

**MEDICAL BOARD STAFF REPORT**

DATE REPORT ISSUED: April 16, 2014  
ATTENTION: Medical Board of California  
SUBJECT: Recognition of International Medical School  
University of Queensland Ochsner School of  
Medicine/Clinical School Program  
STAFF CONTACT: Curtis J. Worden, Chief of Licensing

**REQUESTED ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION:**

After review and discussion, recognize the University of Queensland School of Medicine/Ochsner Clinical School Program (UQO), deem it to be in substantial compliance with the requirements of Business and Professions Code Sections 2089 and 2089.5 and California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1, and extend that recognition to those who matriculate at UQO on or after January 1, 2009.

**BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS:**

The University of Queensland School of Medicine, located in Brisbane, Australia, was founded in 1936 to train physicians to practice medicine primarily in Australia. It is the largest medical school in Australia and is currently recognized by the Medical Board of California (Board). Students graduate with the MBBS degree, which is the equivalent of the M.D. degree in the United States. Geographically, the school extends throughout Queensland with major sites in Brisbane, the outer metropolitan areas, and a number of rural and remote area facilities throughout the rest of Queensland.

In 2008, the school adopted a “clinical school model” with the School of Medicine organized around 11 clinical schools (there were 10 clinical schools at the time the Self-Assessment Report was submitted) where students conduct their clinical training. Nine of the clinical schools are located in Australia and the remaining two are offshore clinical schools located in New Orleans, Louisiana, and in Brunei, SE Asia. The Brunei and Ochsner (New Orleans) clinical schools are designed for international students who will return to their own country to practice medicine upon graduation. Australian students are not eligible to apply to the offshore clinical school programs. Under the clinical school model, students study two years of basic sciences at the University of Queensland School of Medicine in Brisbane, Australia, and then complete two years of clinical training at one of the clinical school sites. The Australian Medical Council has reviewed and approved each of the eleven clinical programs. The University of Queensland is not seeking the Board’s recognition of the Brunei Clinical School Program at this time.

The Ochsner Clinical School Program in Louisiana is conducted in partnership with the Ochsner Health System which includes eight hospitals throughout southeast Louisiana, primarily in New Orleans and Baton Rouge. Ochsner has full institutional accreditation from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), as does its 27 Graduate Medical Education

programs through the respective Residency Review Committees. The Ochsner Health System is also formally affiliated with both Louisiana State University School of Medicine and Tulane University School of Medicine. The UQO admits one class of students each year, with the academic year running from January to late November. The first class of students was admitted in January 2009 with an enrollment of 12 students. The UQO is aiming for a total enrollment of 480 students (120 students admitted into the program each year).

As a medical school program whose primary purpose is to educate non-citizens to practice medicine outside Australia, UQO meets the criteria for the Board's review pursuant to Section 1314.1(a)(2) of Title 16, California Code of Regulations. In January 2012, UQO officials submitted a Self Assessment Report to commence the Board's review process. Medical Consultant James Nuovo, M.D., has been reviewing the school's application. Dr. Nuovo and medical school officials have exchanged written information over the past year. On May 10, 2013, Dr. Nuovo and staff met with Dr. William Pinsky, Chief Academic Officer at Ochsner and Head of the UQO to discuss several issues concerning the administration of the school's educational program.

At the Board's Quarterly Meeting on July 19, 2013, the Board authorized a site visit to UQO's site in New Orleans. The site visit was conducted March 18-21, 2014. The Board's site visit team consisted of the following team members:

Curtis Worden, Board Chief of Licensing  
Dev GnanaDev, M.D., Board Member  
Kerrie Webb, Board Senior Staff Counsel  
Jim Nuovo, MD, Board Licensing Medical Consultant

The site visit included meeting with administration, faculty, and students at the Ochsner Clinical School in New Orleans, Louisiana. Video conference meetings were conducted with Darrell Crawford, MBBS, FRACP, MD, Professor, Head of School, University of Queensland School of Medicine (UQ); Jennifer Schafer, MBBS, DRANZCOG, FRACGP, Head of Academic Discipline of Medical Education, Director of MBBS Program; UQ faculty; and students (both UQO and UQ cohorts).

Staff requests that Board members review the Medical Consultant's report dated April 7, 2014, (pages BRD 4 – 4 through BRD 4 – 11) and determine whether to recognize the medical education provided to students by UQO who matriculated on or after January 1, 2009.

