experts visited the study facilities and equipment in teaching laboratories, lecture and seminar halls as well as the library and general study areas. They visited both the male and female sections of the University campus and discussed a comprehensive spectrum of education-related issues both with male and female representatives of the University.

The expert report was structured in compliance with the accreditation criteria approved by the AHPGS. The study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” will be analyzed in a comprehensive manner below. The documents of the University, the experts’ written reviews of the application documents, the observations made during the on-site visit and the results of the discussions with the University representatives and students serve as the basis for the statements given by the expert report.

### **3.3.0 Introduction and comprehensive remarks**

Umm Al-Qura University, Mecca, Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia, was established in 1981 according to the royal decree of the same year. The University includes 32 colleges, one central library and three research institutes. It offers bachelor, graduate diploma, master, and PhD degrees in Islamic Studies, Arabic language, Applied Sciences, Social Sciences, Education, Medicine and Engineering.

Umm Al-Qura University aims at the provision of higher education and graduate studies to enable the citizens of Saudi Arabia to contribute to the development of their country in the light of Islamic principles. Furthermore, the University’s objective is to contribute to the enhancement of scientific research by conducting and encouraging research and by establishing research centers. In addition to that, the University’s goal is to educate and train specialized scientists and teachers.

The main University campus is located in the city of Mecca with a branch in the city of Taif, the College of Education and the College of Natural Sciences. The University is financially supported by the government. Every student at the University receives financial stipend on a monthly basis. During the visit approximately 30,000 students were enrolled at the University of Mecca. Furthermore, the College of Dentistry has 125 female and 121 male students; the College of Medicine has 766 female and 704 male students, and the College of Pharmacy has 258 female and 239 male students.

In Saudi Arabia, the education program is further organized to encompass gender segregation. Consequently, the campus of Umm Al-Qura University consists each



of male and a female study sections for teaching. At the on-site visit of the University, the expert group assigned by the AHPGS had the opportunity to discuss the program-related issues with both male and female representatives of the University. Moreover, they visited the study premises of both gender sections at the colleges. During the on-site visit, the experts witnessed constant activities and mutually beneficial exchanges between the male and female sections of the University. Apparently, the University strives to provide both gender groups with similar learning and examination conditions, admission chances, material resources and other opportunities for education and development.

During the on-site visit, the University representatives outlined future plans for the development of the institution and of the study programs to be accredited. In particular, the University highlighted the importance of a new integrated campus teaching hospital, which is currently under construction. Upon completion of the main hospital building, the Colleges of Medicine, Dentistry and Pharmacy will move into these new teaching premises.

### **3.3.1 Aims and Implementation**

The main purpose of the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” is to prepare general medical practitioners, who should be able to apply their knowledge and practical skills in basic medical, clinical and social sciences in order to provide appropriate and effective treatment of patients and their health problems. Furthermore, program graduates are expected to demonstrate appropriate communication skills when interacting with patients and their families, with colleagues and other health care professionals, and should be able to work in medical teams. In addition, students graduating from the program learn to work in accordance with the requirements of the Saudi health care system.

The University provided the description of the learning outcomes of the program in terms of acquired knowledge, cognitive skills, interpersonal skills and professional responsibility, communication skills and use of information technologies, and finally in terms of psychomotor skills. Learning outcomes are well defined at the level of the study program and the individual modules. The didactic concepts and the student assessment methods of the program refer to the intended learning outcomes. The experts came to the conclusion that the qualification objectives of the program cover all aspects related to medical care. They positively underlined the fact that the competence-oriented learning outcomes of the program are in congruence with the standards outlined in the CanMEDS Framework<sup>8</sup> and also with

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<sup>8</sup> More information about the CanMEDS Framework is available in: <http://www.royalcollege.ca/portal/page/portal/rc/canmeds/about/history> (06.05.2016)

the German national catalog of learning objectives in medicine<sup>9</sup>. Thus, the program's learning outcomes and professional objectives meet the international norms for the respective specialization.

Apart from degree-specific competences and skills, the University provides also opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration and exchange between students, which are necessary for the future career in multidisciplinary teams. This is partially achieved, for example, through the preparatory year, where students of all healthcare degree programs study together. Nevertheless, the experts observed some lack of interdisciplinary approaches in the implementation of the program.

For further development of the program curriculum, the experts suggested to introduce eHealth as an important new approach in healthcare practice. These approaches apply and transfer health resources and health care by electronic means and included patient-centered solutions.

During the on-site evaluation, the experts noted that competences related to radiology, pharmacology and sub-specialties of internal medicine could be increased throughout the learning objectives of the program (please see section 1.3.2 for more detailed discussion). During the on-site visit, the college representatives clarified that these competences are already covered to a large degree as part of courses related to these speciality areas of medical studies. The experts suggested further that the program administration should pay particular attention to student competences for assessing systematic needs of patients. Inclusion of these competences among the program objectives will contribute to the patient-oriented implementation of the study process.

With regard to the presentation of the program content and results, the experts advocated the idea of offering the program graduates an additional official document describing the competences obtained by the end of the studies together with their graduation diplomas. Higher education institutions of European countries participating in the Bologna Process are required to issue such a document titled "Diploma Supplement", which is an attachment to a higher education diploma. The Diploma Supplement provides information about the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies completed by an individual student. The experts believe that the introduction of a similar document will further contribute to fostering student exchange between Umm Al-Qura University and other Universities. Furthermore, it will enable foreign Universities to better compare Saudi Arabian diplomas within their own system of higher education degrees, which is an important aspect for students planning to pursue further studies abroad. Finally, such a document

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<sup>9</sup> More information is available in: [http://www.nklm.de/files/nklm\\_final\\_2015-07-03.pdf](http://www.nklm.de/files/nklm_final_2015-07-03.pdf) (06.05.2016)

will facilitate the better and faster understanding of the program content and learning outcomes by prospective employers.

The program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” complies with the national qualifications framework, with the national SaudiMED learning outcomes for undergraduate medical programs offered in Saudi Arabian higher education institutions, and finally with the requirements of the national licensing procedure.

