

1_Higher Education Health Program at Airlangga University

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Submission date: 20-Jan-2020 10:51AM (UTC+0800)

Submission ID: 1243843858

File name: n_Health_Program_at_Airlangga_University_978-0-387-09443-4_7.pdf (67.48K)

Word count: 801

Character count: 4606

Chapter 7

Higher Education Health Program at Airlangga University

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Higher Education Health Program

The Higher Education Health Program at Airlangga University in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia has been recognized by the Malaysian government. Airlangga University started to offer the Higher Education Health Program to Malaysian students in 2002. This program is administered by the faculty of medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy. The Department of Medicine at Airlangga University was founded in 1913 during the Dutch colonial time when it was called *Nederlande Indische Artsen School (NIAS)*. The Faculty of Dentistry was also established during Dutch era in 1928 and was called *School Tot Opleidig van Indische Tandartsen (STOVIT)* (Universitas Airlangga, 2004). In 1963, the Department of Pharmacy was founded.

Those three departments provide both academic and professional education programs leading to degrees and certifications for doctor, dentist, and pharmacist (Universitas Airlangga, 2007b). The main reason for admitting students from Malaysia is to move toward international recognition and to have programs accredited by the Malaysian government. In the last five years, many students came from Malaysia to Indonesia to study at Airlangga University or other universities. Malaysian students participate in the Higher Education Health Program at Airlangga University together with those from Indonesia and *Bahasa Indonesia* is used in instruction, because they have to engage and practice with Indonesian people.

This medical educational program takes five years to finish within three, sequential stages, based on the prerequisite of successful completion of each phase in this competence-based curriculum. The courses involve integrated modules, problem-based learning, and medical skill practice. The medical educational competence focuses on main areas that foster academic knowledge, professional skills, and personal development. For example, clinical skills are valued as much as the ability to utilize, judge critically, and manage information or developing lifelong learning skills.

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The dentistry educational program takes five years to finish with its two stages of an academic component and a professional education program. The educational offerings are aimed at shaping attitude, knowledge, and skills to perform professional duties of a dentist in accordance with the criteria of the Indonesian health service system. This system emphasizes humanistic and ethical guidance for patients. It stresses preventive, curative, and rehabilitative approaches at the individual and community level. A team approach to wholistic community health along with the mandate to engage in Continuing Professional Education to improve dentistry practice in line with current scientific and technological progress is a highly valued competence.

The pharmacy higher educational program takes five years, or eight semesters, to finish within two stages of pharmacy, apothecary, and professional education. The graduate level content is delivered in the form of lectures, tutorials, practical/field work, problem-based learning, and a thesis. Graduates are awarded *Sarjana Farmasi* (Pharmacy Diploma), which makes graduates eligible to continue their study directly in pharmacist professional education. Those who continue their study after more than a four-semester postponement must pass a selection test in order to be able to join the Apothecary professional program. This program takes two semesters with 30 credits to finish and has two majors: hospital and pharmacy industry. The courses are given in lectures, professional fieldwork at a government institution, and apothecary and professional fieldwork at a hospital or in the pharmacy industry for two to three months.

The graduates of the pharmacist professional program at Airlangga University graduate with general clinical competence of pharmacology as much as with the knowledge of comprehensive approaches that ensure patient education and community health.

Currently, there are about 166 students from Malaysia, who study at Airlangga University (Universitas Airlangga, 2005, 2006, 2007a). The number will grow in the next years as Airlangga University increases its faculty capacity. Airlangga University is also expanding its program offerings and in 2007, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine started to admit Malaysian students.

Problems and Alternative Solutions

The problems for Malaysian students is their low GPA, on average they have a GPA of 2.66 on a 1–4 scale. This GPA is not satisfactory in relation to the demands from the professional field in Malaysia, which stands at a minimum 2.75. This situation needs to be addressed adequately. The GPA will also affect the general performance of the Higher Education Health Program at Airlangga as a whole. In this case, the Malaysian students' academic standing could be an unfavorable factor for the university to attain international recognition. Thus, it is urgent to find out the causes and take concrete steps to solve the problem.

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