Professor William W. Pinsky, M.D., Head, Ochsner Clinical School from the UQO, has advised staff that he plans to attend the May 1, 2014 Board meeting to be available during the meeting to answer any questions the Board may have concerning the school's educational program.

#### FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS:

In accordance with Business and Professions Code Section 2089.5, the costs of conducting a site inspection are borne by the medical school applying for the Board's recognition. These costs

include all team members' air and ground travel costs within the guidelines allowed by the State, the consultant's daily per diem expense, and the reimbursement of the Board Member's per diem of \$100.00 per day for four days. Subsection (e) of Section 1314.1 of the regulations requires the medical school to reimburse the Board for the team's estimated travel expenses in advance of the site visit. UQO prepaid the estimated cost of the site visit and Board staff is in the process of auditing the final costs of the Site Visit Team. The Board will prepare a request for a refund to UQO of any overpayments if appropriate.

April 7, 2014

To: Members  
Medical Board of California

From: Jim Nuovo, MD  
Professor & Associate Dean of Graduate Medical Education  
UC Davis School of Medicine  
4860 Y Street; Suite 2300  
Sacramento, CA 95817

Re: Evaluation of the University of Queensland Ochsner Clinical School Program

### **Background**

The Medical Board of California (Board) requested a review of the materials provided by the University of Queensland Ochsner (UQO) Clinical School Program. These were submitted in pursuit of a request for the recognition of the UQO Clinical School Program by the Board to enable their students and graduates to participate in clinical clerkships, to enter graduate medical education programs in California, and to become eligible for licensure to practice medicine in California.

This report is based on my review of the documents initially provided to the Board by the University of Queensland, from a response by the School to additional questions posed after review of the Self-Assessment Report, as well as additional information reviewed by the Board's Site Visit Team.

The goal of this review was to determine if the medical education received in this program meets the requirements of current California statutes and regulations for recognition by the Medical Board of California.

### **Site Visit Team**

The Site Visit Team included:

Curtis J. Worden, Chief of Licensing

Dev GnanaDev, MD, Medical Board of California

Kerrie Webb, JD, Staff Counsel

Jim Nuovo, MD, Medical Board of California, Licensing Medical Consultant

### **Site Visit Process**

An agenda for the site visit was developed by the team. The team arrived in New Orleans on the evening of March 18, 2014. There was an initial meeting with Dr. William Pinsky to review the agenda and discuss the goals of the site visit; specifically, that the intent of the site visit was a comprehensive review of the UQO Program as it relates to the requirements of Business and

Professions Code Sections 2089 and 2089.5 and California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1. On the following day, the Site Visit Team met with the leadership of the UQO Clinical School Program to include: Leonardo Seoane, MD, Senior Deputy Head-Curriculum, Richard Deichman, MD, Deputy Head-Student Affairs, Sohail Rao, MD, Deputy Head-Research, Shelly Monks, MBA, System Vice President, Education, Chief Administrative Officer, and Carl Tholen, MEd, Undergraduate Medical Education, Program Director. The content of the discussion included an overview of the relationship between the University of Queensland and the UQO Clinical School Program. Specific topics of discussion included the following: governance and administration, academic environment, educational objectives, admissions and promotions standards, curriculum management and educational resources. We also discussed the process by which academic problems with students are assessed and managed.

The Site Visit Team had a series of 45-minute meetings with the key clinical faculty for each clerkship; i.e. Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Medicine, Psychiatry, Obstetrics and Gynecology and Surgery. In these meetings we discussed the goals and objectives of the service, how the instructors determine if the students met these educational objectives, how the faculty monitor each student's performance, how the faculty communicate with the University of Queensland, the faculty's perception of how well the students are prepared when they start their clinical rotations, and the capacity of the program to ensure adequate support for the full complement of students.

We had a tour of the Ochsner Medical Center campus. The tour included visiting some of the clinical facilities, conference rooms, student workrooms, classrooms and the library.

Afterwards, we met via video teleconference with faculty at the University of Queensland in Australia to discuss the first two years of medical education; known as Phase 1 of the curriculum. We had a 1-hour discussion of the Basic Sciences Curriculum with James Fraser, MBBS, Clinical Lead Educator and Tammy Smith, MBBS, Clinical Lead Educator. This was followed with a 1-hour discussion with Mary Kelleher, MBBS, Clinical Lead Educator and Margo Lane, MBBS, Clinical Skills Coordinator on how students are trained to become clinically prepared. Included in our discussion was the capacity of the program to ensure adequate support for the full complement of students.