It must be emphasized that the national standards currently applied for medical study programs in Saudi Arabia were developed by the College of Medicine of Umm Al-Qura University. From the experts’ perspective, this activity reflects upon the generally high quality and prestige of education in Medicine offered at the University.

The University prepares its students for the national licensing examination conducted by the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties. After passing the licensing examination, graduates of the program are officially recognized as general practitioners and obtain the right to practice medicine in Saudi Arabia. Hence, the study program is implemented in compliance with the national requirements for professional activities in the sphere of health care.

The study program prepares its students for professional careers in governmental health care institutions, such as hospitals and primary health care centers, private hospitals, dispensaries and polyclinics, military and university hospitals. Moreover, the program graduates can work as demonstrators, research assistants, and teaching assistants at higher education institutions. Besides, they can find employment at insurance and other health care-related organizations.

During the discussion at the on-site visit, several students underlined that they prefer to pursue further postgraduate studies for Master's or PhD degrees. It must be emphasized that the University extensively supports its students in their aspirations to study abroad. To do so, the University refers to its contacts with numerous foreign higher education institutions, particularly in English-speaking countries.

The program graduates are expected to serve the needs of the local community and also to contribute to the advancement of health care sciences in Saudi Arabia. According to the University, there is a high demand for health care specialists in the country due to the continuously growing population.

The experts were therefore surprised during the on-site visit by a report of the University, according to which only an average of 25% of all University graduates found employment within the next three months following the completion of their

studies at the University. This report may need to take into account the specific development of the Saudi Arabian labor market and current employment opportunities. The experts concluded that the University should support its students during the critical transition from the academic to professional practitioner world, so that a larger number of graduates may be employed sooner. For example, the University could establish a Career Center and encourage the individual colleges and departments to organize student events and consultation opportunities, where students can meet representatives of important professions and learn about the specific needs and expectations of prospective employer shareholders.

Teaching and involvement in scientific research is one of the main goals of the College of Medicine. Moreover, the learning outcomes of the program include student competences in basic research skills and their commitment to scholarly work. These skills are developed in the course “Medical Statistics and Scientific Research” in the third year, where students are expected to participate in group discussions, to review scientific literature, to use different databases and to analyze the obtained information, to write patient questionnaires and to prepare individual student reports. Furthermore, in the course “Community Medicine” in the fourth year of studies, students learn how to choose a research topic, to write a research protocol, to construct a questionnaire, to collect, analyze and present data, and to write a final report about the results they have achieved.

The experts recognize that the study program motivates students to be continuously engaged with some research questions throughout the education period and also through participation in a dedicated Medical Research Club of the college. Furthermore, the College of Medicine has two research chairs that contribute to involve students and teachers in on-site research activities. As a result, the program enables basic learning of research skills in clinical medicine, which are both beneficial and integrated in the program to advance further student development.

The experts believe that it might be advantageous for the College of Medicine to focus their medical research activities in part on the yearly pilgrimage to Mecca, for example in terms of working with statistical data or development of effective methods such as eHealth to provide health care to large groups of peoples and with limited time and space capacities. Such research directions could be developed as a unique strength of the college and contribute to establish unique research expertise in the local area and for specific populations.

Based on the application documents and the observations during the on-site visit, the experts concluded that the College of Medicine is in the process of establishing international collaborations with several universities and medical schools pri-

marily from Great Britain. However, these collaborations seem to be focused on aspects of the program evaluation and further development of the curriculum, rather than exchange of teaching experiences or students' opportunities with recognition of acquired credits. English as the language of instruction enables teachers and students to access international scientific material. However, direct and beneficial engagement with international peers and state-of-the-art science leaders also in other countries will be beneficial.

The experts confirm that mobility of students and teachers, as well as the development and implementation of international exchange programs, constitute an indispensable part of modern education. From the experts' point of view, one option is to initiate national and international short-time exchange opportunities for academic staff and advanced students of the programs through "summer schools" for a couple of weeks. During this time, students will have the opportunity to meet teachers and their peers from other Saudi-Arabian and foreign higher education institutions. For this purpose, the University can effectively put into use its numerous contacts with various universities and institutions. The experts acknowledge that the University offers continuous teaching opportunities for teachers and instructors, which seemed generally speaking very well informed and to take advantage of these opportunities. In addition, highest ranking and prosperous senior students were given opportunities to apply for national conferences to present research abstracts as well as skills training workshops at least once per year.

Overall, the experts concluded that the requirements of the criterion are fully met.

### **3.3.2 Structure of the study program**

The study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" consists of 50 courses in total, nine of which are taught in the preparatory year and 41 are taught from the second to the sixth year of studies. Of these 49 courses, seven are university requirement courses and 34 are program-specific courses. The regular study period in the program constitutes six years/twelve semesters followed by one year of clinical training. The Medical Internship Program (IP) constitutes the last stage of the program.

The program graduates are required to pass the licensing examination in order to have the right to work as general physicians in the country. The licensing examinations are carried out by the Saudi Arabian Commission for Health Specialties (SCHS). In order to pass this examination, graduates have to submit their application and a list of required documents, which are then reviewed by a specialized consultant and, if necessary, by a specialized committee. Upon the successful

revision of the documents, the program graduates receive the final registration issued by the SCHS.

From the experts' point of view, the program has a well-structured curriculum with basic sciences offered in the initial semesters and medicine-specific courses offered during the main period of studies (from the second until the sixth year). Content of the program is presented in detail through the course descriptions, and it covers all main spheres of medical education. The experts positively noted the fact that the program has a well-prepared manual for the internship program. The College of Medicine conducted reforms of the program curriculum in order to make it more clinical-science-integrated and practice-oriented. The experts emphasize thereby that the restructuring of the curriculum led also to the establishment of a more modern and future-oriented medical education at the University.

The topic of the successive course structure was discussed by the experts in the process of evaluation. During the on-site visit, the University clearly demonstrated that the program reflects a consecutive progression of the study content from basic to more complex learning subjects. Key sub-specialties of the program in internal medicine and surgery are not offered as independent courses but as constituent parts of the related courses. Thus, the curriculum of the program has an interconnected and practice-integrated structure of courses leading to the comprehensive specialization.

