

Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB)

# Site-visit team report

based on WFME 2020 standards

## on the medical education of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen

Appendix of

Decision No. 2022/4/IV/4 of the MAB Board

22 April 2022



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## I Accreditation proposal

<b>University of Debrecen</b> <b>Faculty of Medicine</b>	<b>DECISION NO. 2022/4/IV/4</b> <b>Accreditation of the undivided general medical training of the medical school</b> – <b>valid from 22 April 2022 to 22 April 2030.</b>
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Based on the self-evaluation report of the medical school and the site visit, it can be concluded that the medical education of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen, with regard to the WFME 2020 (World Federation for Medical Education) standards, is found to be

- **compliant with the minimum criteria** (educational programme, selection of academic staff, admission and selection of students, educational infrastructure, clinical training resources, structure and organisation, organisational units supporting the operation of the medical school and its educational and academic activities),
- **partially compliant with the quality assurance processes** (mission statement, development and review of the educational programme, quality assurance of assessment, quality assurance),
- **compliant with the support processes** (educational methods used to deliver the educational programme, system of assessment, student support system, performance, training, and development of academic staff),

and thus it can be granted an 8-year accreditation for a period from 22 April 2022 to 22 April 2030, pending a monitoring procedure combined with a site visit to be completed by 31 December 2026. The monitoring process shall primarily examine the institutional measures taken on the basis of the recommendations of this report and their effectiveness.

## **II General overview of the institution**

The University of Debrecen (hereinafter: University) is the oldest continuously operating higher education institution of Hungary (since 1538), located in the eastern part of the country, with nearly 30,000 students in its 14 faculties. As of 1 August 2021, the University has been operating as a non-state university, maintained by the Count István Tisza Foundation for the University of Debrecen. It is one of the four universities providing medical education in Hungary. The University was ranked 377<sup>th</sup> among the world's universities and achieved a position of 228<sup>th</sup> in the subject of medical sciences in 2021 in the Round University Ranking (RUR). It was also ranked among the top 500 universities in the clinical and health subject by Times Higher Education World University Rankings (THE), and listed among the top 400 universities in medicine by QS World University Rankings.

According to the mission statement of the University, the objective of the institution is to provide high-quality and diverse programmes in education, research, and development in cooperation with the academic staff, students, and national and international partners. The main focus is laid on activities in the health industry.

The Faculty of Medicine (hereinafter: Faculty) was established in 1918 and was an independent university between 1951 and 2000. As one of the largest units of the University, the Faculty has 22 basic science and 25 clinical departments covering various medical fields. In addition to the programmes provided in the Hungarian language – including the BSc in Medical Diagnostics, the MSc in Health Psychology, and the MSc in Clinical Laboratory Research programmes – the Medicine full-time graduate programme and the MSc in Molecular Biology programme are offered both in Hungarian and in English. Students may complete their clinical practice in the hospitals or accredited teaching centres of the Faculty, either in Hungary or abroad.

The Faculty is headed by the Dean, supported by the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs, the Vice Dean for Scientific Affairs and the Vice Dean for Specialization and Further Education. The Faculty Council manages and supervises the Faculty of Medicine's educational, scientific, economic, human resources and entrepreneurial activities. In addition, various committees are operating in the medical school, i.e. the Educational Committee, the Science and Innovation Committee, the Clinical Departments Committee, the Committee on Specialization and Further Education, the Economic Committee, the Students' Feed-back Subcommittee, and the Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment for Students Faculty Committee.

According to the Faculty's self-evaluation report, in the academic year 2020/2021, 3,534 students attended the educational programmes of the medical school, of whom 1,937 were enrolled in the English-language programmes. Currently, the number of teaching staff is 437 within the Faculty, of whom 310 hold a PhD degree, 141 are habilitated doctors, 58 are doctors of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and 7 are members of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

The Faculty's educational and research activities are closely linked to the activities provided in patient care. As stated in its mission statement, the Faculty aims to expand knowledge in new scientific areas so that its activities in education and research gain national and international recognition.

## **III Evaluation**

### **III/1 Mission Statement**

#### **Evaluation:**

The Faculty of Medicine is an autonomous, independent unit of the University of Debrecen, which provides training, specialized and further training in the fields of medical and health sciences, as well as biological sciences, doctoral (PhD) training, scientific research, development, and innovation in the accredited field of science. The Faculty has a mission statement publicly available in both languages of medical education (Hungarian and English).

The current version of the mission statement was issued by the Dean of the Faculty in March 2021. This update was purely formal. The mission statement clearly states the position held by the Faculty in the field of Hungarian health care, refers to its role pursued in domestic and international medical education, and the importance of research in the field of medicine both in Hungary and internationally. The mission statement also covers the medical school's social role, i.e., its third mission role. It states that the utilization of the knowledge created in higher education has high priority and intends to play a leading role in shaping the health policy of the region and Hungary. The Faculty's educational plan can be clearly deduced from the contents of the mission statement, which is the purpose of their quality assurance system. The mission statement of the Faculty aligns with that of the University, and the core values of institutional quality management.

