

University of Chile and TMDU Joint Degree Program in Medical
Sciences with mention of a medical specialty

External Assessment Report

Term of the Assessment
From April 2022 to March 2023

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External Assessment

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Purpose and Background

In 2015, Tokyo Medical and Dental University (hereinafter referred to as the “TMDU”) received authorization from the Ministry of Education to establish a joint degree program (hereinafter referred to as “JDP”) with University of Chile (hereinafter referred to as the “UCh”).

In 2016, the JDP specializing in a gastrointestinal cancer area started, and it has been operated jointly by TMDU and UCh. Both universities, through this JDP, enhance the universities’ international profiles, presences and competitiveness.

The JDP focus on fostering highly advanced professionals and leaders who have extraordinary professional experience and skills in the clinical field, are well-versed in medical research, and have a firm grasp of medical treatment and research coupled with a global perspective.

In the Program, which is different from the usual doctoral program, we offer a curriculum in which students acquire a high level of medical care skill and expertise equal to the level of a clinical specialist.

The Program will provide students high-quality supervision for research training, thesis development and writing. Students will be awarded one degree under the joint names of TMDU and UCh after successful completion.

As a Quality assurance system of the program, we set three steps;

1. Self-assessment, 2. External assessment, 3. Faculty Development. Concerning the external assessment, we must undergo assessment by external experts to evaluate the status of program implementation and achievement and make improvements. To this end, we have set guidelines as below.

- University’s Quality Assurance System (hereinafter referred to as “System”) shall be established for the purpose of carrying out assessments of the JDP.
- The system shall assess the status of program implementation and achievement and suggest improvements.
- The system shall consist of outsourcing veterans and professors from other universities in Japan and Chile, which have doctoral programs in the medical or life science field, and experience of granting doctoral degrees.

Dr. Hiroyuki Uetake, Director, Department of Clinical Research, National Hospital Organization (NHO), Disaster Medical Center and Dr. Marco Arrese, Professor, Pontifical Catholic University of Chile undertake the external assessors. A discussion about the external assessment was conducted from December 26th in 2023 to March 19th in 2024, and this is a report of the assessment results.

External Assessment Method

Three external assessors assessed the status of project implementation/achievement and made comments on project achievements that are organized into eight assessment categories.

Assessment criteria is the same as the self-assessment report for the four categories, as shown below.

IV	Achievement greater than plan.
III	Plan was achieved.
II	Plan was not achieved sufficiently.
I	Plan was not achieved.

1. Mechanism for implementation of the Joint Degree Program

Assessment Category

1-1. Joint implementation structure
(Self-assessment report page 1)

The above assessment category is divided into two categories: 1-1-1. Joint committees and 1-1-2. Communication method. Please make a comprehensive evaluation of the Joint implementation structure based on these two categories.

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appropriate committees for discussing important matters of educational activities and examining curricula and educational methods are organized and active. (1-1-1) ➤ Appropriate communication method is established. (1-1-2) 	
Self-assessment	Rating	III
	<p><u>(UCh)</u></p> <p>The JDP has been implemented and formalized across the different levels of the organization, which requires the approval of both the Faculty of Medicine (FM) as well as the central university body of government.</p> <p>The academic administration procedures of the JDP have been incorporated into the workflow common to all graduate programs in the FM, which will help to have a coherent management of every aspect of the program as well as incorporate wider experience in all details. The academic committee of the previously existing PhD program in medical sciences with associated medical specialty now oversees the admission and progress of the students in the JDP, given the very similar or overlapping profiles of the students and fields of study. This should also help to the eventual expansion of the subjects of study.</p> <p>The institutional relationship between UCh and Clínica Las Condes (CLC) has been terminated by FM and therefore no more academic activity formally associated with UCh at CLC is projected.</p> <p><u>(TMDU)</u></p> <p>The program has been implemented as planned through good mutual communication via online meetings and other means.</p>	

External-assessment	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 An appropriate structure is in place in both institutions with responsible staff in both sides. Regular videoconferences have been held. It is not clear how the end of the relation between CLC and UCh affects the regular operation of the program.</p> <p>【Dr. Hiroyuki Uetake】 Plan was achieved.</p>

Assessment Category

1-2. Policies

(Self-assessment report page 5)

The above assessment category is divided into three categories; 1-2-1. Diploma Policy, 1-2-2. Curriculum Policy, and 1-2-3. Admissions Policy. Please make a comprehensive evaluation of the Policies based on these three categories.