With regard to specific courses of the program curriculum, the experts comment that the program management might consider the introduction of more courses fully or partially focused on radiology, pharmacology and the sub-specialty of internal medicine. Along the same lines, the experts suggest the University to consider offering also cross-sectional courses with clear organ-centered sections.

In a similar way, the experts discussed the possibility of offering elective courses in the program, so that students could choose a course in medical management or other topics related to medical studies on a semester basis. From the experts' point of view, the study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" offers almost no possibility for individual organization of the study plan. By offering elective courses, the University would bring some flexibility into the program structure and would also give its students the opportunity to pursue certain spheres of their interest in medicine more intensely. Moreover, elective courses could help to increase the interdisciplinary capacities of the program content.

The experts discussed the fact that the structure of the program consists of numerous different courses and is, therefore, quite fragmented. They concluded that

this leads to a high examination load for students at the end of each semester because every course finishes with a final examination. The discussion with the program students revealed that, on the one hand indeed, they experience the resulting workload as quite intensive and high. On the other hand, the program students underlined that the continuous engagement in examinations assures a successful learning process. Based on the European perspective, the experts recommend the University to consider the combination of the program courses into larger units, e.g. modules. The experts highlight the expediency of using modules because they cover a bigger amount of learning material and are completed with one final examination (more information about the modularized structure can be found in the document “ECTS Users’ Guide”<sup>10</sup>).

Regarding the workload of students in the program, the experts underlined that along with contact hours, self-study hours constitute an important part of the education process because they reflect students’ total input within and outside of classes. The experts encourage the University to explicitly determine the amount of self-study hours and to outline the total workload of the study program in a transparent manner and including the self-study hours. In addition to that, the experts emphasize that the self-study hours should be continuously structured and navigated by the University, in order to maintain a realistic estimate of the hours students need for independent learning. Hence, the experts recommend the University to use questionnaires in order to assess and to plan the number of hours students need to accomplish various tasks. Based on the obtained results, the University could compare and accordingly adjust the expected workload to the experience and learning capacities of students. This will in turn enable the program administration to determine the feasibility of learning outcomes.

The study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” does not require the submission of a bachelor thesis for awarding the academic degree. But from the experts’ point of view, students’ activities in the courses “Medical Statistics and Scientific Research” and “Community Medicine” are fully comparable with the European understanding of such a final research paper. In this regard, the experts confirm that the program develops a solid understanding of discipline-specific research questions and provides with methods of dealing with them.

After the completion of the sixth year of studies, students of the program can start their clinical training in the Medical Internship Program (IP) in different hospitals in the Makkah region that lasts for one year. It consists of seven rotations lasting

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<sup>10</sup> See the link: [http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2015/ects-users-guide_en.pdf) (11.05.2016)

from one to two months: Medicine (two months), Surgery (two months), Obstetrics and Gynecology (two months), Pediatrics (two months), Emergency Medicine (one month), Family Medicine (one month) and an elective rotation chosen out of the previous ones (two months). Students are considered to have completed the internship program if they 1) attain the minimum of 60% in the Intern Assessment Form after each rotation, 2) complete the interns' Portfolio and logbook with the minimum performance of 60% and 3) do not have the record of discipline violation or similar concerns.

The University provides an Internship Program Manual, which describes the rotations and aims of the training period, interns' right and responsibilities, education and training requirements, teaching activities, and the applied assessment methods. Furthermore, quality and the appropriateness of the internship program is evaluated and maintained with the help of feedbacks from students and educators. Every three years, the Medical Internship Unit prepares a report about the ongoing quality improvement of the training program. Taking these facts into account, the expert group evaluates the internship year of the study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" as effective. They see in particular the opening of the new teaching hospital as a significant step towards further development in terms of locally binding the internship to the University.

The expert group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.3.3 Admission and Feasibility**

The admission procedure of the Department of Medicine complies with the regulations of the University and with the two-step admission system implemented in other Saudi Arabian higher education institutions. First, students are admitted to the preparatory year, which is managed by the University Deanship of Admission and Registration. After the successful completion of the preparatory year, students can apply to one of the following colleges: Dentistry, Medicine, Pharmacy, Applied Medical Sciences, Public Health and Health Informatics, and Nursing. Admission to a college means that students continue their studies in the second year.

The experts conclude that the admission requirements of the study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" are distinctly regulated and are in congruence with the standards of the University.

The experts positively noted the fact that students are offered an orientation week, where they are informed about the learning requirements of the program and the organizational aspects of studies at the University. Initial admission and the enrollment to the second year of the program are institutionally separated, and both



procedures are clearly described. Students do not have to pay tuition fees; the University offers academic and monthly financial support to the admitted students.

The admission requirements enable the University to choose students with the sufficient level of knowledge in subjects related to medicine, and thus, to assure the feasibility of the intended learning material. With regard to the requirement of physical and medical fitness of the applicants, the experts agree that it is important to take into account the fact that students are expected to work with various tools and devices, and are also responsible for the safety of their patients. However, the experts underline that the University should prepare program- or specialization-specific admission requirements, because certain limitations in physical performance are applicable for one study program but are not relevant for another. The same applies to the support methods for students who became physically impaired or chronically ill during their studies at the University. In some specializations they can perhaps continue their studies, whereas in other the University should provide them with special conditions or with the possibility to change the initial specialization.

During the on-site visit, the representatives of the College of Medicine explained that they decide about the provision of special compensation measures for students with disabilities on an individual basis. Within this context, the experts strongly encourage the University to adopt official regulations on the institutional level in order to determine the units or persons responsible for the support of students with special needs, and also to guarantee a consistent and transparent approach in matters of academic, health and social support.

As a result of written reviews, the experts noted low completion rates among male students of the program. The University is aware of this situation and is actively engaged in offering support services as a counter measure. The experts recommend the University to further keep this development under consideration and to monitor it. Thereby, the College of Medicine should actively apply and analyze the results of questionnaires, feedbacks and evaluation measures implemented within the quality assurance system of the University in order to reveal the factors that restrict the feasibility of the study program for a specific group of students.