The stakeholders of the Faculty, the Faculty Management, and the Quality Assurance Committee – which plays a vital role in the operation of the quality assurance system – participated in the development of the Faculty's mission statement. As a result of extensive consultation, the Faculty Management developed its mission statement with the involvement of academic staff, researchers, the Students' Union, and, as they claim, with their external partners. However, the role of the external partners remained somewhat obscure even after a face-to-face consultation of the site-visit team with the responsible leaders of the Faculty.

The content of the mission statement is considered by the Faculty in developing and reviewing its educational programme. However, the mission statement and the QA programs, in general, should be articulated and disseminated more effectively, i.e., among department heads and program directors employed by the Faculty.

The University operates its quality management system according to the ISO 9001:2015 standard. The mission statement is a high-level document that underpins the operating principles of the quality management system, as well as the quality policy and the quality objectives themselves. Thus, the goals and values set out in the mission statement are reflected in the quality assurance processes (planning, measurement, evaluation).

The goals and values set out in the mission statement are mostly well reflected in the operational processes of the medical school. However, it is recommended that the mission statement makes specific, rather than general statements to better incorporate the specific details of the educational programme's design, review, and quality development processes. About the delivery mechanisms of the Faculty's tasks, the content of the mission statement is too general, and it is difficult to understand. It is essential that specific development goals and quality objectives can be derived from the mission statement.

### Recommendations:

- Documenting how stakeholders can get involved in the development and review processes of the above documents (mission statement, quality assurance policy).
- More detailed articulation and dissemination of the mission statement among department heads and program directors employed by the Faculty.
- The mission statement should make specific, rather than general statements to better incorporate the details of the educational programme's design, review, and quality development concentrating on the 21<sup>st</sup> century needs in more depth.

## III/2 Educational programme

### Standard 2.1: Educational programme

#### Evaluation:

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen has a publicly available, up-to-date educational programme. The educational programme is developed in communication with a wide range of internal and external stakeholders so that it can be considered responsive to the needs of the geographical region. Through its contact with the governing organisations, the Faculty is actively contributing to medical and social responsibilities of the county, of eastern Hungary and, together with the other three Hungarian medical schools, to the higher education system, healthcare system and social system of Hungary.

The Faculty is building a close unity with the Clinical Centre. Through the Clinical Centre, by being the most extensive healthcare facility system of the region acting from the primary to the tertiary level, it is significantly contributing to the patient management and patient care of the region. Through the communication and cooperation with the Faculty of Health and with the local and regional social and healthcare facilities, the Faculty of Medicine possesses central importance in shaping the healthcare and social care of the region.

The educational programme consists of basic biomedical sciences, preclinical and clinical sciences, including behavioural, medical humanities and public health sciences topics, in a balance that is typical for the Hungarian and European medical schools. The proportion of social and behavioural sciences in the educational programme is clearly defined, well documented, including mandatory, required optional and optional courses, and accompanying the medical studies from the beginning to the final year. The proper acquisition of practical clinical skills is accurately planned in the description of the clinical courses, documented individually at the practical examinations and signed in the "Course Registration Book", "Clinical Practice Booklet", a logbook of clinical skills of the students. The medical school's educational programme includes more than twelve months of well-structured clinical practice, giving sufficient possibilities for the acquisition of clinical practical and professional skills, attitudes, and responsibility. The acquisition of practical clinical skills teamwork is supported by a medical skills laboratory (Centre for Medical Simulation, Interactive Medical Practice Centre), giving the possibility for every student to gain the sufficient, required amount on practical clinical skills, and provide additional opportunity for the interested, most motivated students to deepen their knowledge and its practical applications.

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen, in cooperation with the Clinical Centre, is one of the four Hungarian medical schools meeting the needs of graduate medical training, postgraduate Ph.D. training, postgraduate resident and specialist training, as well as continuing medical education (CME) for medical specialists within the national framework. Sports and physical education are an essential mandatory part of the curriculum and serve the wellbeing and healthy lifestyle of students. The Faculty home page is transparent and valuable regarding the readily available description of the educational programme and the procedures aiming at its review, renewal, and development. Based on staff interviews, the faculty members are aware of the content of the educational programme and the regulatory documents.

### Recommendations:

- To further strengthen the medical students' contribution to the region's social responsibilities by taking part in preventive programs and public health measures.
- The educational programme should be communicated with a wider range of external stakeholders, such as governing organisations, cooperating health care facilities, scientific societies, alumni students, pharmaceutical companies, chambers and trade unions.
- The documented acquisition of practical laboratory and clinical skills could be complemented by the possibility of performing additional optionally learned clinical competencies, thus demonstrating the above-average motivation and activity of students.

### Standard 2.2: Development and review of the educational programme

#### Evaluation:

The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen has clear processes and procedures for adopting, reviewing, monitoring, and renewing its educational programme. The review of the educational programme is taking place on the level of the course directors with the inclusion of new scientific advances without delay, on the level of the medical school every year. The selection process of the leading faculty members requires and ensures a high degree of scientific activity, competence, scientific and professional communication, and responsibility of the course directors. The curriculum review takes place with the involvement of all the important internal and with the participation of most of the external stakeholders. The decisions on the educational programme are made transparently, with thorough preparation, by the Committee on Studies and with the approval by the Faculty Council. The educational programme review provides course directors with a wide range of flexibility applying state-of-the-art knowledge, evidence-based medicine, and advancements in their particular scientific fields but imposing clear criteria at the faculty level.

