

**5-Year Graduate Entry Doctor of
Medicine (GEMD) Programme
Interprofessional Learning
Strategic Plan
2022-2024**

**Working Version
(April 2022)**

University of Nicosia Medical School

Department of Basic and Clinical Sciences

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5-Year GEMD Programme

Strategic Plan for Interprofessional Learning: 2022 to 2024

Background

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), interprofessional education (IPE) occurs when “two or more professions learn about, from, and with each other to enable effective collaboration and improve health outcomes.” There is evidence, brought forward by the WHO study group on IPL and Collaborative practice, to suggest that “effective interprofessional education enables effective collaborative practice” (1).

In 2011, core competencies related to interprofessional collaborative practice were developed by the Interprofessional Education Collaborative representing six national associations of schools of health professions in the United States of America and were updated in 2016 (2). In addition, the United Kingdom’s General Medical Council’s 2013 “Good Medical Practice: Working with Doctors for Patients included domains related to communication, partnership and teamwork with direction to work “collaboratively with colleagues” (3).

The University of Nicosia Medical School is starting a 5-year graduate entry programme for the training of Doctor of Medicine (MD) students, building upon its achievements and experience in medical education.

Aim

To foster professionalism and excellence in collaborative multidisciplinary patient care through interprofessional learning (IPL) for future physician graduates of the University of Nicosia Graduate Entry Doctor of Medicine (GEMD) Programme.

Introduction

This working version of the Strategic Plan for Interprofessional Learning (IPL) of the 5-Year GEMD Programme of the University of Nicosia Medical School seeks to achieve enhancements to the IPL activities of the Medical School by building on current strengths, seizing key opportunities, and by developing and implementing solutions to current challenges.

As part of the larger work of the Department of Basic and Clinical Sciences (BCS) of the University of Nicosia Medical School, this working version of the IPL Plan aligns with the Medical School’s vision, which espouses the holistic concept of One Health, which emphasizes the relationship between the health of humans and animals within a healthy, sustainable environment. The strategic plan further aligns with our core values and mission, which aims to provide innovative, student-centred and high-quality education, and outlines the strategy to be taken over the next three years.

The IPL working plan herein builds on the details submitted by the BCS Department to the national regulator, the Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Higher Education (CyQAA), in January 2022 as part of the Department's submission for evaluation. Current and future versions of this plan will take into consideration feedback received from relevant stakeholders, such as students, staff, faculty and partners, as well as that of external experts, such as our International Advisory Committee and the external evaluators engaged by CyQAA.

This IPL working plan will define the strategy that will guide the continual enhancement of IPL for the 5-Year GEMD Programme and will be coupled with a separate IPL Implementation Plan for the 5-Year GEMD Programme that will provide further detail as to the specific actions to be taken. The implementation and achievement of the goals set forth below will be dependent on core assets, including people and resources. Relevant stakeholders along with partners across all sectors of health and the multidisciplinary health care team will be key to the success of this plan.

Stakeholders

There are a variety of stakeholders when considering the inclusion and expansion of IPL activities in the 5-Year GEMD Programme. Though the broader group of stakeholders are numerous, below listed are a few indicative examples specific to the University of Nicosia, recognizing the diverse additional local, regional, and global stakeholders, such as patients, parents, community members, community groups, non-governmental associations, private and public institutions as well as broader sectors such as health care, public health, agriculture, food industry, hospitality, and wellness.

- University of Nicosia Medical School
 - Medical Students
 - Students of other University of Nicosia Medical School health professional training programmes, such as those from:
 - Master of Public Health (MPH),
 - Master of Science in Health Services Administration (MHSA),
 - Doctoral Degree (PhD) in Medical Sciences, and
 - Faculty
 - Staff
 - Administration
 - Partner Institutions, including local, regional, and global
 - Patients
- University of Nicosia (including all patients, students, staff, faculty, administration and partners)
 - Veterinary School
 - Doctor of Veterinary Medicine. The University of Nicosia is developing the first Veterinary School in Cyprus, continuing the alignment of the work of the Medical School with the "One Health" concept (4). Having Veterinary Medicine students on-site will allow for the continued expansion of the variety of IPL opportunities for students of the 5-Year GEMD Programme.
 - School of Humanities and Social Sciences
 - Psychology
 - Social Work

