



ACIBADEM

MEHMET ALİ AYDINLAR
ÜNİVERSİTESİ

School of Medicine

**Social Accountability
Self-Assessment Report**

Social Accountability Working Group

January 2024

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Rationale

The main aim of medical education is to train physicians who can understand the community's health problems, address them effectively, and protect and improve health. Accordingly, a medical school should plan medical education to equip graduates with specific competencies. These competencies should address the community's fundamental health needs and align with the World Health Organization's definition of health as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." However, globally, a substantial gap is observed between available health resources and people's needs. (Boelen 2018; Greer et al. 2018; Sayek et al. 2021)

Boelen and Heck (1995) developed and defined the concept of social accountability (social responsibility) for the WHO as follows:

"Social accountability is the obligation of a medical school to direct its education, research and service activities towards addressing the priority health concerns of the community, region and/or nation it has a mandate to serve. Priority health concerns are to be identified jointly by governments, health care organizations, health professionals and the public." (Boelen C. & Heck J., 1995)

This definition emphasizes that medical schools should not only contribute to improving the health system, but also educate graduates with the knowledge and skills to work in their own communities, thereby creating a positive impact on people's health. (Sayek et al. 2021; Rourke 2018)

Acıbadem University School of Medicine is aware of its social obligations and carries out work in this area. To respond to these obligations, the School has prioritized its work on social accountability and devoted substantial space to this topic in its strategic plan (School of Medicine Strategic Plan 2022–2026).

In this strategic plan, the mission is stated as "to conduct work that responds to the community's health needs with awareness of our societal and social obligations, and to expand areas of collaboration," and a separate strategic area is defined under the heading "Focusing on Social Responsibilities." The priorities are expressed as follows:

"The School's social obligations are shaped towards being responsible, sensitive and trustworthy (accountable) in education, research and service so as to respond to the community's priority health problems. Increasing and strengthening our graduates' competencies within this scope, valuing and strengthening societal contribution in research, contributing to community health, and establishing collaborations and partnerships with actors in health and social work are among our priority targets across different strategic areas of this Plan. To achieve these targets, our priority is to raise awareness among all stakeholders about social obligations and to strengthen sensitivity, placing greater emphasis on work to become a socially accountable medical school. Within this scope, we attach importance to continuing our work in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals."

In line with the target of "increasing awareness in social accountability and conducting work to ensure institutionalization," it was planned to "develop and implement a societal contribution policy and action plan" and to "develop and implement an institutional monitoring strategy" from the perspective of social accountability.

These efforts were evaluated as exemplary in the evaluation and recommendation report provided by TEPDAD during the program accreditation process (TEPDAD Accreditation Results and Recommendations

Report): “Including ensuring the functionality of social obligations within the scope of the strategic plan was evaluated as an exemplary practice.”

Working Group and Work Process

The Social Accountability Working Group was established on 6 November 2023 to support the development of Acibadem University School of Medicine as a socially accountable medical school, and to prepare a societal contribution policy and an institutional monitoring plan. (Appendix 1: Faculty Board Decision dated 06.11.2023 and numbered 2023/14)

The Working Group started its work with the Dean, faculty members assigned or invited by the Dean, and a rapporteur.

The Working Group met four times between November 2023 and January 2024. In the first meeting, the aim and working method were discussed; in the second meeting, tools used to evaluate social accountability were reviewed, and an evaluation strategy was defined based on the internationally validated “Indicators for Social Accountability Tool in Health Profession Education” (ISAT), considered the most appropriate for our School. In the next stage, practices and plans within the School were reviewed according to ISAT criteria; evaluation results were discussed; and consensus was reached on the situation analysis, development plan, and action plans.