Students actively contribute to the development of the educational programme; they take part in approving but also in evaluating and initiating changes to the curriculum. Representative bodies of students have a direct communication channel to the dean and the Faculty's leadership. Students assess this fast flow of information to be an outstanding feature of the Faculty that impacts curriculum development. In exceptional situations (e.g., COVID-19 pandemic), it may ease the adaptation to the quickly changing circumstances and regulations. The Graduate Career Tracking System (DPR) and information of the labour market have a relatively fast and almost immediately detectable impact on the development of the curriculum,



since course directors of the graduate studies at the medical school frequently represent heads of the boards of the postgraduate medical speciality training and at the same time lead the corresponding medical departments or at least work in these departments so that feedback from the healthcare system can actively be taken into account at the review of the educational programme. The 360 credit points distributed among mandatory and optional courses are proportionate, set according to the current regulations in place and line with the Programme and Outcome Requirements.

The educational programme is assembled properly balancing theoretical and practical training of students by providing a large number of possibilities for experimental research studies (Student Scientific Projects, critical evaluation of scientific literature, active participation at student conferences) and clinical practices. Preclinical courses (e.g., Pharmacotherapy, Clinical Physiology, Medical Physiology) translate basic and clinical sciences. Important global higher education features and tasks are well incorporated into the curriculum and into the standard operating procedures, e.g., recognition of human and animal rights, valuing human dignity, preserving patient safety, work safety, appropriate data handling and data protection (e.g., GDPR), the spread of informatics and digitalisation, environmental protection, sustainability, global and public health, awareness of the legal, economic and ethical framework, development of intercultural and international competencies and experiences, maintaining equal opportunities for students and staff, avoiding discrimination, valuing diversity.

#### Recommendations:

- The Graduate Career Tracking System (DPR) should be evaluated regularly regarding feedback on the need for possible development of new teaching strategies in the practical and theoretical courses.
- The specific mandatory and optional courses of the medical school should be regularly evaluated based on the Programme and Outcome Requirements, as to which extent the taught materials, skills, attitudes, and responsibility of the subject are relevant to the Outcome Requirements.
- The communication between teaching staff members of the basic biomedical sciences, preclinical and clinical courses should be strengthened, thus making teaching more effective, building knowledge dependably onto the prerequisite courses, avoiding unwanted parallelism and unnecessary repetition.
- The communication and connection between the Faculty and the Clinical Centre should be strengthened to make immediate feedback from the labour market and from the Graduate Career Tracking System readily available, thus shaping both healthcare and medical education. The feedback should also be shared with the heads of departments and teaching staff, so that they may use it to improve their course materials.

#### Standard 2.3: Educational methods used to deliver the educational programme

##### Evaluation:

The Faculty of Medicine applies and continuously develops a wide range of different state-of-the-art educational methods, including skills lab training, small group education with an optimized number of students for the specific tasks (Laboratory Medicine), use of good quality simulators, video and audio recording of courses for the analysis of the teaching and learning process, incorporation of continuously accessible multi-platform e-learning materials into the



teaching (lecture materials, supplementary teaching materials, educational films, tests, self-evaluations, problem-solving tasks, InSimu Patient e-learning tool) (e.g., Interactive Medical Practice Centre, Department of Experimental Surgery and Surgical Research, Haematology, Neurology, Obstetrics and Gynaecology), bedside teaching (e.g. Internal Medicine), blended learning, simulation of clinical scenarios (Behavioural Medicine), student-initiated training workshops (Winter Camp, Behavioural Medicine), in-class polling (e.g., use of Kahoot in Biophysics, Biostatistics), hybrid and online classes, shadowing at the clinical practices (e.g., Internal Medicine), introduction into scientific research (Scientific Students' Association - TDK), peer and near-peer teaching (teaching assistants, student helpers, student demonstrators). The site-visit team was able to personally prove the use of in-class polling (Biophysics) group- or team-based learning, case-based learning (Internal Medicine, Neurology), problem-based learning (Neurology, Public Health and Epidemiology), co-teaching, peer-assisted teaching (Neurology), practical training (Physiology), student contribution to the development of state-of-the-art teaching materials (e.g., scanning, and digitizing histology samples and preparations in Anatomy).

The recruitment, training, and teaching of "student helpers" or "student demonstrators" acting as teaching assistants serves multiple goals. It involves the most motivated students into teaching, thereby easing the load on teaching staff or acting as multipliers of the teaching effort. Near-peer or peer teaching may enhance the motivation of students, raise the interest and responsibility of fellow students in the learning process. Student teaching assistants or student helpers may once become teaching staff, if they sufficiently deepen their knowledge and skills, and if they get practically involved in the department's everyday workflow.

The medical school emphasises the importance of specialised scientific knowledge in teaching by assigning practical course leader tasks to the highest-ranking faculty members of the institutes and departments. This provides opportunity for students to learn the behaviour and follow the attitudes of role model teachers. Teaching staff with a medical degree contributes to the teaching of the basic and preclinical courses of the medical school, authentically representing and synthesizing the Programme and Outcome Requirements, the optimal clinical teaching outcomes, and the entry requirements of the medical and healthcare labour market.