This ended the first day of the site visit.

The following day the Site Visit Team started with a series of 45-minute meetings with student groups who had just completed one of the six core clerkship rotations. In these meetings we asked students to describe how they came to be at the UQO Clinical School Program, how they were informed of the goals and objectives of the rotation, the expectations for the clerkship, how performance feedback is given and how they evaluate the rotation and faculty. A total of 56 students were interviewed; 52 were from the UQO cohort and 4 were from the UQ cohort.

We followed these meetings with a tour of the Ochsner Baptist Medical Center Campus, which represents a major site of training. The tour included the Labor & Delivery suite, conference rooms, call rooms, workrooms, and simulation facilities.

Afterwards, we met via video teleconference for 1-hour with the Head of the Medical School, Darrell Crawford, MD, FRACP. The conversation included an overview of the goals of the

UQO Clinical School Program and a discussion of the Site Visit Team's concerns regarding the admissions process.

We had a 1-hour meeting via video teleconference with the Dean of Medical Education, Jennifer Schafer, MBBS, DRANZCOG, FRACGP. Among the topics discussed included a review of the disciplinary process for students who failed to meet the academic requirements during Phase 1 and Phase 2.

We had a 1-hour meeting via video teleconference with 10 students currently in their first year of training; 7 from the UQO cohort and 3 from the UQ cohort. The topics included the academic environment, curriculum, teaching and evaluation, academic and career counseling, health services and financial aid.

Finally, we had a 1-hour meeting via video teleconference with 11 students currently in their second year of training; 6 from the UQO cohort and 5 from the UQ cohort. The topics discussed were the same as we had with the first year students.

During the site visit we had the opportunity to review additional materials provided by the UQO Clinical School Program. These documents included the following: 1. The organization charts for the University of Queensland, the UQO Clinical School Program, and the Ochsner Health System. 2. Representative samples of the Medical Student Performance Evaluation (also known as the "Dean's Letter"). This is the final summative letter prepared for all graduates. 3. Copies of the evaluation forms used to assess student performance on the 3<sup>rd</sup> year clerkships. 4. The student's "Patient Clinical Log." These are used to document completion of the clerkship training requirements. 5. The GPA and MCAT data for the UQO classes from 2014-2017. 6. Demographic information to include the USMLE and Match outcomes for the students who have been in the UQO Clinical School Program. 7. The 2013 "Enrollment and Academic Progression Rules" which were requested by the Site Visit Team to better understand the process to address students in academic difficulty.

On March 21<sup>st</sup>, we had a closing meeting with Dr. Pinsky and the UQO Clinical School Program Leadership to discuss the preliminary findings of the Site Visit Team. The discussion focused on the admissions process; specifically, the lack of involvement of the UQO faculty and medical students in the selection process and the lack of an interview.

The School provided a document titled "University of Queensland/Ochsner Clinical School Proposed Interview Process." We were informed that further clarification of the interview process would be forthcoming.

We received a letter dated April 4, 2014, from Dr. Crawford. In this letter Dr. Crawford states that "The School of Medicine at The University of Queensland supports an initiative to introduce an interview into the selection process for students into the UQ-Ochsner program" and that the interview will be "added to the selection criteria for the Ochsner cohort."

Dr. Pinsky also provided the specifics of the interview process which included the following: 1. The UQO Program will institute a semi-structured interview process weighted along with the MCAT score and GPA. 2. The interviews will be performed by the "Ochsner Interviewing Committee." The committee consists of "diversified staff by gender, race, and specialty." Two 4<sup>th</sup> year students will also be part of the committee. The interviews will be conducted either in

person or via videoconference. The applicants will be rated on measures of interpersonal communication, skills and teamwork, practice-based learning and improvement, professionalism, motivation and commitment to medicine and to a global medical education with the UQ/UQO School, and resilience and adaptability. A scoring system has been developed to determine which of the applicants will be offered admission.

## **Recommendations**

After review of all of the information described above, it is the opinion of the Site Visit Team that the UQO Clinical School Program is in substantial compliance with the requirements of Business and Professions Code Sections 2089 and 2089.5 and California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1.

## **General Overview of the Program**

### The University of Queensland (UQ) School of Medicine

The University of Queensland's School of Medicine was founded in 1936. It has worked to establish itself as "Australia's Global Medical School." As an indication of these efforts, the School notes that there are "over 450 staff who work across 31 sites over three continents." As of 2011, there were 1770 students studying in the MBBS program.