Members of the Social Accountability Working Group	Role / Unit
Prof. Dr. Nadi Bakırcı	Dean, School of Medicine
Prof. Dr. İlhan Cem Sungur	Department of Medical Education
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Levent Altıntaş	Department of Medical Education
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Figen Demir	Department of Public Health
Dr. Kaan Mert Güven	PhD Student, Institute of Health Sciences – Medical Education (Rapporteur)
Fatma Yağız	Rapporteur

The working group met four times between November 2023 and January 2024. The first meeting discussed the group's purpose and methodology; the second meeting examined the tools used to assess social accountability and defined an assessment strategy based on the internationally valid "Indicators for Social Accountability Tool in Health Profession Education" (ISAT) tool, which is most suitable for our faculty. In the next stage, the faculty's practices and plans were reviewed according to the ISAT criteria, the assessment results were discussed, and a consensus was reached on the current situation analysis, development plan, and action plans. (Appendix 2: Meeting minutes)

Evaluation Method: ISAT

The "Indicators for Social Accountability Tool in Health Profession Education," or ISAT for short, is a self-assessment tool. It evaluates a school across 11 different criteria at 4 levels. These levels are referred to as "Stages." In general:

Stage 1: The criterion is not met at all.

Stage 2: There are basic initiatives to meet the criterion.

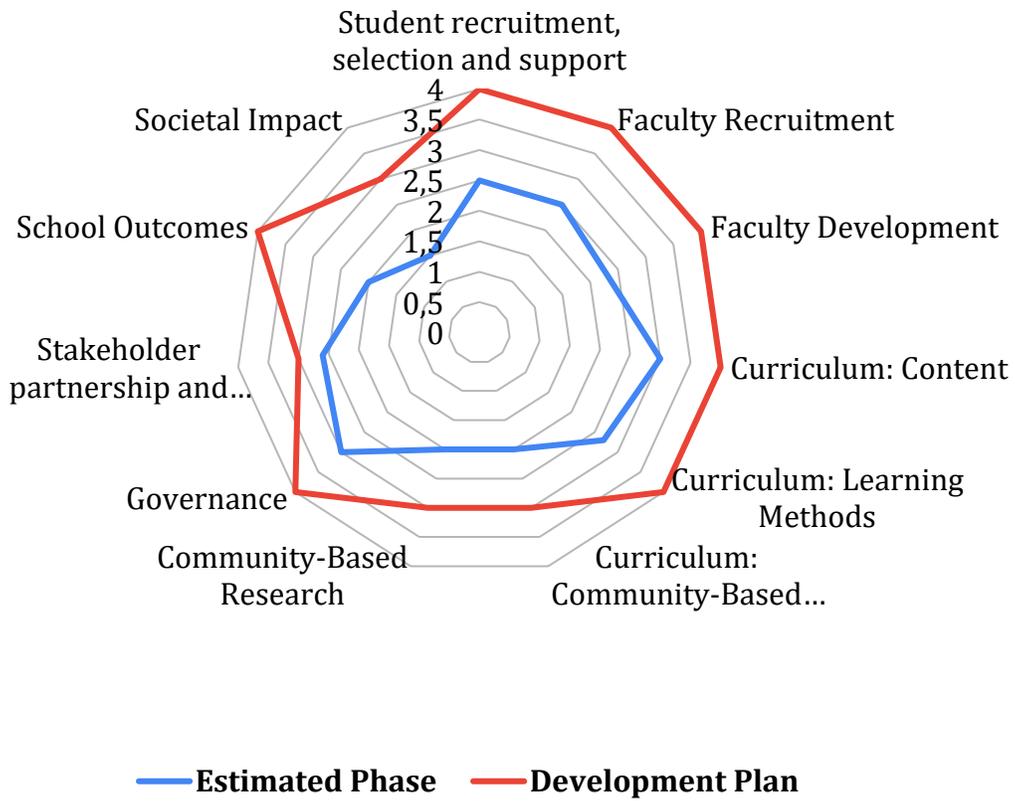
Stage 3: The criterion is defined within the School and relevant activities are implemented.

Stage 4: Advanced practices are implemented regarding the criterion.