Course directors possess a high degree of freedom in selecting teaching and pedagogical methods. Still, the Faculty provides faculty-based pedagogical, methodological training for its staff (training of 160 staff members in pedagogical and methodological areas in the last five years, online education techniques and platforms). The primary review of the applied educational methods takes place through the course director. Also, the course directors, whose courses are built on other subjects, continuously evaluate the effectiveness of teaching of the prerequisite courses. Students' feedback is taken into account to develop, improve, and modify pedagogical and teaching methods (50% of the members of the Feedback Subcommittee are students). The introduction and use of state-of-the-art teaching and learning methods are incorporated into the system of yearly evaluation of academic staff performance (TÉR). Interviewed Hungarian and international students described the high degree of motivation, enthusiasm, friendly and empathic communication of the teaching staff to be a positive feature of the medical school.

### Recommendations:

- Regular evaluation of the applied examination and assessment processes and methods should be performed at the level of the course director, evaluating exam results and at the level of the faculty, helping the distribution of good practices and helping to design further methodological trainings of staff.
- Involvement of students in the teaching should be further emphasised to increase student engagement and motivation by applying the advantages of near-peer and peer teaching.
- A culture of formative assessment systems could be disseminated and promoted at the medical school, guiding students, and informing them on their specific stage of the learning process.
- The faculty-based pedagogical and methodological training for teaching staff could be regularly repeated to support new staff members and disseminate best teaching and assessment practices.

### III/3 Evaluation processes of the educational programme

#### Standard 3.1: System of assessment

#### Evaluation:

The Medical Faculty of the University of Debrecen provided a clearly and concisely written self-assessment report that served well as the foundation for further analysis during the site visit. The documents provide a good overview of student assessment principles, methods, practices and requirements, and the process for developing and reviewing assessment requirements. The site visit further strengthened this impression. It is worth noting that the Dean's Office team provided the panel with additional data upon the panel's request during the site visit.

It is to be emphasised that the Medical Faculty of the University maintains a system of requirements and assessment that allows for regular feedback to students about the effectiveness of their learning process. The process is transparent and based on uniform principles. Additional regular monitoring and documentation of how the teaching staff use the teaching and assessment methods of the study programme (objectives, learning outcomes, subjects, transferable skills (e.g., digital skills)) could further improve the current system.

Given the lack of a national catalogue of educational outcomes for medical programmes, developing such a detailed document locally would be helpful to further implement the constructive alignment of teaching, learning and assessment together with the constantly ongoing evaluation / educational change strategies cycle. It would be pioneering at the national level. This document should include the transparent definitions and list of the practical skills / practical learning outcomes positioning them in the curriculum at a minimum of three levels: before starting the practical courses (and seeing patients for the first time), before entering into the 6th (practical) year and at the time of graduation (professional skills).

### Recommendations:

- Monitoring and documenting how the teaching staff use the teaching and assessment methods of objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme and the transferable skills.
- Review the syllabus and assessment methods during the following years and adapt them according to the upcoming challenges by including the transparent definitions and list of the skills / practical learning outcomes' competence levels throughout the medical curriculum. A further recommendation would be to state these competencies and assessment levels transparently at three levels: before starting the practical courses (and seeing patients for the first time), before entering into the 6th (practical) year and at the time of graduation.

### Standard 3.2: Quality assurance of assessment

#### Evaluation:

The quality assurance of assessment processes is linked to the medical school's feedback system and the review of its results. Regulations on the feedback system of the Faculty are set out in the document "Regulations for Student Feedback on Teaching Work", which is publicly available on the institution's website. Students' feedback on subjects and lecturers is collected through questionnaires accessible in the Neptun system, pre-approved by the Students' Feedback Subcommittee.

Students have the opportunity to express their opinions on the subjects and the work of the lecturers once a semester. The data collected through the questionnaires are forwarded to the dean of the faculty, and the president of the Students' Feedback Subcommittee for evaluation. The results are shared with the heads of the departments and the representatives of the Subcommittee. The heads of departments inform the academic staff about the feedback results, discuss them with the staff members and notify the Faculty management of any possible actions taken. The summarized feedback results are shared with the university citizens on the Subcommittee's website.

Based on the feedback results, modifications can be made, and further improvements may be implemented regarding the quality of education, such as expanding the content of a practical course. Also, student requests such as optimizing the venues, or the timing of lectures are also taken into account. Feedback from external partners, e.g., foreign training sites, may be considered when developing new courses or designing curricula.

Overall, the medical school has processes to provide feedback on the assessment methods. The data collected are used to improve the quality of education, the academic requirements and to consider the needs and expectations of the students.

### Recommendations:

- Introduction of the OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Examination) is worth considering.

## III/4 Students

### Standard 4.1: Admission and selection of students

#### Evaluation:

The University provides medical education in English and Hungarian languages. The admission procedure is straightforward and uniform nationwide. Hungarian students are informed about the admission requirements during their secondary school years, but detailed information on the University is also available for those who wish to study in Debrecen.

Information on the English-language admission procedure and requirements is available on the University's English-language website; the requirements are broken down by geographical region. The University also supports the successful enrolment of international students with preparatory training, which is announced on the online platform. In addition, the University runs its agency to ensure that students from distant countries are effectively integrated into English language education.

The possibility of taking a semester off (passive semester) is also available for students, who may have two consecutive semesters in passive status, which shall be followed by an active semester.

