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EXCELENCIA EN EDUCACIÓN MÉDICA

ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy



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Abstract The ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy was recently founded at the 2015 Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) conference in Glasgow. The academy is new pillar of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence initiative by AMEE, which aims at promoting and encouraging medical schools in achieving excellence in the categories of assessment, student engagement, social accountability or faculty development. The Academy panel consists of the members of the ASPIRE Board and representatives from schools which have been recognised with an ASPIRE-to-excellence award in one or more of the categories. Major goal of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy is to foster collaboration between excellent medical schools and to allow them to exchange experiences and Best Practices. The Academy members are organising workshops and symposia at international conferences to inform medical schools about the ASPIRE-to-Excellence programme and the areas for recognition in excellence as well as to support medical school in preparing their applications.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

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premios

Academia ASPIRE para la Excelencia

Resumen La *academia ASPIRE para la excelencia* en educación médica es una nueva iniciativa de la Asociación para la Educación Médica en Europa (AMEE), puesta en marcha recientemente en Glasgow (2015). Esta academia constituye un nuevo pilar de la iniciativa ASPIRE, nace a propuesta de Asociación para la Educación Médica en Europa y tiene como objetivo fundamental fomentar la excelencia en educación médica a nivel internacional, y dar apoyo a las facultades de medicina para alcanzar la excelencia en las categorías de evaluación, participación y contribución de los estudiantes, responsabilidad social o desarrollo de la facultad. El panel de expertos de la *academia ASPIRE para la excelencia* está formado por miembros de los comités de ASPIRE y representantes de las facultades de medicina que han sido reconocidas con un premio ASPIRE a la excelencia en una o más de las categorías. El objetivo principal de la academia ASPIRE a la excelencia es fomentar la colaboración

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entre las facultades de medicina excelentes para que puedan intercambiar experiencias y sus mejores prácticas. Los miembros de la academia ASPIRE organizan talleres y simposios en las conferencias internacionales para dar a conocer a las facultades de medicina el programa *ASPIRE para la Excelencia* y las áreas de reconocimiento de excelencia, así como para orientar a las facultades de medicina en la preparación de sus solicitudes.

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to provide key information on the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy, its foundation, members, goals and activities. The foundation of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy dates back to 2012, when the Association for Medical Education in Europe (AMEE) launched the ASPIRE-to-Excellence award programme, an initiative to “recognise international excellence in medical, dental and veterinary schools”.^{1,2} The award was established due to the finding that international university rankings and accreditation procedures had so far failed to adequately recognise excellence in medical education.³

The ASPIRE-to-Excellence initiative aims to “promote and encourage” schools achieving excellence in the categories of assessment, student engagement, social accountability or faculty development, thereby increasing visibility and supporting the adoption of Best Practice models in other medical, dental or veterinary schools. Having started in 2013, the awarded institutions were announced and presented in an official ceremony at the AMEE annual conferences. Up to now, 17 institutions have

been awarded in three categories, some of them in more than one.¹ Table 1 lists the institutions which were awarded ASPIRE according to the category of excellence, together with the year their award was granted.

The ASPIRE award programme by AMEE has created great attention and interest concerning the dimensions and criteria for the recognition of excellence in medical education around the world. In response, several ASPIRE award winning institutions as well as members of the ASPIRE board increased the activities to disseminate information about the award and to help other schools to achieve excellence in those defined areas. These efforts included workshops to introduce scope and concept of the ASPIRE award,^{4,5} discuss the definition of excellence in medical education and share Best Practice examples,^{6–8} support other schools in preparing their submission,^{9,10} and more. Information on the ASPIRE award was also published in medical journals^{2,3,11,12} and via newsletters, the AMEE website (<http://www.amee.org>) and MedEdWorld internet portal (<http://www.mededworld.org>).

At the AMEE conference of 2015 in Glasgow, members of the ASPIRE board and the review panels for the

Table 1 ASPIRE Schools and their award year as of 2015 as members of the ASPIRE to-Excellence Academy.