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Diploma Policy is set and published based on the educational objectives, and completion of the program is approved in a fair and strict manner. (1-2-1)➤ Curriculum Policy is clearly indicated and published based on the educational objectives. (1-2-2)➤ Academic curricula are organized and implemented based on Curriculum Policy. (1-2-2)➤ Clear Admissions Policy is established and entrance examination is conducted in accordance with it. (1-2-3)	
Self-assessment	Rating	III
	<p>(UCh) All reglementary aspects for the program are formally approved and up to date according to the requirements of the UCh. The academic committee and the Graduate School at FM UCh are well acquainted with requirements for admission, the scope of the program and its curriculum.</p> <p>(TMDU) Curriculum policies were revised to specify the policies on mutual agreement. Admission policies were also revised by adding the “Basic Entrance Examination Policies.”</p>	
External-assessment	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 The criteria set for this assessment category is met by both institutions. I have reviewed U. Chile’s website and there is accessibility to information about the JDP. Also, in TMDU web site the features of the JDP are outlined including requirements that the applicants should have. The information provided in the following internet link: https://rrii.med.uchile.cl/EN/page15.html is not current though. The curriculum Policy is clearly indicated as well as the diploma policy and the admission rules.</p> <p>【Dr.Hiroyuki Uetake】 Plan was achieved.</p>

Assessment Category

1-3. Quality Assurance System (Self-assessment report page 15)

The above assessment category is divided into four categories; 1-3-1. Self-assessment, 1-3-2. External assessment, 1-3-3. Feedback of assessment results, and 1-3-4. Information publication. Please make a comprehensive evaluation of the Quality Assurance System based on these four categories.

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Self-assessment is implemented, and the results are published and reflected in educational and research activities. (1-3-1)➤ External assessment is implemented and the results are published and reflected in the educational and research activities. (1-3-2)➤ Opinions of university members (students and faculty members) are heard and utilized properly in concrete, sustainable improvement of educational quality. (1-3-3)➤ Opinions of external parties are utilized properly for concrete, sustainable improvement of educational quality. (1-3-3)➤ Faculty Development is properly managed, and leads to improvement of educational quality and coursework. (1-3-3)➤ Information such as that on educational activities (including the items defined by paragraph 2, Article 172 of the Enforcement Regulations of the School Education Law, MEXT) are publicized. (1-3-4)	
Self-assessment	Rating	III
	<p><u>(UCh)</u> Questionnaires and the website have been implemented as planned.</p> <p><u>(TMDU)</u> Questionnaires were delivered and effective feedback from the students was obtained. A faculty development/ video workshop was held to increase our education effectiveness in online communication.</p>	

External review	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 Both institutions have worked in implementing a quality assurance system. Attention has been paid to hear opinions and ideas from both students and faculty as well as one faculty development workshop at TMDU. Thus, activities seem to be advancing as planned in this category.</p> <p>【 Dr.Hiroyuki Uetake 】 Some website, such as https://www.tmd.ac.jp/cmn/jdp/tmd_uuch/thesis.html, are not updated.</p>

2. Operation of the Joint Degree Program

Assessment Category

2-1. Progress of the Joint Degree Program operation
(Self-assessment report page19)

Criteria	➤ Program operation is properly conducted as planned.	
Self-assessment	Rating	III
	<p>(UCh) Entrance examination has been conducted according to plan, although the number of applicants is low.</p> <p>(TMDU) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there were no applicants this year, TMDU and UCh were ready to jointly conduct entrance examinations. • Thesis/dissertation defense has been conducted and a students who matriculated in April 2016 have passed it. TMDU and UCh have finally produced a graduate through this JDP. </p>	
External review	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 In my opinion, the number of students is scarce as well as having only one student being graduate after more than 5 years. One factor in this regard is the very narrow and specific scope of the program, which limits the application of more prospective students. The program is correcting this through the expansion of his scope.</p> <p>【Dr.Hiroyuki Uetake】 Perhaps due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, Japanese student was not admitted to graduate school.</p>

Assessment Category

2-2. Fulfillment of student capacity (Self-assessment report page 21)

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Admissions policy, Curriculum policy and Diploma policy are properly publicized and disseminated.➤ Number of admissions versus admissions quota is appropriate.	
Self-assessment	Rating	II
	<u>(UCh)</u> Enrollment remains below what is expected due to the restricted field of study (mainly digestive cancer) in which capable students have alternative professional paths and opportunities that may result more attractive than a demanding academic program. Nevertheless, our experience shows that several comparable areas attract very able students which have become leaders in their fields, supporting the desirability of widening the scope of the JDP.	
	<u>(TMDU)</u> Applicants and enrollees have not reached initial expectations. However, the easing of immigration restrictions will increase the number of doctors interested in the JDP in both countries. The Joint Symposium was held with the aim of strengthening the future collaboration between the two universities in broader areas and providing a good opportunity for lively exchanges of personnel. This will allow us to anticipate more applicants in the future.	