- School of Sciences and Engineering
 - Nursing
 - Nutrition and Dietetics
 - Pharmacy
 - Physiotherapy
 - Sports Science
 - Human Biology
 - Biomedical Sciences
 - Computer Science
 - Exercise Science and Physical Education
 - Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation
 - Drug Regulatory Affairs
- School of Education
 - Education Sciences
 - Dance
 - Music
- Intercollege
 - Culinary Arts Programme

The availability of these programmes provides a unique opportunity for IPL in the GEMD programme, which would benefit all stakeholders.

Opportunities and Challenges

The IPL working plan has taken into consideration potential opportunities and challenges, such as described below.

Current Opportunities

1. Teaching and Learning:
 - a. Training Platform(s): Current restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic have brought to light opportunities to utilize virtual platforms for IPL activities about, from and with other professionals where the activities would have otherwise been limited by distance or location. In addition, faculty of the University of Nicosia Medical School are already experienced in the delivery of distance-learning due to the already existing distance-learning programmes within the University of Nicosia Medical School, such that the technological infrastructure and expertise are already present that allow for the creation of innovative technology-based IPL activities.
 - b. Faculty Training: The University of Nicosia Medical School has an enthusiastic multi-disciplinary team that delivers the curriculum on its premises and its clinical training sites. Faculty have a breadth of experiences, come from all aspects of the clinical and non-clinical sectors, and engage in a wide variety of faculty development training opportunities. In addition, the University of Nicosia Medical School remains at the forefront of education with faculty utilizing the latest most effective didactic

techniques in their repertoire, with techniques such as the “Flipped Classroom” (5) allowing for creation of expanded and engaging IPL activities. In January and February 2020, faculty of the Medical School were trained in interprofessional group facilitation by the Centre for the Advancement of Interprofessional Education (CAIPE) and the recorded training is available, along with additional IPL resources, to all new and returning faculty via the Moodle page for the Medical School’s Center of Medical Education.

- c. Current GEMD Programme Curriculum: The curriculum of the 5-Year GEMD Programme has been designed to include an Interprofessional Learning Stream, which affords the opportunity to thread throughout the years of training a longitudinal approach to IPL. In this manner, students can continue to grow in their learning by sequentially building on their experiences while also exploring the varied aspects of health with their future multidisciplinary team colleagues.
- d. Synergies: Synergies and similarities exist between the GEMD programme curriculum and other programmes offered at UNIC. Invariably, students in different programmes share similarities in taught courses. This creates ample opportunities for students to learn together. Some indicative examples include: (i) Ultrasound education; (ii) clinical skills, (iii) communication skills; (iv) surgical skills; (v) anatomy teaching.

2. Collaborations:

- a. Clinical Training Programs: The University of Nicosia Medical School is already working with a variety of University of Nicosia health professional training programmes (e.g., Nutrition and Dietetics, Pharmacy) across a series of fronts, including community efforts, education, and research. There exists an assortment of local health professional training programmes which have a mix of undergraduate (e.g., Nursing, Psychology) or graduate (e.g., Nutrition and Dietetics) students currently being trained locally in English. This presents a variety of opportunities for the creation of additional joint IPL activities with efforts already underway to create these interprofessional opportunities.
- b. Non-Clinical Training Programs: Aligning with the “One Health” concept (4) and acknowledging that, in our current era, the multidisciplinary team in fact includes partners across multiple sectors beyond the clinical sector, all of which contribute towards the health of patients and the community, the University of Nicosia Medical School already has a multitude of internal training programmes and external partnerships providing wider opportunities for the expansion of IPL activities.
 - i. Within the University of Nicosia Medical School, there already exist a variety of health professional training programmes allowing for the creation of diverse IPL collaborations, including the following programmes:
 - 1. Master of Public Health (MPH),
 - 2. Master of Science in Health Services Administration (MHSA),
 - 3. Doctoral Degree (PhD) in Medical Sciences, and
 - ii. The University of Nicosia Medical School has already existing partnerships with diverse non-health professional training programmes (e.g., Intercollege Culinary Arts) which provide the opportunity for wider sector collaborations,

such as the exploration of the development of Culinary Medicine modules between Medical, Nutrition and Culinary Arts students:

- c. Clinical Site Collaborations: The University of Nicosia Medical School has partnerships with a multitude of clinical sites throughout Cyprus and beyond. Additionally, under the auspices of the University of Nicosia Medical now exists the state-of-the-art University of Nicosia Medical Centre, which provides wide-ranging primary and specialty care services. In the UNIC Medical Centre, interprofessional clinical activities are already underway for medical students (e.g., rotations for medical students with the nursing team) and discussions are already underway to explore the delivery of interdisciplinary learning activities in both the pre-clinical and clinical years between medical students and trainees from other programmes (e.g., Nutrition and Dietetics).
3. Research opportunities. The University of Nicosia Medical School places research at the core of its academic activities and is committed to the promotion of medical research for the benefit of the international community. Opportunities are already under discussion for students from different programmes to work together on multidisciplinary research projects (e.g., with Pharmacy).

Potential Challenges

1. Programme Uniformity: Coordinating equivalent opportunities across different physical sites can add complexity to planning. Our strategy focuses on identifying common teaching and learning opportunities across programmes and across clinical training sites.
2. Scheduling: Coordinating with other multiple health professional training programs across different physical sites can be challenging. Students may be working at different times in different cities on different schedules and across different months throughout the year. Effective planning in advance will be important to mitigate scheduling difficulties.
3. Language: While English will be utilized for the delivery of training in the 5-Year GEMD Programme, some of the undergraduate training programmes of our local University of Nicosia partner clinical programmes (e.g., Dietetics, Pharmacy, Sports Science, Physiotherapy, Social Work) are taught in Greek, posing a challenge in the development of collaborative IPL activities with trainees of these programmes. However, English is widely spoken in Cyprus by faculty and students alike and many of the aforementioned stakeholder programmes at the University of Nicosia are in fact also delivered in English.
4. COVID-19 Pandemic: The current COVID-19 pandemic poses challenges to the coordination of both pre-clinical and clinical training sessions for students. In the clinical setting, coordinating the in-person meeting of professional student trainees from varied clinical training programs adds complexity, due to varied and changing restrictions across clinical sites imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, availability of clinical tutors may be more limited in those serving to care for patients during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, our experience with distance learning and other innovative technologies will be key to overcoming these challenges.

Approach for Enhancement of IPL Learning Activities

Short-Term and Long-Term IPL Development Goals

- **Short-Term Goals:** To create, enhance, expand, and implement IPL learning activities for medical students and to continue to develop and train faculty in IPL best practices.
- **Long-Term Goals:** To develop and implement a variety of innovative multi-disciplinary IPL learning activities with experienced internal faculty including collaborations with several professional training programs and in varied clinical sites.

The IPL goals are aimed at enhancing the following three components of IPL:

1. Learning about other professional disciplines,
2. Learning from other professionals, and
3. Learning with other professionals.

Sequence of Implementation

- **GEMD 5-Year Programme Years 1 through 3:** To create, enhance, develop and implement IPL opportunities, beginning with GEMD Year 1, with subsequent extension to Years 2 and 3.
- **GEMD 5-Year Programme Years 4 and 5:** To create, enhance, develop and implement IPL opportunities, beginning with GEMD Year 4, with subsequent extension to Year 5.

Strategic Goals

In order to train medical students of the 5-Year GEMD Programme about, from, and with other health professionals through interprofessional learning, four pillars have been identified for which strategic goals, objectives, and actions are described as below:

1. Strategy
2. Collaboration
3. Teaching
4. Learning

Pillar 1: Strategy

Strategic Goal 1: Advance educational excellence through strategic high-quality interprofessional education

Strategic Objective 1.1: To continuously review the IPL strategic plan for the 5-Year GEMD Programme to ensure the inclusion of innovative and effective IPL strategies that allow medical students to learn about, from, and with other professionals through the following specific actions.