Indicators for Social Accountability Tool in Health Profession Education:
<https://socialaccountabilityhealth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/ISAT-Implementation-Guide.pdf>

Using this self-assessment tool, the Working Group evaluated our School and made development recommendations, taking the higher stages into consideration.

Situation Analysis and Development (Institutional Self Assessment 2024 January)



Current Situation Assessment and Development Areas

Criterion 1.1: Student Recruitment, Selection and Support (Updated 22 April 2024)

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
1.1 Student recruitment, selection and support	<p>As in all medical schools in Türkiye, student admission is based on centrally administered examination performance, and faculties do not have a say in student selection. As long as this condition does not change, it was excluded from the self-assessment.</p> <p>It was considered that scholarship policies have the potential to change student demographics; that existing examples of good practice can be strengthened; and that inclusive counselling and support systems for students can be improved.</p>	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review scholarship policies in line with Social Accountability and the School's goals. • Review international student selection criteria in line with Social Accountability and the School's goals. • Establish a monitoring and support system for students' learning processes and wellbeing (covering primary, secondary and tertiary prevention). • Strengthen scholarship programs based on criteria beyond academic achievement. 	4

Criterion 2.1: Faculty Recruitment

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
2.1 Faculty recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect for diversity is among the School's core values, as also stated in the School of Medicine Strategic Plan. • Faculty recruitment is conducted based on the School's needs; the gender distribution among faculty members is balanced. • The proportion of academics in community-oriented departments (e.g., primary care/family medicine, public health, forensic medicine, history of medicine and ethics, biostatistics) and the balance between basic and 	2.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanently identify field educators. • Design a development program for field educators. • Make Social Accountability work visible within academic performance evaluation; support it by evaluating and monitoring its level. 	4

	<p>clinical sciences are appropriate. The School also includes faculty members from social sciences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School has field educators in its educational and research region. 			
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Criterion 2.2: Faculty Development

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
2.2 Faculty development	<p>There is a basic faculty development course, and additional targeted courses are organized when needed. However, there is no structured faculty development program beyond traditional approaches.</p>	2.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add criteria aligned with Social Accountability and teaching competence to academic performance monitoring. • Design a longitudinal and blended faculty development program to strengthen faculty members in Social Accountability (e.g., prioritizing primary care and preventive medicine; being competent in social determinants of health and reflecting this in teaching) and contemporary educational approaches. • Implement the ACUDEMI project. • Design a development program for permanently identified field educators. • Develop a system (integrated with performance monitoring) to make exemplary faculty visible and reward them in line with Social Accountability. 	4

Criterion 3.1: Curriculum – Content

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
3.1 Curriculum – Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the Phase I renewal, the direct integration of the most common diseases into the curriculum resulted in a structure that covers priority health problems. • The curriculum includes elements related to the social determinants of health. • The curriculum has been evaluated and improved for alignment with UÇEP. • The program is competency- and outcomes-based; the identification of competencies was carried out with participation of multiple stakeholders (community representatives, students, physicians in the field, alumni, the Ministry of Health, other medical schools, etc.). 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examine full alignment of assessment with competencies and redesign assessment accordingly— especially aligned with graduate competencies for primary care and professionalism. • Consider adopting a programmatic assessment approach. • Produce evidence that competencies developed to meet community needs are explicitly used in program design, delivery and evaluation. • Develop systems to incorporate all stakeholders into program evaluation and to measure how well the program meets community needs. • Strengthen community-oriented and community-based education within the upcoming program renewal. • Curriculum work on climate change and global environmental health. 	4