The Hungarian higher education system has a conservative approach to horizontal transitions between degree programmes. The possibility is given; however, the student must be enrolled in the newly chosen degree programme or, if the new programme contains subjects that the student has already completed in his/her previous degree programme(s), they may be accepted by applying for credit transfer.

### Standard 4.2: Student support system

#### Evaluation:

The Faculty's well-established, innovative programmes ensure that students do not neglect their mental and physical health and social life during their university years, and the Faculty also provides opportunities for professional fulfilment.

There are jointly organised and implemented health education programmes based on a shared vision of students and faculty, which provide appropriate support for medical students. Online availability is the perfect solution for today's generation, especially during the pandemic. It is much appreciated that the Student Council works closely with the Faculty leadership on such activities.

Students may apply for the Faculty's needs-based financial support at the beginning of each semester. The conditions for application are available on the University website. The social

support system also includes providing dormitory accommodation for students, which is well managed.

The dual support system for research allows students to use these opportunities extensively. On the one hand, medical students can join the Scientific Students' Association, for which they receive a scholarship. On the other hand, senior students can become involved in teaching their younger peers and work as teaching assistants, giving practical training and seminars.

The Students' Union delegates participants to the decision-making bodies of the Faculty; for example, several members of the Students' Union participate in the Educational Committee. These collaborations are effective, and student representation has a voice in the university's educational work. For example, the Educational Committee decides on cost reductions for self-financed students and requests for individual study arrangements, so the active participation of the Students' Union in this body is welcome.

At the end of each semester, the University collects feedback from students, asking for information and experiences about the semester and exams. The feedback received in this form is also incorporated by the Faculty in its training development and student satisfaction projects.

#### Recommendations:

- The amount of money devoted to students' contribution to teaching should be increased, partly because this amount has not changed in years and partly because other medical schools in the country spend significantly more on this work.

### III/5 Academic staff

#### Standard 5.1: Selection of academic staff

##### Evaluation:

All the staff the site-visit team met, whether academic, clinical, or administrative, were motivated and committed to their roles. Given the number of the students, there seem to be adequate teaching staff overall. The composition of academic staff is well documented, regularly monitored and is in line with the educational programme and the mission statement of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen.

Professional competencies of the teaching personnel are based on high school education, university education (MD, MSc, PhD), and pedagogic studies, if any. The teaching staff is either employed at the non-clinical institutes or works primarily as a physician, mainly at the University Hospital. The contract of the latter also includes teaching. The university has managed to attract a respectable number of MDs working in non-clinical institutes.

The academic staff was selected based on a public call for tenders in accordance with the public sector system until 31 July 2021. The legal form of the universities has changed in Hungary from 1 August 2021. The adaptation of the selection process and recruitment roles of the academic staff is still ongoing. Based on the panel's information gained during the site visit, the new approach seems to be straightforward.

### Recommendations:

- Further develop and harmonise the selection process of new academic staff in accordance with the strategic goals defined by the Institution Development Plan 2021-2026 and in the light of the new legal form of the university.
- A high priority should be given to maintaining the existing and respectable number of MDs as academic staff in non-clinical institutions.

### Standard 5.2: Performance, training, and development of academic staff

#### Evaluation:

The rights and obligations of the academic staff are specified in the documents provided as parts of the self-assessment report. Furthermore, the University of Debrecen has a uniform code for specifying the ethical norms and requirements applicable to both academic staff and students (Code of Conduct of the University of Debrecen). The documents are available on the portal of the university. Academic evaluation takes place annually and is coordinated with the direct supervisor.

Changes in the performance and behavioural expectations of the existing academic staff are initiated and implemented by the Senate and the Faculty Council. In both, the current academic staff is represented, allowing them to actively participate in the process.

The site-visit team was informed that the University had developed a range of training for teachers, but this training is not obligatory, and the last cycle ended in 2019. A significant part of the faculty staff is, accordingly, not routinely engaged in professional and teaching-skills development. Furthermore, teaching activities seem not to be sufficiently recognised for academic development and promotion.

Modern teaching and learning methods have been already implemented at the university. Their further development, including the teaching and assessment of practical and clinical skills and active learning techniques, is recommended. It is especially important that the Curriculum Programme Committee members receive practical training in medical education, including curriculum development, teaching, learning and assessment strategies.

### Recommendations:

- To facilitate the implementation of the HRS4R ERA Euraxess guidelines for human resource development.
- Further developing a long-term development strategy for academic staff, which includes digital skills and active learning techniques, is recommended. Remuneration of the good practices of the Faculty to motivate teachers to develop their educational knowledge and skills could support the strategy. An institutional hub for guiding and accompanying the educational programmes for teaching would be especially helpful.

### III/6 Infrastructure

#### Standard 6.1: Educational infrastructure

##### Evaluation:

The Faculty of Medicine has the necessary infrastructural conditions to implement the Programme and Outcome Requirements.