Specific action 1: Identify an academic lead within the University of Nicosia Medical School faculty to oversee the 5-Year GEMD Programme IPL strategy and related activities.

Specific action 2: Refine the current Strategic Plan for IPL of the GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme stakeholders.

Specific action 3: Develop a plan for periodic review, revision, and approval of the Strategic Plan for IPL and its implementation of the GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme stakeholders.

Specific action 4: Develop a separate document describing the Implementation Plan for IPL for the 5-Year GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme stakeholders, along with a plan for its periodic review, revision, and approval.

Specific action 5: Revision and approval of the Strategic Plan for IPL of the 5-Year GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme and stakeholders.

Pillar 2: Collaboration

Strategic Goal 1: Foster professionalism and excellence in collaborative patient care through interprofessional learning

Strategic Objective 1.1: To expand upon IPL opportunities for GEMD Programme students to learn throughout their training years how to work professionally and collaboratively for optimal patient care through education about, from, and with other professionals through the following specific actions.

Specific action 1: Develop IPL-specific collaboration(s) with other health care professional training programmes.

Specific action 2: Develop IPL-specific collaboration(s) with health care clinical sites and facilities.

Specific action 3: Explore opportunities for IPL through collaboration with non-health care organizations or programmes.

Pillar 3: Teaching

Strategic Goal 1: Nurture faculty professional development about Interprofessional learning

Strategic objective 1.1. To support our UNIC Medical School faculty, enabling them to develop their knowledge and expertise in IPL through the following specific actions.

Specific action 1: Explore local, national, or international sources of IPL expertise accessible to our faculty for training.

Specific action 2: Train faculty in the concepts of interprofessional education, such as interprofessional supervision and how to stimulate discussion in interprofessional student groups.

Specific action 3: Develop a process to expand the number of internal faculty trained in IPL and continue to develop clinical tutors' related IPL skills.

Pillar 4: Learning

Strategic Goal 1: Deliver innovative, student-centred and high-quality interprofessional education

Strategic Objective 1.1: To allow opportunities for medical students to learn how to collaborate professionally and effectively with members of the multidisciplinary health care team.

Specific action 1: Enhance or develop learning activities that explore the contributions and roles of medicine and other health professional members of the multidisciplinary health care team.

Specific action 2: Enhance or develop learning activities that identify when medical referral to another health professional is warranted.

Specific action 3: Enhance or develop learning activities that involve members of the health professional team and require collaborative decision making and problem-solving.

Specific action 4: Enhance or develop learning activities that allow medical students to learn about, from, and with professional students in the clinical setting.

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References

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5-Year GEMD Programme Interprofessional Learning – Strategic Action Plan

Pillar 1 Goals	Objectives & Actions	Measures of achievement	Timeframe	Responsibility
Strategy				
Goal S1: Advance educational excellence through strategic high-quality interprofessional education	Objective S1.1. To continuously review the IPL strategic plan for the 5-Year MD Programme to ensure the inclusion of innovative and effective IPL strategies that allow medical students to learn about, from, and with other professionals through the following specific actions.			
	<i>S1.1.1: Identify an academic lead within the University of Nicosia Medical School faculty member to oversee the 5-Year GEMD Programme IPL strategy and related activities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appointment of IPL Lead ratified by the GEMD programme committee 	2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
	<i>S1.1.2: Refine the current Strategic Plan for IPL of the 5-Year GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme stakeholders.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of working version of strategic plan to the GEMD programme committee 	2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator GEMD Programme Director Associate Dean for Academic Affairs
	<i>S1.1.3: Develop a plan for periodic review, revision, and approval of the Strategic Plan for IPL and its implementation of the 5-Year GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme stakeholders.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of quarterly report to the GEMD programme committee, including feedback from relevant stakeholders 	2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator
	<i>S1.1.4: Develop a separate document describing the Implementation Plan for IPL for the 5-Year GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme stakeholders, along with a plan for its periodic review, revision, and approval.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of quarterly report to the GEMD programme committee, including feedback from relevant stakeholders 	2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator
	<i>S1.1.5: Revision and approval of the Strategic Plan for IPL of the 5-Year GEMD Programme with input from relevant GEMD Programme and other stakeholders.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submission of revised strategic plan for approval at the GEMD programme committee 	2022-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator GEMD Programme Director Associate Dean for Academic Affairs

