ASPIRE RECOGNITION OF EXCELLENCE IN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL

CRITERIA - Version 2.0

For background information, please refer to **ASPIRE Recognition of Excellence in Social Accountability of Schools: An Introduction** (www.aspire-to-excellence.org) and Background Paper on Environmental Accountability.

The essence of social accountability of a school is their engaging, partnering with, and responding to the needs of their communities, regions and nation (noting that some social accountability activities may involve all three levels whereas others may predominately involve the community, or region, or nation).

In combining the work of the Global Consensus for the Social Accountability of Medical School and its own deliberations in the area, the ASPIRE Panel has developed criteria for Excellence in Social Accountability of Medical Schools approved by the ASPIRE Board, to encompass four domains:

1. Organisation and function of the school;
2. Education of doctors, dentists and/or veterinary schools;
3. Research activities;
4. Contribution to health services for its community, region, and nation.

In developing Version 2.0 of these *ASPIRE* Social Accountability Criteria we have reflected on the experience of ten years of ASPIRE applications, and acknowledge the influence of work by *The Network Towards Unity for Health* [TUFH], the *2017 Tunis Declaration on Social Accountability*, as well as the enthusiasm demonstrated by the *International Federation of Medical Students' Associations (IFSMA) and THEnet in developing the Students Toolkit on SA in Medical Schools* **https://ifmsa.org/social-accountability/**

We have also explicitly broadened the scope of Social Accountability to include the concept of Environmental Accountability, i.e. (in summary) *the obligation of medical schools to ensure they actively develop, promote, and protect environmentally sustainable solutions to address the health concerns of the community, region, and the nation they serve*. (Pearson, Walpole & Barna 2015). Global impact will also be considered.

To demonstrate social accountability, schools will be expected to document:

- **plans,** including concepts and goals evident in its organisation and function;
- **actions** evident in its education and research program activities;
- **impacts** evident in positive effects of its education, research and service, graduates and partnerships, on the healthcare, health and health equity of its community, region, and nation.

It is our hope and expectation that many schools will **ASPIRE to EXCELLENCE** in Social Accountability and will be able to demonstrate excellent progress towards social accountability, but we recognise that as social accountability is so comprehensive it will be very difficult for any one school to achieve excellence in all areas. Similarly, "excellence" is not a destination that, once reached, can be assured of enduring.

The notion of excellence also embodies active engagement with scholarship and a desire to seek continuous improvement in the roles that the academic institution plays and the impact it has on the health of the society it serves. Social accountability embraces the inclusive definition of five forms of scholarship:

1   The scholarship of *teaching* includes transmitting, transforming, and extending knowledge;
2   The scholarship of *discovery* refers to the pursuit of inquiry and investigation in search of new knowledge;
3   The scholarship of *integration* consists of making connections across disciplines and, through this synthesis, advancing what we know;
4   The scholarship of *application* asks how knowledge can be practically applied in a dynamic process whereby new understandings emerge from the act of applying knowledge through an ongoing cycle of theory to practice to theory;
5   The scholarship of *engagement* connects any of the above dimensions of scholarship to the understanding and solving of pressing social, civic and ethical problems. (Woollard 2006)

Given that cultural, social and other issues influence social accountability in a school, how social accountability manifests itself will vary from school to school. Excellence may be found in institutions with limited access to resources just as much as in wealthier institutions. The way in which institutions demonstrate cost effectiveness and context appropriateness will be taken into account by the panel when reviewing individual submissions.

Further guidance relating to the criteria is included in the Application Form.