The Faculty currently has 16 large lecture halls with a total seating capacity of 2500. These lecture halls are primarily used in the theoretical and pre-clinical modules of the medical training. For clinical module training purposes there are 36 smaller lecture halls, located within the clinics themselves, and each hall can accommodate 100–200 people. The Faculty also has 61 seminar rooms with a total capacity of 1901. In addition, there are 34 classrooms for practical training with a full seating capacity of 637. There are highly specialized practice classrooms for specific disciplines such as Anatomy autopsy and histology rooms, which have recently been modernized and equipped with state-of-the-art multimedia services. Complementing the above teaching facilities, the Faculty has five rooms fully equipped with computers, which can be used for specialized training and examination purposes. The generous and high-quality teaching infrastructure extends into the clinical training module as well (see also below).

The Faculty has recently invested in developing and constructing a brand new Learning Centre, a multi-functional building dedicated to teaching, examination and student services. The Centre houses two large lecture halls (256 seats each), a 130-seat examination room equipped with the most modern electronic facilities, and eight seminar rooms. The Learning Centre will expand the student social services beyond the currently existing level by offering space for various activities such as social meetings and meditation, and so forth. The new Learning Centre is expected to be opened before the end of 2021. Supporting infrastructures are state of the art, and these include well-functioning dormitory and sports facilities and a well-laid-out campus that offers environmentally friendly commuting solutions.

Extensive IT and library facilities back up the teaching infrastructure. The Multimedia and E-learning Technical Centre of the University assists the instructors and the students of the Medical Faculty in the development and application of e-learning technologies. The teaching infrastructure (lecture halls, classrooms, seminar rooms, etc.) are well equipped with state-of-the-art IT and multimedia instrumentation, and — as witnessed during the site visit — the faculty members and the students are skilled users of these facilities. The Faculty Library is part of the University and National Library of the University of Debrecen system, which is a public, scientific, and service centre that houses one of the largest print and digital collections in Hungary. Unfortunately, library access is offered for a limited time (i.e., not around the clock), a concern voiced by the medical student body during the site visit.

The Faculty regularly monitors the utilization of the teaching infrastructure by accessing data from the Neptun System. Based on the record, the necessary maintenance issues are addressed. Furthermore, the Faculty invests significant sources into modernizing the classrooms. In the academic year of 2021/2022, eight lecture halls will be fully renovated, which includes full air conditioning and up-to-date digital devices.

In summary, there is generally a rich, high-quality, modern and well-accessible medical training infrastructure in the theoretical and pre-clinical training modules. Thus, the



infrastructure and available resources satisfy the needs of modern medical training at the Faculty.

#### Recommendations:

- Library access is recommended to be extended to provide around-the-clock services (24 hours a day, seven days per week).
- The teaching infrastructure renovation project (which is currently carried out for lecture halls) is recommended to be expanded into a continuous and systematic long-term program.

#### Standard 6.2: Clinical training resources

##### Evaluation:

The Faculty of Medicine provides a wide range of possibilities to ensure the acquisition of clinical practical skills, necessary professional and human attitudes, and responsibility. It provides sufficient infrastructural, human, and professional resources to ensure the acquisition of practical skills.

Implementation of clinical training (besides providing health-care services) is managed by the Clinical Centre across two campuses: the older "Nagyerdei" clinical campus and the newly acquired "Kenézy" campus. Clinical departments at the University are under dual leadership; while the clinical director manages the health-care services, the teaching director manages the clinical training program for the medical students. Although such a dual leadership poses no problems in general, and the two leadership roles are often unified in the same person, this management structure does carry elements of risk. The Nagyerdei campus is well equipped with teaching infrastructure, including local lecture halls and seminar rooms with the necessary multimedia services (see also above). The availability and generosity of such infrastructure is questionable on the Kenézy campus.

The clinical infrastructure is backed up and complemented by an independent educational unit, the Department of Operative Techniques and Surgical Research. This Department includes the Interactive Medical Practice Centre, which is a modern, high-fidelity simulation centre for the practical training of general medical skills. The Centre is equipped with several complex educational tools and hi-fi simulators that provide the background for task-oriented practices. The Interactive Medical Practice Centre is on par with international standards. The Centre has been recently expanded to accommodate the newest training technologies and a large number of medical students.

The medical school closely collaborates with clinical departments of the Clinical Centre representing both medical teaching and healthcare. Through the cooperation with the other three Hungarian medical schools, they possess a large number of accredited teaching hospitals and departments for the clinical practices of the Hungarian and English Program students. The range of clinical practical training sites include teaching hospitals and wards throughout Europe and worldwide. The accreditation of the clinical training sites outside the European Union, the United States, and Canada is performed centrally by the Hungarian Accreditation Committee (MAB).

The clinical practical teaching and training sites, teaching or practicing hospitals follow the medical school curriculum, provide feedback from the motivation, contribution, and activity of students. Students, on the other hand, evaluate the quality of teaching at these specific hospitals and departments. State-of-the-art professional qualification and scientific activity are required from the leading faculty of the teaching hospitals and departments. The departments of the Clinical Centre represent teaching departments of the medical school at the same time. This close collaborating, combined structure of the medical school and clinical centre ensures communication, immediate feedback in both directions between clinical, preclinical, and basic sciences, provides background for the active use of information from the labour market. Sufficient financial, personnel, human and infrastructural resources are made available specifically for clinical practical teaching, thereby ensuring the completion of the clinical practices of students.

Medical students gain information about their clinical rotations via the generous Faculty homepage system. Their skill training is monitored and approved through an accredited and personalized clinical skills booklet. The clinical module of the training at the University of Debrecen is managed through a mixture of the traditional, semester-based and lecture-oriented training and a more modern, block-based small-group training.