The University has a set of regulations for internal and external transfer procedures. Students transferring from other higher education institutions forward their request to the University's Deanship of Admission and Registration, and if they fulfill the requirements, their request is then submitted to the respective college. Courses completed at the previous university will be equated and registered in

students' academic record, though credits for these courses will not be counted into their cumulative grade.

The expert group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.3.4 Examination System and Transparency**

The University implements bylaws that regulate the study process, grading and examinations on the undergraduate level. Methods of assessment of students' performance can be grouped into the following types: continuous assessments, midterm and midyear examinations, and final examinations. Continuous assessments take place throughout the semester; midterm and midyear examinations are usually carried out in the middle of the semester or of an academic year, respectively, and final examinations at the end of the semester. Course instructors are responsible for the preparation of all examination questions and also for the evaluation of students' answers. Students whose attendance rate is lower than 75% are not allowed to take the final examination and have to repeat the respective course. Furthermore, students have to obtain at least 60% of performance in clinical tasks and tests in order to successfully complete the courses containing such assignments.

Students, who have failed an examination after the first attempt, can take the second round examinations that are carried out in the following semester on the date approved by the college. However, students who have failed in more 50% of final examinations in the given semester are not permitted to take the second round tests; in that case they have to repeat the course in the next academic year. If students cannot attend the final examination due to an acceptable reason, they are allowed to take a make-up examination. The University has a regulated procedure for the submission and consideration of students complains.

The experts evaluate the examination methods applied in the program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" as expedient and competence-oriented. The experts positively note the fact that the University uses different forms of examinations, e.g. presentations, OSPE<sup>11</sup>, OSCE<sup>12</sup>, written exams, practical tasks.

The experts evaluate the assessment regulations and procedures of the University as adequate. The expediency of the examination procedures of the University serves as an effective tool to determine students' learning success as well as the feasibility of the learning material. As it has already been mentioned under section

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<sup>11</sup> OSPE means 'objective structured practical examination', which is carried out for the assessment of laboratory exercises in preclinical circumstances.

<sup>12</sup> OSCE means 'objective structured clinical examination', which is carried out for the assessment of students' performance in clinical circumstances.

1.3.2, the program management might consider the reduction of the examination load of students through the combination of the program courses into larger units, e. g. modules. However, it should also be taken into account thereby that the program students consider the constant engagement with the study content as beneficial and indispensable for their professional development.

Information about the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery”, including the study plan, description of the courses, enrollment and study regulations, students guide and other program-related facts is available on the website of the College of Medicine. Students are informed about the objectives, regulations, requirements, attendance sheets, assessment methods and other details of the program courses through the college website, the training guide as well as in the University library.

In the course of the on-site visit, members of the teaching staff and students of the program expressed their contentment with the examination system and the methods of information provision at all stages of education process at the University.

The expert group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.3.5 Teaching staff and Material Equipment**

The full-time teaching staff of the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” consists of 216 male and 96 female members. Given the fact that there are currently 704 male and 766 female students in the program, the ratio of students to full-time teachers constitutes three male students and eight female students per one teacher. Part-time teaching staff of the program includes 63 male and 29 female assistant professors, one male associate professors and one male full professor. Further human resources include ten male and three female technicians as well as 19 male and eight female administrative staff members. More than 80 demonstrators of the college are currently on scholarship trainings abroad in different specialties and are expected to join the college within the next five years.

The University implements a regulated procedure of employment on academic and non-academic positions for Saudi-Arabian and non-Saudi-Arabian candidates. These regulations are designed and administered by the Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education. The University announces vacant positions on its website, as well as in local newspapers and through various media sources. The experts consider these employment procedures of the University to be adequate, transparent and well-described.

The experts emphasized the high qualification of the teaching staff of the program. The academic staff of the College of Medicine attends and participates in workshops and conferences organized by the University as well as by international higher education institutions and organizations. Thus, it is actively involved in the academic life and scientific life of the University and also in the continuous development of the study program. The experts positively highlighted the increase in research funding at the College of Medicine. At the same time though, they recommend the college to strengthen the involvement of the teaching staff in international academic exchange activities and scientific events. Moreover, they suggest the college to demonstrate its research objectives as well as the achievements of its members in various research activities and projects in a more distinct and transparent manner.

During the on-site visit, the experts visited the classrooms, lecture halls and training premises of the College of Medicine. It has 26 teaching halls, five seminar rooms, three meetings rooms, 44 teaching and research laboratories and five PBL (problem-based learning) rooms. According to the University, every meeting room, teaching and research laboratory as well as staff and administration room is equipped with a computer. The College of Medicine has 83 data show equipment, 75 whiteboards and eight smart boards divided between the male and female sections of the college. Furthermore, there is an e-learning room with 20 and 25 computers in both male and female sections of the college. The laboratories of the program are quipped according to the content and purpose of training sessions and experiments conducted in them. The Clinical Simulation Center (CSC) has been recently expanded and equipped with additional training objects.

The College of Medicine has its own library, which is open from 8:00 till 15:30 and which consists of a male and a female part. In addition to that, students of the program have access to the central library of the University named "King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Library". The opening hours of the central library are from 8:00 till 20:00 for the male section and from 8:00 till 16:00 for the female section of the library. King Abdullah Bin Abdul-Aziz Library is subscribed to 68 on-line databases; all students can access the digital library of the University 24 hours a day by means of their username and password. Besides, there is an Internet hall within the central library, which is open from 8:00 till 20:00 in the male section and from 8:00 till 14:00 in the female section.

Regarding the opening hour of the central library and the internet hall, the experts recommend the University to offer equal access to the existing learning resources for both groups of students. They underline that the female students must have the same timeframe and opportunities for working at the library as their male peers,

especially given the fact that the number of female students is larger in all three colleges considered in the accreditation process.

