

ASPIRE-ing to improve the Quality of Medical Education

The ASPIRE to Excellence Programme was established by The Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE), a leading international association for medical education to go beyond the traditional accreditation process and to recognise that the education program in a medical College can be subjected to peer review against an agreed set of standards or benchmarks that identify world-class excellence in education. ASPIRE was developed by a group of leading international authorities in medical education and educational bodies with a commitment to excellence. An ASPIRE award allows, medical, dental Colleges to be recognised internationally for their excellence in education.

ASPIRE panels of international experts in specific areas of medical education have developed internationally peer-based criteria to benchmark excellence in the areas of, student engagement, student assessment, social accountability, faculty development, and simulation, Curriculum Development and Technology Enhanced Learning.

Excellence in Education

Over the past decade, the move to recognise excellence in universities has been reflected in increasing attention being paid to university league tables. Rankings, however, concentrate more on research. While excellence in teaching has not featured prominently in world ranking tables, the concept of teaching excellence has attracted attention from academics, governments and the public, and is now part of the everyday language and practice of higher education.

There is currently no mechanism at a global level for a professional peer review of excellence in teaching. There is a need for a form of quality assurance that goes beyond accreditation, which recognises excellence that rightly falls outside the formal accreditation process and is the remit of professional educational bodies.

The ASPIRE Programme goes beyond the traditional accreditation process and to recognise that the education programme in a medical, dental Colleges can be subjected to peer review against a set of criteria that identifies world-class excellence in education.

Instead of the College as a whole unit, ASPIRE has scope to identify important components of a College / Program that could be evaluated for excellence. ASPIRE is not just about recognition. It is the first attempt by any international body to utilize a

peer based approach to recognize excellence in medical education programs. The very existence of standards of excellence developed by peers for these subjects is, in and of itself, a remarkable achievement. Most importantly, it is about encouraging all Colleges to improve and to help each other by sharing best practices with each other.

Benefits of ASPIRE recognition

The ASPIRE-to-Excellence Award programme provides a medical, dental Colleges with a number of opportunities:

- ASPIRE recognition provides the entrepreneurial university with an enhanced capability for monitoring, demonstrating and promoting its exceptional excellence in teaching and learning.
- Benchmark your College against what is considered as best practice in an aspect of education.
- Demonstrate to the students, staff and other stakeholders that the quest for excellence in education is part of the College's vision and mission.
- Have your College/Program recognised nationally and internationally for its education programme.
- Participating in the ASPIRE Awards program, regardless of outcome, fosters local, national, and international educational community development
- Become a member of a network of Colleges (Medical / Dental) recognised for excellence in education.

ASPIRE criteria and awards have emerged as a systematic way to provide objective and peer-based benchmarks of excellence in medical education. Bringing international experts together to create these criteria is a significant contribution in and of itself. ASPIRE has the potential to revolutionize medical education worldwide with the Colleges aiming to achieve excellence as part of their mission.