University	Country	Area of Excellence	Awarded Year
Southern Illinois University School of Medicine	USA	Student Assessment	2013
		Student Engagement	2013
		Social Accountability	2013
Aga Khan University	Pakistan	Student Assessment	2013
		Student Engagement	2013
University of Maribor	Slovenia	Student Engagement	2013
International Medical University	Malaysia	Student Engagement	2013
University of Western Australia, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry & Health Sciences	Australia	Student Engagement	2013
University of Minho	Portugal	Student Engagement	2013
Northern Ontario School of Medicine	Canada	Social Accountability	2013
Hull York Medical School	UK	Social Accountability	2013
University of Leeds, School of Medicine	UK	Student Assessment	2014
		Student Engagement	2015
University of Southampton	UK	Student Engagement	2014
Memorial University of Newfoundland	Canada	Social Accountability	2014
University of New Mexico, School of Medicine	USA	Social Accountability	2014
Charité - Universitätsmedizin Berlin	Germany	Student Engagement	2015
UMC Utrecht	Netherlands	Student Engagement	2015
Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry	Canada	Student Engagement	2015
Faculty of Medicine, Chulalongkorn University	Thailand	Student Engagement	2015
Uppsala University, School of Medicine	Sweden	Student Engagement	2015

ASPIRE categories assessment, student engagement, social accountability and faculty development, and representatives of the ASPIRE awarded institutions all met to discuss current and further approaches to promote excellence in medical education. A key result of this meeting was that the ASPIRE Board agreed on the establishment of an ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy and that they defined its major goals.

Aims of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy

One major goal of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy is to foster collaboration between excellent medical schools and to allow them to exchange experiences and Best Practices. The Academy consists of the members of the ASPIRE Board and representatives from schools which have been recognised with an ASPIRE award in one or more of the categories. Membership in the Academy continues for the period of 3 years the Aspire award is active. Its members will meet regularly to develop the Academy further and provide a platform for networking. Best Practice examples will also be shared with the medical education community and the public through the publication of case studies on the ASPIRE website as well as articles in scientific journals. Dissemination of the awarded schools' concepts through various publication channels will not only increase the visibility of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence programme but also facilitate improvements in these areas at other medical schools, which is a key aim of the academy.

Another major goal is to encourage and support other institutions in submitting their own application for the ASPIRE award. ASPIRE schools will support these medical, dental and veterinary schools by giving advice on how to achieve excellence and guiding them during the application process. Over and above this, a key goal of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy is to involve its members in the ASPIRE initiative itself, for example as members of the ASPIRE review panels which evaluate the applications for the ASPIRE-to-Excellence award. More tasks and activities by the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy will be discussed at regular future meetings, generally held during the annual AMEE conferences.

The aims of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy as published on the ASPIRE-website¹ are outlined in Table 2.

Implementation

At the AMEE conference 2016 in Barcelona, two pre-conference workshops on Best Practice approaches in assessment and student engagement are held as an activity of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy.^{13,14} In addition, members of the Academy will meet during the conference and evaluate previous work.

Members of the Academy will continue to organise workshops and symposia as mentioned above. These workshops focus on informing medical schools about the ASPIRE-to-Excellence programme and the areas for recognition in excellence, encouraging schools to apply, supporting applicants in preparing their submission as well as evaluating and openly discussing the criteria for excellence. Awarded schools will be encouraged to

Table 2 Aims of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy.

The aim of the Academy is to:

Promote excellence in education through collaboration and dissemination of Best Practices in medical education.

Provide members of the Academy with the opportunity to network and share their experience and knowledge.

Through membership of the Academy, members will:

Promote the ASPIRE-to-Excellence initiative

Contribute to the further development of the ASPIRE initiative

Play an active part in the ASPIRE submission review process

Provide workshops and symposia to assist schools who wish to apply for ASPIRE recognition

publish press releases and articles in order to increase awareness. Beyond that, awarded institutions should strive for the distribution of their excellence concepts through publications in journals to further increase the quality of medical education worldwide. Educational research should be conducted to support their approaches whenever applicable. The ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy supports outstanding, implemented concepts and strategies in medical education so that these can exert influence on guidelines and be presented at scientific conferences and national meetings.

Outlook

With the foundation of the ASPIRE-to-Excellence Academy, the ASPIRE board and the ASPIRE-awarded schools have established a promising institution for promoting excellence in medical education and the exchange of knowledge and Best Practice. The Academy members will further advance the ASPIRE-to-Excellence initiative and contribute to the quality improvement of education in medical, dental and veterinary schools throughout the world.

Conflict of interest

The authors of this article declare no conflict of interest.

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