The College of Medicine conducts financial planning in agreement with the Financial Department of the University. The college can obtain additional funding from research support units of the University. Based on the information provided by the University, the experts concluded that funding of research at the College of Medicine has increased six times from 2012 to 2014.

To conclude, the program has sufficient and adequate facilities and equipment necessary for the organization of the education process in medical care. The provision and use of facilities and equipment is monitored as part of the quality assurance system of the program.

The expert group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.3.6 Quality Assurance**

The University follows the regulations and accreditation standards of the Saudi National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA), which is an independent body directly cooperating with the national council of higher education. According to the University, the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” complies with the standards of the National Qualification Framework of the NCAAA.

From the experts’ point of view, the College of Medicine has a well-structured system of quality assurance and a Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) that functions under the supervision of the University Deanship of Quality Assurance and Academic Accreditation. The QAU is responsible for the organization of all quality assurance mechanisms, which include setting the necessary Key Performance Indicators (KPI) to evaluate the achievement of performance indicators within the college, and also the application of different surveys for the analyses of teachers’ and students’ satisfaction with education process and college services.

The College of Medicine implements a number of periodical reviews, which follow the requirements and standards determined by the NCAAA. All stakeholders of the college, including students, academic staff, management members, patients who were treated by the program students, and employers of the program graduates, are required to fill in questionnaires, in which they evaluate the quality of the courses, the orientation week, the program in general, academic counselling, facilities and equipment, education experience, professional qualities of graduates and other aspects related to higher education process.

The College distributes also periodical surveys for graduates and employers six months after the completion of the program in order to determine the employment percentage and to monitor graduates' level of satisfaction with the program.

At the end of each course, course instructors have to prepare a course report, which is then submitted to the Quality Assurance Unit to analyze the activities of the college and to issue an annual college report. Revision results and modification proposals are discussed with the responsible program coordinator, the Curriculum Unit and the Exam Assessment Unit before they are forwarded to the dean of the college. The experts concluded that such evaluation procedures enable the program management to promptly introduce minor corrections and alteration in the curriculum.

Students of the program are required to submit their feedback and evaluations at the end of each course and after the completion of the internship year. The college applies the DREEM (the Dundee Ready Educational Environment Measure) questionnaire in order to measure the educational environment from students' perspective. Furthermore, students are expected to evaluate their teachers' performance at the end of every academic year.

The experts were convinced about the sufficiency and completeness of the documents demonstrating the functionality of the quality assurance system of the University. At the same time though, they recommend the University to do the final edition of the documents (reports, descriptions, results) prepared and submitted within the framework of evaluation and accreditation procedures, both internal and external. The final edition should be implemented institution-wide and should serve the purpose of ensuring a coherent and uniform layout of all documents. In terms of content, the final edition should also enable the University to remove redundant information and thus, to make the documents as precise and subject-specific as possible. The experts are confident, that this will help to make the respective documents more comprehensible and, thus, immensely facilitate the work of external parties involved in the accreditation procedures.

As the main recommendation within this criterion, the experts strongly encourage the College of Medicine to present in a more detailed and transparent manner, how the results of quality evaluation are implemented for the continuous enhancement and improvement of the education process in the program. Such a description could serve also as an explanatory basis why, for instance, student satisfaction surveys show a low level of satisfaction. The same recommendation applies also to the implementation of the results of management information system of the college and of the University.

Concerning the student support mechanisms, the University indicates that there are two orientation programs for the students of the College of Medicine: the first one takes place at the beginning of the preparatory year and the second one at the beginning of the second year. The college administration organizes also summer trainings in clinical practice for the fourth year students and arranges the so-called 'Career Day' for senior students. The Academic Office of the college is responsible for academic counselling and guidance of students. It has a Mentoring Unit that assigns one mentor per 4-5 students in order to support them in social and psychological matters.

The expert group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.3.7 Gender Equality and equal opportunities**

The study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" is taught to female and male students separately in the respective sections of the University campuses. The University assures to offer equal education process for both female and male students. Thus, the same course specifications, lecture forms, timing and content of examinations, as well as equipment and learning material, are said to be provided in both sections of the program.

However, the experts point out that the opening hours of the central library, which are shorter for female students than for their male peers, do not fully comply with the statement of the University. Therefore, the experts strongly recommend the University to guarantee equal access to the existing learning resources for both groups of students.

Moreover, the experts encourage the University to develop and to publish a concept of gender equality in the form of an official document. This document should serve as a clear and transparent statement that both female and male students and members of the teaching staff, as well as other stakeholders of the University, are provided with equal opportunities and conditions to study and work within the premises of the University. Consequently, this institutionally adopted concept of gender equality should serve as a standard to be fulfilled by all colleges and study programs of the University.

Regarding the admission and compensation measures for students with disabilities and chronic illnesses, the University informs that physical and medical fitness is one of the main admission requirements of the program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery". As written above, the experts agree that the successful completion of higher education program in medicine sets certain requirements to the physical constitution and health of students.

At the same time though, the experts strongly recommend the University to set up program-specific requirements to physical fitness of students. Furthermore, the University should also adopt official institution-wide regulations that will determine what units or persons are responsible for the organization of support measures for students with disabilities and how these measures are to be implemented. Thanks to such regulations, the University will have a solid basis for taking decisions regarding students with special needs in a transparent and objective way.

Taking into account the social norms and the cultural context of the country of Saudi Arabia, the experts group concludes that the requirements of the criterion are met.

### **3.4 Summary**

The on-site visit of Umm Al-Qura University took place in an open atmosphere of mutual trust and respect. As a result, the experts used the opportunity to discuss and clarify questions related to the accreditation procedure as appropriate. This included critical aspects identified through prior evaluation in writing, and with all relevant groups of the University and representatives of the Colleges.

The experts acknowledge that due to ongoing and highly dynamic demographic developments in Saudi Arabia, i.e. the growth rate of the general population, the University is confronted with significant educational pressures. Some of these societal problems and challenges, as well as novel opportunities, are comprehensively addressed by medium- and long-term strategies formulated by the University. From the experts' point of view, the study programs in health care sciences, as concerns this accreditation, need to be considered also from the perspective of contributions by the University to societal development and transformation.