Once fully implemented, the UQO Clinical School Program would add 480 students to the School's complement.

The School has a defined mission statement which includes its "Vision, Purpose, Core Values and Strategic Priorities." Its Core Values include: Social Commitment, Inspiring Passion, Collective Pursuit of Excellence, Integrity and Professionalism, Valuing Our Social Community, and Innovation."

Its Strategic Priorities include: "Learning, Discovery, Engagement, Globalisation, and Operational Excellence."

The Self-Assessment Report provides a statement of the "Broad Expectations for the Education of Students." These are presented as "three aims of the UQ MBBS curriculum with seven goals and 35 outcomes, which align with the School of Medicine's Vision, Purpose and Values as well as the Australian Medical Council's Attributes of a Medical Graduate."

### The Ochsner Health System

The Ochsner Health System (OHS) is a not-for-profit healthcare provider based in southeast Louisiana. OHS was founded in 1942. The OHS hospitals include: Ochsner Baptist Medical Center, Ochsner Medical Center – Kenner, Ochsner Hospital – Elmwood, Ochsner Medical Center – West Bank, Ochsner Medical Center – Baton Rouge, Ochsner St. Anne General Hospital, Ochsner Medical Center, and Ochsner Medical Center – Northshore.

The OHS "Mission and Vision Statement" is included in the Self-Assessment Report and states: "Ochsner will be a global medical and academic leader who will save and change lives. We will shape the future of healthcare through our integrated health system, fuelled by the passion and strength of our diversified team of physicians and employees."

## The University of Queensland Ochsner (UQO) Clinical School Program

The UQO Clinical School Program opened in January 2009 with an enrollment of 12 students. The first class of UQO students graduated from the program in September 2012. The goal of the UQO Clinical School Program is for a total enrollment of 480 students.

Students admitted to this program will study two years of Basic Sciences at UQ in Australia. They will then spend two years completing their core and elective clinical rotations at OHS in New Orleans and/or Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

Upon successful completion of the curriculum, the UQO students are eligible for ECFMG certification and receive the MBBS degree.

During the site visit we discovered that UQ is moving towards the implementation of an MD degree for all of its students.

UQ has 10 different “clinical schools” within its school of medicine where students complete their clinical rotations. Two of these schools are offshore; UQO and the Brunei Clinical School, which is a partnership between UQ and the University Brunei Darussalam in Brunei. UQ is not seeking recognition of the Brunei Clinical School.

The following is a detailed assessment of the School based on the aforementioned statutes and regulations and on the School’s response to the Self-Assessment Report and the additional concerns posed by this reviewer.

### **Business and Professions Code Sections 2089**

Section 2089 requires the medical curriculum to extend over four years or 32 months of actual instruction. UQO is a four year program in which the first two years (called Phase 1) are primarily pre-clinical and completed in Australia. The third and fourth years (called Phase 2) are structured as 10 Core Clinical Rotations and are completed in the OHS. These Core Clinical Rotations include: Medicine, Surgery, Mental Health, General Practice, Medicine in Society, Obstetrics and Gynecology, Pediatrics and Child Health, Medical Specialties, Surgical Specialties, and Electives.

The total number of hours of all courses required to complete the MBBS degree program is 5,740. This complies with the 4,000 hour minimum requirement in Section 2089.

UQO has an expected attendance of 100% for all curricular elements of Phase 1 and Phase 2. Students are required to sign in for all educational sessions and this is monitored in an attendance log folder. Students must account for all absences and there is a process to address those who are not in compliance.

The School does not allow transfer into the MBBS program for students enrolled at other medical schools.

The School’s curriculum includes all of the courses listed in Section 2089 (b). The information provided in the Self-Assessment Report indicates that the goals, objectives and course content meet the educational requirements.



The School meets the medical curriculum requirement for instruction in pain management and end-of-life care as listed in Section 2089 (c).

### **Business and Professions Code Sections 2089.5**

The documents provided by UQO indicate that the instruction in the clinical courses meets or exceeds the minimum requirements in Section 2089.5. For example, Section 2089.5 requires a minimum of 72 weeks of clinical coursework. UQO requires 80 weeks of clinical coursework.

Students complete the core clinical rotations required in Section 2089.5 at OHS hospitals. The information provided by the School indicates that they are in compliance with item (d); specifically, that the sites provided for these core clinical rotations are performed in hospitals that meet one of the stated requirements.