The course descriptions of the specific clinical practices provide enough guidance for the personnel of the practical teaching site to follow the medical school's educational programme. Overall, the high-quality organization and operation of clinical practices for all students show outstanding motivation and devotion of the involved departments and their staff. Well-equipped teaching infrastructure is accessible, and students do receive the information, skills and training support necessary to fulfil the objectives laid out in the Medical Programme and Outcome Requirements.

#### Recommendations:

- Close collaboration of the medical school with the clinical centre provides a solid background for developing the educational programme both in the area of medically relevant scientific knowledge, and in the area of their translation into clinical research or practice. This close collaboration should be maintained and strengthened.
- Expanding and developing teaching facilities on the Kenézy campus are recommended.

### III/7 Quality assurance

#### Standard 7: The quality assurance system of the medical school

##### Evaluation:

The quality assurance system of the Faculty of Medicine is managed by the faculty leadership in cooperation with the Clinical Centre, based on the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Manual of the University of Debrecen, in accordance with the ISO 9001:2015 Standard. The Faculty's Quality Assurance Board – including the Dean, the Vice Dean for Educational Affairs, the Vice Dean for Scientific Affairs, the Vice Dean for Specialization and Further Education, the Head of the Students' Union and the Head of the Dean's Office – is summoned twice a year to take decisions. It also defines the faculty goals regarding quality assurance every year. The work of the Board is supported by the Feed-back Subcommittee, comprising representatives of the academic staff and students from all majors. Implementation of the tasks related to quality assurance within the Faculty is monitored by the Head of the Dean's Office,

while the quality system manager ensures that the quality assurance system of the Faculty complies with the specifications described in the Quality Assurance Manual of the University.

The documents on quality assurance are publicly available on the university's website. The university's Quality Assurance Manual, formulated on the basis of the mission and strategic aims of the institution, is accessible on the website for all university citizens both in Hungarian and in the English language. The Hungarian version of the document (15<sup>th</sup> edition) was prepared in December 2021. However, the one available on the Faculty's website is the 13<sup>th</sup> edition, and the English-language version is the 8<sup>th</sup> edition, prepared in 2017. Also, at the time of the site visit, the English version of the university website contained no information on any of the faculties, whereas the Hungarian-language website offered detailed information on them. It should be assured that the same updated information is available on the institution's organizational structure and on the medical school for both Hungarian and international enquirers and students.

During the site visit, examples on the quality assurance processes were provided in an ad hoc manner, but a stronger link with the quality assurance system is less explicit in the Faculty; it would have been useful to receive a more detailed picture on how quality assurance processes work in practice. The quality assurance system should be in compliance with the mission statement and the strategy of the medical school. The roles and responsibilities of some participants in the quality assurance organizations are not obvious. The results of the quality assurance activities are shared with the stakeholders, and the members of the site-visit team highly appreciated the involvement of students in the Faculty's quality assurance organisations (e.g. as committee members) and their active role in the various faculty processes.

#### **Recommendations:**

- It is recommended that the English-language documents are aligned with the Hungarian documents, so that both Hungarian and international students will have access only to the most recent versions.
- The responsibilities of those involved in quality assurance should be more clearly defined.
- It is recommended that the quality assurance system should be in compliance with the Faculty's mission statement and strategy.
- It is suggested that the Quality Assurance Manual be made compliant with the WFME standards in the future.

### **III/8 Organisational frameworks**

#### **Standard 8.1: Structure and organisation**

##### **Evaluation:**

The University of Debrecen is a state-recognised higher education institution that operates as a public benefit organisation. The integrated University was set up on 1 January 2000, while the date of establishment of the institution with public benefit status is 1 August 2021. The controlling authority of the University is the Count István Tisza Foundation for the University of Debrecen. The founder's rights are exercised by the Board of Trustees of the Foundation. The Rector is the responsible manager and representative of the University, while the President of the Board of Trustees exercises the employer's rights over the Rector.

The Senate is the supreme governing body of the University, assisted by various specific committees. The members and chairs of the Senate's councils and committees are elected by the Senate. The central operational unit of the University is the Chancellery performing the administrative, management and operational tasks of the institution; the Chancellor is the administrative and economic head of the University. The University has several administrative units performing teaching and research and coordinate the primary activities (e.g. the Directorate of Education, the Directorate of Science, the Centre for Student Relations and Services, the University and National Library of the University of Debrecen, and the Centre for the Coordination of International Education).

The University's teaching and scientific research units are the 14 faculties (including the Faculty of Medicine), which are autonomous, independent organizational bodies in charge of education, further education, scientific research, development and innovation, dissemination of results and human resources policy in their fields. They have their own operating rules, internal financial budgets, and staff with economic and administrative functions. However, the faculties are not legal entities. The Faculty is headed by the dean, supported by vice deans. Its governing unit is the Faculty Council (FC), which may set up and operate advisory and decision-preparatory bodies.