Furthermore, the experts acknowledge the regional role, responsibility and awareness concerning Mecca as an international pilgrimage site of massive scales. Accordingly, representatives of Umm Al-Qura University perform important roles and health care duties. In particular, students were proud to contribute to these roles and report about their involvement in community projects that support the well-being of pilgrims.

With regard to the future development of the University and of the study programs in health care sciences in particular, the experts have to emphasize the significance of the new teaching hospital, which will be open to patients in the near future. The University does make extensive efforts to complete the construction work and the experts acknowledge the importance to open the teaching hospital as soon as possible.



The Bachelor program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” has an adequate teaching program designed to assure continuous acquisition of key knowledge by individual students throughout the entire period of education. The structure, learning outcomes and training requirements of the study program are aimed at preparing students for the national licensing examination and also important aspects for post-graduates as healthcare practitioners. The quality assurance system of the College of Medicine is described and explained in sufficient detail. The study program includes a well-functioning teaching and examination system. Learning materials, training equipment, digital training opportunities and the necessary teaching facilities are provided in a sufficient, transparent and widely accessible manner.

Based on the application documentation and the conclusions of the on-site visit, the experts have determined that the study program “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” fulfils the above described and evaluated criteria.

The experts concluded the on-site visit with a clear votum to submit a positive recommendation to the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS in favor of a positive decision regarding the accreditation of the study program.

Apart from the accreditation decision, the experts have outlined the following list of specific recommendations for further continuous development of the study program:

Recommendations for the “Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery” program:

- The College of Medicine should principally offer elective next to obligatory courses in order to motivate enrolled students to ad and pursue particular interests in medicine in general or its specializations individually or intensely i.e. in smaller groups. The elective courses might be strategically positioned to grow and increase certain interdisciplinary capacities of the program (1.3.1 and 1.3.2); an example of such courses might be cross-sectional topics related to particular organ systems, which organize certain expertise and prioritize evidence-based medical approaches based on the state-of-the-art. It is predicted that horizontally organized interdisciplinary groups will be of eminent importance for future health care and that early training in elective peer groups can have a major impact on networking capacities and interdisciplinary developments.
- The College of Medicine should give additional consideration to train competences for the assessment of patients based on systematic review of their needs and evidence-based treatment options. Inclusion of such training com-

petences in a transparent manner throughout the program objectives is expected to enhance the patient-centered implementation of the study and learning process (1.3.1);

- The representatives of the College of Medicine should strengthen the research focus and medical research activities concerning the pilgrims and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Public health and observational medical programs that combine different aspects and interdisciplinary approaches may contribute to the development of unique competences and insights under the umbrella of the College. This should include the establishment of distinct clinical data bases, eHealth tools distributed to pilgrims and practitioners, publications, research funding, and ultimately increase the combined medical and research expertise in health care services within the context of dynamic populations and environments with important endemic or epidemic disease pressures (1.3.1);
- The College of Medicine should closely monitor the developing situation concerning potentially decreasing graduation rates among male students. Thereby, the college should actively obtain data and analyze the results of questionnaires, take feedback and evaluation measures implemented through the quality assurance system of the University in order to potentially reveal important factors that may restrict the feasibility of the study program for specific subgroups of students as appropriate (1.3.3);
- The college should enhance the involvement of its teaching staff in international academic exchange activities and scientific meetings as appropriate. Moreover, it is suggested that the college actively communicates its research objectives and identifies particular research areas and promotes achievements by its faculty members and their various research activities and projects in a distinguishing and transparent manner (1.3.5);
- The College of Medicine should present in a more detailed and transparent manner, how the results of quality evaluations are ultimately implemented to continuously enhance and improve the education process and to overcome potential weaknesses of the program (1.3.6);

Recommendations for all study programs assigned for accreditation:

- The University should consider to provide an additional and official document to all successful graduates, which details the specific program courses and the medical competences obtained throughout the medical studies to accompany the graduation diplomas (1.3.1);
- The University should increase its preparatory support to students during the critical transition period from the academic to professional health care sphere by establishing a Career Center and encouraging individual Colleges and de-

partments to organize regular events and consultation opportunities, where students can meet representatives from various health care sectors and professions to learn about the specific needs and expectations of prospective employers (1.3.1);

- The University should initiate national and international short-term exchange opportunities for their academic staff and senior students of the program within the framework of “summer schools”. For this purpose, the University may use already established and well-functioning contacts with other Universities and Institutions (criterion 1.3.1);
- The University should consider combining and strategizing particular program courses in addition through larger educational units, e.g. modules, which cover a larger amount of connected learning materials to be completed with one final examination. This might help to reduce redundancy and limit the examination load of students (1.3.2 and 1.3.4);
- The University should explicitly determine the amount of self-study hours and of the total workload of the study programs in a transparent manner. By means of questionnaires, it should assess and plan the number of hours students need to accomplish various tasks. Based on the obtained results, the University should compare and accordingly adjust the expected workload to the experience and learning capacities of students (1.3.2);
- The University should adopt official regulations for students with special needs on the institutional level in order to guarantee a consistent and transparent approach in matters of academic, health and social support. These institution-wide equal opportunity regulations should determine specific units and persons responsible for the organization of support measures for students with disabilities. Furthermore, these regulations should include program-specific exemptions concerning the general physical fitness of students (1.3.3 and 1.3.7);
- The University should offer equal access to the existing learning resources for both female and male groups of students. Female and male students must always have the same timeframe and opportunities for example to study and work at a particular library important for the study program (1.3.5);
- The University should organize the final edition of the documents (reports, descriptions, results) to be prepared and submitted within the framework of evaluation accreditation procedures, both internal and external. The final edition should be implemented institution-wide and should ensure a coherent and uniform layout of all documents. In terms of content, the final edition should remove redundant information and render the documents as precise and subject-specific as possible for outside readers (1.3.6);

- The University should develop and publish a concept of gender equality in the form of an official document. This document should serve as a clear and transparent statement that both female and male students and members of the teaching staff, as well as other stakeholders of the University, are provided with equal opportunities and conditions to study and work at the University (1.3.7).