External review	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 In this category the program has not advanced sufficiently in appropriately disseminate information or design strategies to recruit more students. A dedicated webpage should be implemented highlighting the leading faculty and available areas of research. This web page should be Number of admissions versus admissions quota implemented in three languages (Spanish/English and Japanese), which could be shared with other institutions.</p> <p>Dissemination (program brochures, informative lectures or similar activities) in both Chilean and Japanese medical schools is advised. Looking to the available sources it is not clear who are the leading scientists participating in the program that have slots for incoming students as well as their research areas and scientific outputs.</p> <p>【Dr.Hiroyuki Uetake】 Student enrollment is chronically low.</p>

Assessment Category**2-3. Syllabuses**

(Self-assessment report page 24)

Criteria	➤ Appropriate syllabuses are prepared and operated.	
Self-assessment	Rating	III
	(UCh) The syllabus is adequate. (TMDU) Most of the important information for JDP students or applicants is well described in the syllabus.	
External review	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	【Dr. Marco Arrese】 No syllabus is available for review. The data presented in the following link appears appropriate: https://rrii.med.uchile.cl/EN/index.html . However, I would like to emphasize the need to highlight the leading scientists participating in the program who have slots for incoming students, along with their research areas and scientific outputs. It would also be beneficial to examine publications in which students of the JDP have been involved. 【Dr. Hiroyuki Uetake】 Plan was achieved.

Assessment Category**2-4. Evaluation method and criteria**
(Self-assessment report page 25)

Criteria	➤ Evaluation methods and criteria (grading, recognition of credits, and completion of course) for each subject are established, applied properly in a fair manner, and disclosed to students.	
Self-assessment	Rating	III
	<p><u>(UCh)</u> Grades have been duly matched and assigned according to plan and according to the guidelines and procedures common to graduate and medical specialty programs at FM UCh</p> <p><u>(TMDU)</u> Student evaluations in each university have been proceeding smoothly.</p>	
External review	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 It seems that evaluation has been conducted as planned.</p> <p>【Dr.Hiroyuki Uetake】 Plan was achieved.</p>

3. Student Support

Assessment Category

3-1. Student support system
(Self-assessment report page 27)

The above assessment category is divided into three categories; 3-1-1. Accommodation, 3-1-2. Research environment, and 3-1-3. Financial support. Please make a comprehensive evaluation of the Student support system based on these three categories.

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appropriate housing support for students is ensured. (3-1-1) ➤ Educational environment that will provide education according to instruction goals is in place. (3-1-2) ➤ Ensure adequate financial support for students. (3-1-3) 	
Self-assessment	Rating	II
	<p>(UCh) The impossibility of travel due to the pandemic did not allow student travel for a sustained period. The Internationalization Grant awarded to the UCh expired on 12/2022 and therefore there is no active source of support for student travel at this time.</p> <p>(TMDU) Although scholarships were prepared for students at UCh, the pandemic did not allow for travel to Japan.</p>	
External review	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p>【Dr. Marco Arrese】 The criteria to be fulfilled in this category assessment has not been yet met completely. The Covid-19 pandemic complicated financial support.</p> <p>【Dr. Hiroyuki Uetake】 -It is unclear whether LACRC is still provides housing support for Japanese student in Chile (3-1-1). -It is unclear whether stable financial sources exist for both Japanese and Chilean side(3-1-3).</p>

Conclusion

Conclusion	Rating (Please circle)	IV · III · II · I
	Comments	<p> 【Dr. Marco Arrese】 Overall, the evaluation of this program has been conducted correctly, with proper attention paid to issues such as initial implementation, policies, and design of evaluation criteria. However, for various reasons, some aspects of the JDP are not satisfactory. In particular, the program has a low graduation rate, with only one student graduating since its inception. The JDP's operation needs improvement in terms of attracting prospective students and providing student support. Additionally, dissemination of information about the program has likely been insufficient. It is desirable to widen the program's research and clinical training areas and to involve leading scientists from both TMDU and UCh. </p> <p> The Joint Degree Program (JDP) presents a valuable opportunity with significant potential benefits for both institutions. Pursuing this initiative is strongly recommended. </p> <p> 【Dr.Hiroyuki Uetake】 The website needs updating, but it is not a major problem. I think they should continue to work on recruiting graduate students. </p>