The FC decides on the rules of operation, the Faculty's regulations, the election of the heads and members of the FC committees, the Faculty's development plans, the approval of the Faculty's budget, the use of the Faculty's own revenues, the granting of jubilee certificates, the Faculty's curricula and their modification, cooperation with other faculties, the sharing, transfer and takeover of tasks. In addition, it makes proposals to the Senate regarding the establishment, termination, consolidation of educational, research and other organizational units, the modification of their names, as well as the establishment and initiation of BSc and MSc majors, post-graduate training and higher education vocational training. The FC also expresses its opinion on various matters, such as the nomination of university and college professors appointed to the faculty, the appointment and dismissal of academic advisors and research professors, the announcement of applications for deanship and vice deanships, the initiation of professor emeritus titles, coordination centres, academic matters concerning faculty students, and reports to the Senate.

The Students' Union delegates student members to the FC who represent at least one quarter but not more than one-third of the FC's membership. The Board of the Representatives of the Undergraduate and Post-Graduate Students shall also delegate one PhD candidate to the FC.

The Clinical Centre is a legal unit within the University, which is an independent health care provider. It is involved in training and research tasks related to the undergraduate, master, doctoral and postgraduate education and further training of physicians, dentists, pharmacists, and health science professionals, and carries out curative and preventive activities for educational purposes. It was noted during the site visit that in some clinical units the operational (clinical) director is not the same person as the responsible teaching program director. Their competencies are difficult to separate from each other's and may potentially result in operational collisions.

#### Recommendations:

- If possible, appoint the same person for the director of health services (clinical directors) and the director of the teaching program of the same clinic upon a mutual agreement of the Clinical Centre and the Faculty. If it is for some reason not possible,

separate their duties and competencies more clearly, including their capacities to involve human resources in a mutually harmonic way.

- Make additional efforts at the level of the University, the Faculty, as well as the Clinical Centre for further harmonization of the clinical training of medical students, specialist training and clinical research to avoid unnecessary conflict of interest between teaching and healthcare providing units of the University.

## Standard 8.2: Organisational units supporting the operation of the medical school and its educational and academic activities

### Evaluation:

The administrative functions at the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Debrecen are overseen by the Dean's Office, which houses the Administration Department, the Registrar's Office and the Centre for Specialized Education and Further Training. Altogether these units oversee all of the administrative tasks, certain human resources activities, events and public relations services, financial and economic tasks, student enrolment and administration, class schedule, and residency and specialty programmes. Specific areas are managed and overseen by three vice deans. The Faculty Council and faculty committees assist in maintaining efficient decision making and management processes. In addition, more notable university offices in close co-operation with the Dean's Office are the Centre for the Coordination of International Educations, which oversees the English training programmes and the Directorate of Education of the University of Debrecen, which coordinates the overall teaching program of the entire university. The general structure and organization of the medical training efficiently and transparently serve the objectives laid out in the mission statement of the Faculty of Medicine. Student representatives, including those from the English Program, are members of the decision-making bodies such as the Faculty Council and faculty committees. The committees work efficiently on a regular basis according to a declared operating mechanism and transparent workflow. The Dean's Office and the Centre for Coordination of International Education co-operate harmoniously and share administrative tasks.

The education system is backed up by well-developed IT services, including a Moodle system stuffed with up-to-date educational materials developed by the Faculty. Furthermore, the site-visit team witnessed the professional use of modern IT tools (e.g., Kahoot) during a seminar (Biophysics).

Overall, the administrative and supporting personnel and services are professional, even though a well-established performance assessment and performance-correlated waging are premature if existing. The general impression is that every person involved in providing, guiding, supporting, and administering medical training is in the right place. They are enthusiastic and proud about what they do.

### Recommendations:

- Implementation of a performance assessment system in the support areas is recommended.

**Members of the site-visit team:**

**Chair:** Prof. Dr. Gábor L. Kovács

**Co-Chair:** Prof. Dr. Andrea Olschewski

**Members:** Prof. Dr. Miklós Kellermayer  
Dr. László Czopf  
Árpád Rózsa (HÖOK)  
Dr. Péter Levente Lakatos (MAB)  
Anna Szombathelyi (MAB)

**Date of the site visit:** November 22-24, 2021

## SUMMARIZED EVALUATION TO DETERMINE THE ACCREDITATION PERIOD

	STANDARD		ASSESSMENT		
	NO.	TOPIC	COMPLIANT	PARTIALLY COMPLIANT	NON-COMPLIANT
<b>MINIMUM CRITERIA</b>	2.1	<b>Educational programme</b>	✓		
	5.1	<b>Selection of academic staff</b>	✓		
	4.1	<b>Admission and selection of students</b>	✓		
	6.1	<b>Educational infrastructure</b>	✓		
	6.2	<b>Clinical training resources</b>	✓		
	8.1	<b>Structure and organisation</b>	✓		
	8.2	<b>Organisational units supporting the operation of the medical school and its educational and academic activities</b>	✓		
<b>QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCESSES</b>	1.	<b>Mission statement</b>		✓	
	2.2	<b>Development and review of the educational programme</b>		✓	
	3.2	<b>Quality assurance of assessment</b>	✓		
	7.	<b>Quality assurance</b>		✓	
<b>SUPPORT PROCESSES</b>	2.3	<b>Educational methods used to deliver the educational programme</b>	✓		
	3.1	<b>System of assessment</b>	✓		
	4.2	<b>Student support system</b>	✓		
	5.2	<b>Performance, training and development of academic staff</b>		✓	