

Sultan Qaboos University College of Medicine and Health Sciences Curriculum office



Curriculum Overview

The MD Program at SQU is six years in length and delivers a comprehensive curriculum that prepares students for every kind of career in medicine. This is followed by a one-year internship programme. The curriculum consists of three interlocking phases that are integrated both vertically and horizontally. The spiral nature of the programme allows students to build on previous knowledge as they work their way through the phases. Each of the three phases has its specific learning model.

Phase I: builds the fundamental concepts of basic medical sciences and is discipline-based

Phase II: integrates basic sciences with clinical sciences and is system-based

Phase III: develops competency-based clinical practice and is clinical presentation-based

Together, the phases constitute the overall educational framework of the MD programme, which are built on a student-centered, integrated and competency-based pedagogy.

Educational outcomes

The educational outcomes of the program have been categorized from the original proposal in 2006, to be in harmony with the established six core competencies of postgraduate medical education in Oman (OMSB) to unify graduate medical education—patient care, medical knowledge, interpersonal communication skills, professionalism, ethics, jurisprudence, practice-based learning and systems-based practice. These competencies serve as the building blocks necessary for shaping the students to become competent physicians at the end of the MD program.

Educational principles

The educational framework of the programme is based on the following educational principles:

- Ensure students will acquire a core set of competencies in knowledge, skills, and attitudes attained upon graduation
- Utilize a competency-based curriculum, with standardized learning objectives which are aligned with an assessment process throughout the educational framework

- Provide an integrated experience teaching both basic science and clinical skills throughout the educational framework
- Contextualize learning of basic science concepts by introducing clinical relevance in the preclinical phase while encouraging early clinical exposure
- Foster student centered active learning methods throughout the curriculum and promote problem solving, critical thinking and decision-making skills.
- Provide varied clinical training opportunities to deliver patient care to a diverse population while integrating social, epidemiological, ethical and professional issues whenever possible.
- Emphasize on evidence-based medicine, critical appraisal and understanding scientific method as applied to the practice of medicine.
- Provide opportunities for students to explore science and medicine beyond the required curriculum and develop their individual potential and interest
- Update the curriculum continuously to keep pace with rapid advances in scientific underpinning of medicine

Curriculum Content

Phase I (2 semester duration)

The curriculum content in Phase I is discipline based. It includes University core and elective requirements in addition to a number of courses that focus on the study of normal human structure and function. These courses include Anatomy, Physiology, Chemistry, Enzymology and Metabolism (Biochemistry). Some of the courses offered integrate basic science disciplines together such as Physiology & Pharmacology in a Cellular Communication course.

Phase II (4 semester duration):

The curriculum content of the first semester in Phase II focuses on advanced study of normal human structure and function including molecular biology and principles of genetics. The other courses offered integrate basic science disciplines together including Microbiology, Pathology and Immunology in Response to Infection and Pathobiology course as well as integrate Anatomy and Physiology in Structure and Function course. Students are also introduced to the behavioral, sociological, epidemiological, ethical and scientific aspects of medical practice through early medical contact in the Hospital and Community course. The remaining three semesters are system-based which are learned in integrated fashion both horizontally and vertically with an emphasis on pathophysiology of disease and introduction to clinical medicine. In addition, three courses related to the research component of the curriculum are incorporated in this phase.

Phase III (3-year duration)

Phase III, is the patient oriented clinical phase. The curriculum content in Phase III is based on the clinical presentation (CP) curriculum. The CP curriculum is based on 120 patient-oriented core clinical presentations. The presentation specific application represents a modular approach to curriculum design. The CP curriculum was adopted and modified to suit the local and regional needs, with adjustment of core presentation topics to include 124 topics. For each core clinical presentation, learning objectives were written by a group of expert faculties. The outcome-based objectives for each of the 124 CP topics were written according to the *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attitudes* which are expected for a graduating student to acquire. The CP curriculum is mapped, so that each of the 124 topics is assigned to the relevant specific rotation.

MD Program									
Phase I		Phase II				Phase III			
2 Semesters		4 Semesters				PC	JC	SC	PI
1	2	1	2	3	4				
30 wks	60 wks				9 wks	48 wks	48 wks	12 wks	
90 wks						117 wks			
207 wks									
PC: Pre-clerkship, JC; Junior Clerkship, SC: Senior Clerkship and PI: Pre-internship									