#### **4 Decision on the recommendation for accreditation**

The resolution of the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS of 21 July 2016 is based on the University's application documents, the experts' written reviews and the results of the on-site visit described in the Expert Report. Moreover, the Accreditation Commission took into account the response opinion of the University regarding the study program submitted by the University on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2016 (attachment 1 to the final report).

The on-site visit of the University took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2016 according to the previously agreed schedule.

The accreditation decision is based on the accreditation criteria of the AHPGS. They have been developed in close accordance with the existing standards and requirements valid in the Federal Republic of Germany and based on the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" (ESG), established by the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA).

Taking into account the explanations in the response opinion, the Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS considers that all accreditation criteria are fulfilled and adopts the following decision:

The bachelor study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" completed with the academic degree "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" is accredited. The regulated study period of the program is six years/12 semesters in full-time form followed by a one-year internship. The study program comprises 50 courses, nine of which are the preparatory year courses, 34 are the program-specific courses and seven are the university requirement courses. The study program is offered for both female and male students.

The study program "Medical Bachelor and Bachelor of Surgery" is accredited for the duration of five years, until 30 September 2021.

The Accreditation Commission of the AHPGS welcomes the response opinion of the University. It underlines the effort the University spends on the development of the study program.

**Attachment 1: Response opinion of the University regarding the Expert Report**

**The expert report was send to the University by Email at the 17.06.2016, the response opinion to the expert report was sent to AHPGS by Email at the 06.07.2016.**

<p>Recommendation 1:</p> <p>The College of Medicine should principally offer elective next to obligatory courses in order to motivate enrolled students to add and pursue particular interests in medicine in general or its specializations individually or intensely i.e. in smaller groups. The elective courses might be strategically positioned to grow and increase certain interdisciplinary capacities of the program (1.3.1 and 1.3.2); an example of such courses might be cross-sectional topics related to particular organ systems, which organize certain expertise and prioritize evidence-based medical approaches based on the state-of-the-art. It is predicted that horizontally organized interdisciplinary groups will be of eminent importance for future health care and that early training in elective peer groups can have a major impact on networking capacities and interdisciplinary developments.</p>	<p>The reformed MBBS curriculum has considered this recommendations and it includes three elective courses (in year 3 and year 6) with total of 8 Credit Units</p> <p>The nature of the courses are designed to allow the students to choose a course of list of interdisciplinary and specialization courses and topics... this motivate enrolled students to add and pursue particular interests in medicine in general or its specializations individually or intensely</p>
<p>Recommendation 2:</p> <p>The College of Medicine should give additional consideration to train competences for the assessment of patients based on systematic review of their needs and evidence-based treatment options. Inclusion of such training competences in a transparent manner throughout the program objectives is expected to enhance the patient-centered implementation of the study and learning process (1.3.1);</p>	<p>During clinical rotations (in pediatrics, OBG, internal medicine courses, etc) there are specified sessions prepared by students where they should review evidence-based topics selected from their own patients' encounter. The major aim of these sessions is to enhance evidence-based practice and patient-centered implementation of studies. As the recommendation suggested we should give more consideration not involving clinical rotations but also</p>

	<p>throughout the years of the program. This approach has been considered in the reformed MBBS program particularly in Research and Evidence vertical module.</p>
<p>Recommendation 3: The representatives of the College of Medicine should strengthen the research focus and medical research activities concerning the pilgrims and the pilgrimage to Mecca. Public health and observational medical programs that combine different aspects and interdisciplinary approaches may contribute to the development of unique competences and insights under the umbrella of the College. This should include the establishment of distinct clinical data bases, eHealth tools distributed to pilgrims and practitioners, publications, research funding, and ultimately increase the combined medical and research expertise in health care services within the context of dynamic populations and environments with important endemic or epidemic disease pressures (1.3.1);</p>	<p>The reformed MBBS curriculum has considered this recommendation. There are two longitudinal vertical modules “Hajj and Umrah” and “Research and Evidence” that extended from year 2 to year 6 of the MBBS program.</p> <p>The focus of these two vertical modules are designed to fulfill the competencies of Saudi MEDs and UQU Competencies of “research and scholar pursuit” as well as enable UQU MED students and graduates to understand and contribute to the Pilgrims welfare and their role as health advocate.</p> <p>Students are required to deliver leaning projects that help the community and the medical professions to utilized and communicate available guidelines or researches effectively to enhance Pilgrims and community welfare. These learning projects could be in form of: educational materials (pamphlets, promotions, animations); design a campaign; or simple survey. These materials will be utilized in future activities in UQU MED Pilgrims and community welfare program.</p>
<p>Recommendation 4: The College of Medicine should closely monitor the developing situation concerning potentially decreasing</p>	<p>This is a very important recommendation: Last year the College Board discussed this particular aspect regarding student’s progression in the program</p>



<p>graduation rates among male students. Thereby, the college should actively obtain data and analyze the results of questionnaires, take feedback and evaluation measures implemented through the quality assurance system of the University in order to potentially reveal important factors that may restrict the feasibility of the study program for specific subgroups of students as appropriate (1.3.3);</p>	<p>and developed “student mentoring program”. The program was designed to monitor students and focused on students who faced potential academic difficulties to detect them and provide required support.</p> <p>Yet there is a need to investigate this aspect in more details. Thus the college will develop a taskforce to investigate this aspect and develop an action plan the concurred with current QA system.</p>
<p>Recommendation 5: The college should enhance the involvement of its teaching staff in international academic exchange activities and scientific meetings as appropriate. Moreover, it is suggested that the college actively communicates its research objectives and identifies particular research areas and promotes achievements by its faculty members and their various research activities and projects in a distinguishing and transparent manner (1.3.5);</p>	<p>There is several teaching staff requesting to spend some time in international centers in what we call “scientific connection programs”. The major aim of this activity is to allow the staff to explore his/her research interest further and make appropriate research collaboration with international centers.</p> <p>The second part of the recommendation is a really valid and great recommendation. It is going to be considered in the agenda of college strategic plan.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6: The College of Medicine should present in a more detailed and transparent manner, how the results of quality evaluations are ultimately implemented to continuously enhance and improve the education process and to overcome potential weaknesses of the program (1.3.6);</p>	<p>The Higher Curriculum Committee presents the annual reports that conclude the major notes and recommendations of all curriculum subcommittees, which based on the results of quality evaluations. This also takes in considerations any recommendations from structural peer-review or the accreditations activities.</p> <p>This report discussed in the first annual College Board to agree on the</p>