Criterion 3.2: Curriculum – Learning Methods

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
3.2 Curriculum – Learning Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The program includes regular student-centred activities and their proportion has been increasing; this is also stated as a target in the strategic plan. • There are community-based learning activities within CMPS and the Public Health 	2.7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced work on interprofessional learning: provide interprofessional learning opportunities within primary care; ensure students’ active participation in primary care teams. • Develop learning activities 	4

	clerkship. • Working on solutions to encountered health service problems is a component of the internship (intörnlük) training.		in the community and create “reflection” areas. • Develop problem-solving methods to identify the community’s priority needs. • Establish clear links between social determinants of health and community-based learning experiences. • Evaluate whether educational methods respond to students’ needs.	
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Criterion 3.3: Curriculum – Community-Based Education

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
3.3 Curriculum – Community-Based Education	<p>The proportion of clinical training by year and, within it, the proportion of learning activities in primary care or in the community were reviewed.</p> <p>Learning opportunities through participation in community health services are implemented in Phase I and during internship through the SEAB protocol with the Directorate of Health.</p>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify field educators, link them with the university, and ensure continuing training. Structure community-based education so that it is directly linked with social determinants of health. Strengthen quality assurance work for community-based education settings (quality assurance exists for hospital and campus; develop for other learning environments). Review learning environments and their proportions in the curriculum. 	3

Criterion 4.1: Community-Based Research

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
4.1 Community-Based Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academics individually conduct community-based and community-oriented 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate with the community and health service providers; conduct 	3

	<p>work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategic plan envisages developing a strategy to evaluate the societal impact of research; a working group has been established for this purpose and has begun work. • In academic performance evaluation, academics are expected to evaluate and report the societal impact of their research. 		<p>joint research/projects on the community's priority problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase community-based and community-oriented research through activities (regular monitoring, visibility, leadership, inviting to joint work). • Track research conducted. • Develop a system for School support of such work. • Track the level of impact of work conducted. 	
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Criterion 5.1: Governance

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
5.1 Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Accountability targets are explicitly defined in the vision, mission and strategic plan. • Decision-making processes are multi-stakeholder, with meaningful student participation in particular. 	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase participation of community stakeholders in decision-making processes. • Conduct work for Social Accountability monitoring and evaluation; develop scales and criteria. 	4

Criterion 5.2: Stakeholder Partnership and Participation

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
5.2 Stakeholder partnership and participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participate at a high level in decision-making processes. • The School has an ongoing relationship with the Directorate of Health, and works are carried out with NGOs. 	2.6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Accountability core stakeholder triangle: School – Student – Community. Ensure these stakeholders are involved in decision-making and in the design, implementation and evaluation of education, research and service activities. • Establish a system to 	3

			regularly track faculty members' work with NGOs.	
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Criterion 6.1: School Outcomes

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
6.1 School outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The School tracks where its graduates are. • The strategic plan includes targets for tracking and evaluating graduates. 	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate tracking and impact monitoring study: include each graduating cohort in a detailed study at graduation and then every 6 years thereafter. This study will examine: (i) the School's influence on graduates' current career choices; (ii) the relevance of School education to graduates' real-life practice; (iii) monitoring the impact of education on society through graduates; and (iv) obtaining regular feedback from graduates. • Plan work to establish an environment for continuous learning and development. 	4

Criterion 6.2: Societal Impact

ISAT Criteria	Current Situation Assessment	Current Stage	Development Areas	Target Stage for Development
6.2 Societal impact	The School is working to develop a strategy to regularly evaluate the outcomes of its work in this area and its impact on graduates and practices. It does not conduct systematic monitoring to measure the School's impact on the health system, policies and practices; information is	1.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct regular societal impact monitoring and research based on it. • Alumni impact monitoring (via the graduate study mentioned above). • Studies and monitoring on the impact of community-oriented educational activities on 	3

	<p>collected in a non-systematic way. Measuring impacts on health policies and community health is very difficult due to many confounding factors; evidence should be sought through different methodologies.</p>		<p>the community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track the extent to which academics and graduates advocate for improving the health system and serving in underserved areas (via the graduate study). • Conduct research and activities to improve policies and the health and health services of the communities served by the School. 	
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References

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