Pillar 2 Goals	Objectives & Actions	Measures of achievement	Timeframe	Responsibility
Collaboration				
Goal C1: Foster professionalism and excellence in collaborative patient care through interprofessional learning	Objective C1.1. To expand upon IPL opportunities for GEMD Programme students to learn throughout their training years how to work professionally and collaboratively for optimal patient care through education about, from, and with other professionals through the following specific actions.			
	<i>C1.1.1: Develop IPL-specific collaboration(s) with other health care professional training programmes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations document included in the quarterly report submitted to the GEMD programme committee 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPL Academic Coordinator • GEMD Programme Director
	<i>C1.1.2: Develop IPL-specific collaboration(s) with health care clinical sites and facilities.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations document included in the quarterly report submitted to the GEMD programme 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPL Academic Coordinator • Chair of Clinical Education • Clinical training site Academic Leads
	<i>C1.1.3: Explore opportunities for IPL through collaboration with non-health care organizations or programmes.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of opportunities and management-approval • Memorandum-of-understanding 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IPL Academic Coordinator • GEMD Programme Director • Associate Dean for Academic Affairs • Executive Dean

Pillar 3 Goals	Objectives & Actions	Measures of achievement	Timeframe	Responsibility
Teaching				
Goal T1: Nurture faculty professional development about interprofessional learning	Objective T1.1. To support our UNIC Medical School faculty, enabling them to develop their knowledge and expertise in IPL through the following specific actions.			
	<i>T1.1.2: Explore local, national, or international sources of IPL expertise accessible to our faculty for training.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document outlining these included in the quarterly report 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Professors of Medical Education
	<i>T1.1.3: Train faculty in the concepts of interprofessional education, such as interprofessional supervision and how to stimulate discussion in interprofessional student groups.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training records Document outlining these included in the quarterly report 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Professors of Medical Education Internal or External IPL Experts
	<i>T1.1.4: Develop a process to expand the number of internal faculty trained in IPL and continue to develop clinical tutors' related IPL skills.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training plan included in the quarterly report 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Professors of Medical Education

Pillar 4 Goals	Objectives & Actions	Measures of achievement	Timeframe	Responsibility
Learning				
	Objective L1.1. To allow opportunities for medical students to learn how to collaborate professionally and effectively with members of the multidisciplinary health care team.			
	<i>L1.2.1: Enhance or develop learning activities that explore the contributions and roles of medicine and other health professional members of the multidisciplinary health care team.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly IPL report to the GEMD programme committee detailing proposed upcoming activities Feedback from staff and students about the effectiveness of the activities 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Year Leads
	<i>L1.2.2: Enhance or develop learning activities that identify when medical referral to another health professional is warranted.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly IPL report to the GEMD programme committee detailing proposed upcoming activities Feedback from staff and students about the effectiveness of the activities 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Chair of Clinical Education Year Leads (4 and 5) Clinical training site academic leads
	<i>L1.2.3: Enhance or develop learning activities that involve members of the health professional team and require collaborative decision making and problem-solving.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly IPL report to the GEMD programme committee detailing proposed upcoming activities Feedback from staff and students about the effectiveness of the activities 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Chair of Clinical Education Year Leads (4 and 5) Clinical training site academic leads
	<i>L1.2.4: Enhance or develop learning activities that allow medical students to learn about, from, and with professional students in the clinical setting.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Quarterly IPL report to the GEMD programme committee detailing proposed upcoming activities Feedback from staff and students about the effectiveness of the activities 	2022-2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> IPL Academic Coordinator Chair of Clinical Education Year Leads (4 and 5) Clinical training site academic leads