OHS has a long track record of providing training in both undergraduate and graduate medical education. OHS is the sponsoring institution for 27 ACGME accredited training programs with over 300 residents and fellows.

OHS currently provides 600 student-months of clerkship training for third and fourth year medical students from Tulane and the Louisiana State University School of Medicine. Therefore, the UQO program represents a substantial increase in the number of student months offered within their system. As noted above, the projected full complement of students will require accommodation of 240 students at a time in Phase 2 of the curriculum. Based on our findings during the site visit, the team felt that UQO had the educational and administrative capacity to meet this requirement.

The School indicates that there is a head of the department for all required courses. For the preclinical sciences, the instructors have full-time faculty appointments and appropriate credentials. For the clinical training, the faculty at OHS have appropriate credentials for the training of the students.

### **California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1**

The Self-Assessment Report states that UQ is one of Australia's "premier learning and research institutions." UQ is a founding member of the "national Group of Eight, an alliance of research-strong universities." The School of Medicine is the largest School within the Faculty of Health Sciences at UQ, and one of the largest Schools within the University with 461 FTE staff and 2700 unpaid Academic Title Holders. The Schools programs are delivered across three of UQ's campuses (Herston, St. Lucia, and Ipswich), and through 10 Clinical Schools; two of which are offshore (OHS and Brunei).

The School of Medicine has an "Office of the Medical Dean" which includes the Deputy Head of the School (with oversight of the Clinical Schools); an "Office of Teaching and Learning" which is responsible for quality assurance in teaching, learning and assessment; and an "Office of Research."

The organization and governance of the UQO "matches that of the other Clinical Schools within the School of Medicine." UQO has the "same structures, functions, and responsibilities as the onshore Clinical Schools. All Clinical School Heads report to the Deputy Head of the School."

UQ acknowledges the challenges it faces in operating the offshore clinical schools due to the geographic separation and describes a plan to ensure effective communication. Based on our findings during the site visit, the team felt that there was sufficient evidence that UQ and the UQO Clinical School Program had an effective communication plan. Additionally, we found evidence that the UQO Clinical School Program had substantive input into curricular changes and student assessment.

UQ provided a description of the facilities and faculty for each preclinical course. There is a sufficient description of the credentials of the faculty to indicate that they are appropriately qualified to teach their specific curricular content. It was the impression of the Site Visit Team that the School has sufficient resources to manage the proposed increase in the complement of students for the UQO Program at the UQ and OHS campuses.

UQ has published standards governing admission requirements which include: “a completed key degree” with a GPA equivalent of 2.67, an MCAT with a minimum score of 8/8/M/8 – “(Students who do not meet the minimum MCAT requirement but have no less than a score of 7 and nor more than one 7 in their MCAT will be assessed on a case-by-case basis),” English language proficiency “(this requirement is met if the applicant graduated from an institution where the instruction and assessment was in English.”

Prior to the site visit an interview was not part of the selection process. Students who are interested in applying to the MBBS program are directed to a website led by International Pathways Incorporated at <http://www.mededpath.org>. This organization managed all aspects of the selection process including a background check.

As noted above, the Site Visit Team informed the School that under these conditions the UQO Clinical School Program did not meet the entrance requirements of the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1 (8); specifically, that “its admitted students generally meet entrance requirements equivalent to those utilized by US and Canadian medical schools, including an appropriate background check.”

The additional information provided by Drs. Crawford and Pinsky which now includes an interview process as part of the selection criteria, indicates that the UQO Clinical School Program meets the requirements of the California Code of Regulations, Title 16, Division 13, Section 1314.1 (8).

There are defined promotion standards for each phase of training. These are encoded in the 2013 “Enrollment and Academic Progression Rules.”

The School does not accept transfers from other medical schools.

The School presented information on its financial resources. The School appears to have sufficient financial resources to carry out its stated mission.

The School indicates that it is compliant with the requirement to permanently retain student transcripts.

## **Summary**

Again, the summary recommendation by the site visit team is that the UQO Clinical School Program is in substantial compliance with the applicable statutes and regulations. It is also our recommendation that recognition be retroactive to the prior graduating classes. In our assessment of the program there haven't been any substantive curricular changes and therefore those trainees who successfully completed the program should also be eligible.

Thank you for the opportunity to review the materials from UQ and the UQO Clinical School Program.