	<p>major changes and to be communicated to departments, staff and students. However, developing a more transparent schema to present how the collected feedbacks inform future changes and decision will be taken in consideration by the next academic year.</p>
<p>Recommendation 7: The University should consider to provide an additional and official document to all successful graduates, which details the specific program courses and the medical competences obtained throughout the medical studies to accompany the graduation diplomas (1.3.1);</p>	<p>This is very crucial recommendation that concurred with the requirement of most overseas postgraduate programs. Nevertheless, the Dean and Academic Vice-dean developed such documents when it is required by graduates and some overseas postgraduate programs. There is a need to develop a comprehensive document that presents the competences of UQU Med graduates. The College will design and approve a comprehensive official document to all graduates, which details the specific program courses and the medical competences obtained throughout the medical studies to accompany the graduation diplomas.</p>
<p>Recommendation 8: The University should increase its preparatory support to students during the critical transition period from the academic to professional health care sphere by establishing a Career Center and encouraging individual Colleges and departments to organize regular events and consultation opportunities, where students can</p>	<p>The College conducts an annual Career Day for Year 6 students. The program includes symposium, workshops and one-one counseling sessions. Graduates and students are involved in designing the program regarding their needs and expectations. As part of the preparation for practice course conducted this year for 6<sup>th</sup> year students, several workshops conduct-</p>

<p>meet representatives from various health care sectors and professions to learn about the specific needs and expectations of prospective employers (1.3.1);</p>	<p>ed for some the purposes mentioned in the recommendation. For example: How to plan your carrier? What skills you need as an intern? How to apply for different health sectors? How to prepare for national and international accreditation exams?..etc</p> <p>In addition, there is an annual national Career Day for Medical Students organized by one of the Medical Schools in the Kingdom. UQU MED hosted the Medical Graduates Career Day 2013. However, their Career Day must essential aspects of preparing UQU MED graduates to professional life.</p> <p>Thus the College will keep organizing annual Career Day where students can meet representatives from various health care sectors and professions to learn about the specific needs and expectations of prospective employers.</p>
<p>Recommendation 9: The University should initiate national and international short-term exchange opportunities for their academic staff and senior students of the program within the framework of “summer schools”. For this purpose, the University may use already established and well-functioning contacts with other Universities and Institutions (criterion 1.3.1);</p>	<p>This is a very crucial recommendation that enrich the experiences’ of students and staff. The College has some initiative in this regard and keep sending for the two years some of Year 5 students to “summer school” in international medical schools. The College itself established a “research Summer school” for 5-day for local and national medical students.</p> <p>In addition, the College sends some of the staff to tailored “Medical Education” courses in UK and USA.</p> <p>The College will highlight this recommendation to ask for the University support in this regard. And then will study and develop the potentials na-</p>

	<p>tional and international short-term exchange opportunities for their academic staff and senior students of the program.</p>
<p>Recommendation 10: The University should consider combining and strategizing particular program courses in addition through larger educational units, e.g. modules, which cover a larger amount of connected learning materials to be completed with one final examination. This might help to reduce redundancy and limit the examination load of students (1.3.2 and 1.3.4);</p>	<p>The reformed MBBS curriculum has address this recommendation. The reformed MBBS in from Year 2 – Year 6 is annual system that consists of 20 core-integrated modules plus three electives. In each year of the program the core-integrated modules has integrated comprehensive final examinations.</p>
<p>Recommendation 11: The University should explicitly determine the amount of self-study hours and of the total workload of the study programs in a transparent manner. By means of questionnaires, it should assess and plan the number of hours students need to accomplish various tasks. Based on the obtained results, the University should compare and accordingly adjust the expected workload to the experience and learning capacities of students (1.3.2);</p>	<p>This is a very central recommendation that concurs with the international trend to evaluate the leaning load instead of the teaching load, especially in student-centered curricula. The College will develop a taskforce to determine the students learning load of the current and new program.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12: The University should adopt official regulations for students with special needs on the institutional level in order to guarantee a consistent and transparent approach in matters of academic, health and social support. These institution-wide equal opportuni-</p>	<p>I suggest if University officials responds to this comment (Dr. Fatin?)</p>

<p>ty regulations should determine specific units and persons responsible for the organization of support measures for students with disabilities. Furthermore, these regulations should include program-specific exemptions concerning the general physical fitness of students (1.3.3 and 1.3.7);</p>	
<p>Recommendation 13: The University should offer equal access to the existing learning resources for both female and male groups of students. Female and male students must always have the same timeframe and opportunities for example to study and work at a particular library important for the study program (1.3.5);</p>	<p>The collages try its best to offer equal access to the existing learning resources for both female and male groups of students. For example, in Simulation Center, Building 3, new buildings design (Collage and Hospital), etc.</p>
<p>Recommendation 14: The University should organize the final edition of the documents (reports, descriptions, results) to be prepared and submitted within the framework of evaluation accreditation procedures, both internal and external. The final edition should be implemented institution-wide and should ensure a coherent and uniform layout of all documents. In terms of content, the final edition should remove redundant information and render the documents as precise and subject-specific as possible for outside readers (1.3.6);</p>	<p>Again same as in 12</p>
<p>Recommendation 15: The University should develop and publish a concept of gender equality in the form of an official document. This document should serve as a clear and</p>	<p>Same as 12</p>

<p>transparent statement that both female and male students and members of the teaching staff, as well as other stakeholders of the University, are provided with equal opportunities and conditions to study and work at the University (1.3.7).</p>	
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