



The  
University  
of Sydney

# CURRICULUM MATTERS

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THE NEWSLETTER  
OF THE OFFICE OF  
MEDICAL EDUCATION



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## Dean's message

WELCOME TO THE FIRST EDITION OF *CURRICULUM MATTERS*, THE NEWSLETTER OF THE OFFICE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION (OME).



BRUCE ROBINSON  
DEAN,  
FACULTY OF MEDICINE

Establishing the OME was one of the key recommendations of the Curriculum Review undertaken by Kerry Goulston and Kim Oates. We have moved quickly to define the roles in OME and the Faculty is fortunate to have appointed a talented and committed group of people to take OME leadership roles who will ensure the continued improvement in our Medical Program.

We are a Faculty strongly oriented towards research but we must never forget that for many in the wider public the training of our future doctors is our primary role. And, just as we strive for excellence in research, we must also ensure that we deliver outstanding medical education and that we have the leading educational enterprise in Australia – if not the world.

I must gratefully acknowledge the enormous contribution made to the delivery of our curriculum by our colleagues in the healthcare system (in hospitals, general practices and rural communities) who volunteer their time, intellectual input and energy to serve our students. I was taken aback by the numbers – there are over 3000 of you – and without your invaluable contributions we simply could not function.

Although we have established it as an Office of Medical Education, OME also has the important responsibility for the delivery of a substantial part of the first two years of the Bachelor of Dentistry Program. Our curricula have much in common and working together is just one example of the close cooperation in teaching that I envisage for our two faculties.

I commend the report of the Curriculum Review to all of you and thank each of you for your continuing help in implementing the changes. The beneficiaries of what you do will not only be the young professionals following behind, but the wider Australian community.

## Dean of Dentistry's welcome to the OME Newsletter



PROFESSOR ELI SCHWARZ  
DEAN, FACULTY OF DENTISTRY

It is my great pleasure to join Dean Robinson in welcoming the new initiative of a Newsletter from the Office of Medical Education. Dentistry at the University of Sydney is indeed fortunate to be interlinked with Medicine and the recent impressive Curriculum Review, and we are looking forward to the important practical implications of this review. Due to the integrated character of the first two years of USydMP and BDent, dental students will also benefit from the substantial upgrades and changes in this part of the curriculum. The challenge that remains for Dentistry now is to implement an additional review of the clinical components of our curriculum, which has been initiated and will roll out over the coming months.

A few years ago the Institute of Medicine, USA, defined the five key competencies essential for health professionals in the 21st century. These included patient-centered care, working in interdisciplinary teams, employing evidence-based clinical practice, applying quality improvements, and using informatics. Globally, many medical and dental teaching institutions are still striving to introduce such concepts into their curricula. At Sydney, we should pride ourselves to have been at the forefront of educational development and having integrated internationally recognised benchmarks into our daily living. I am certain that the OME will continue to carry the torch for both Medicine and Dentistry in the years to come.



# Why curriculum matters...

## Office of Medical Education (OME)

Passionate  
Committed  
Supportive and pro-active

*"Curriculum Matters"* is a quarterly newsletter from the Office of Medical Education with several aims. This inaugural edition introduces the fresh and enthusiastic team charged with the responsibility of running the USyd Medical Program and implementing the recommendations of the Curriculum Review, as well as supporting the delivery of much of the first two years of the Bachelor of Dentistry Program. Subsequent issues will feature each School in turn. In essence, we view this newsletter as a means of showcasing the enhancements to the Program

and keeping students and staff updated about changes to the curriculum. Importantly, we also view *"Curriculum Matters"* as a key line of communication between OME and our students and staff. We will be seeking and welcoming contributions from you about your experiences in teaching and learning.

Please contact us under [curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au) or 02 9036 6529 (Jutta von Dincklage).

**Tessa Ho**



## OME staff spotlight

## Behind the scenes at OME

ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE – OME TEAM EFFORT

The newly established Office of Medical Education (OME) is proud of its enthusiastic and experienced academic and administrative team. In this edition, we would like to introduce the OME academics: Tessa Ho, Associate Dean (Curriculum) and Chair; the three Stage Coordinators, John Mitrofanis, Michael Frommer and Chris Dennis; Head of Assessment, Leo Davis; and Head of Evaluation, Heather Jeffery

### Associate Professor Tessa Ho

ASSOCIATE DEAN (CURRICULUM) AND HEAD OF USYD MEDICAL PROGRAM



Tessa Ho is a medical graduate from the University of Sydney with a clinical background in anaesthetics and health services research. From 1989 she was in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales, after completing her Master of Health Planning and Doctor of Medicine in the area of health economics, focusing of the development of funding models for NSW public hospitals using needs-based and output-based (Diagnosis Related Groups) funding formulas. She is delighted to return to her alma mater.

She has a longstanding interest in and commitment to medical education and professional development, manifest in her work both as a medical educator and administrator in workforce planning. She has had extensive involvement throughout the spectrum of medical training and education: as university level medical educator of students and member of a range of committees overseeing postgraduate medical education and training. Tessa strongly supports the philosophy of lifelong learning and the continuum of medical training and education. She sees this as an ongoing and

important role, as it serves to break down the silos of training that currently exist as health professionals progress from undergraduate/graduate education, to postgraduate years one and two, through to vocational training.

Tessa has four children, one of whom is going through the throes of final year Medicine while another is sitting the HSC. It is therefore no surprise that Tessa does not have any hobbies except for cleaning up rooms, screening phone calls, maintaining calendars, coordinating the production of multiple homework projects and driving a sports car.

# OME staff spotlight



## Professor John Mitrofanis

STAGE 1 COORDINATOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN OF USYD MEDICAL PROGRAM



John Mitrofanis gained his PhD at the University of Sydney in 1990. He then won a Fellowship from the Royal Society (UK) to work in Oxford and returned to the Department of Anatomy at the University of Sydney in 1993.

Throughout his academic life, John has convened many undergraduate courses and taught students on most aspects of human anatomy, from the scalp down to the big toe. He has also led an active research program on aspects of brain structure and development;

and is currently exploring various issues related to the survival of cells in Parkinson disease. He looks forward to rejoining the University of Sydney in this new role, in particular strengthening the basic science component of the course, from the beginning right up until the very end.

On the personal front, John has some particular interests. Namely, he is:

(1) a big fan of Elvis Presley and takes every

opportunity to sing and dance to his music

(2) a devoted South Sydney Rabbitohs supporter and is pleased to inform you all that the pain of many years of such devotion has been eased in more recent times

(3) a lover of his Beetles. He has two of them, a new (2006) and old (1966) one. He spends much of his time driving, washing and just looking at them.

## Professor Michael Frommer

STAGE 2 COORDINATOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN OF USYD MEDICAL PROGRAM



Michael is a public health physician and an adjunct professor in the School of Public Health. He runs the Sydney Health Projects Group, a small self-funding unit within the School that undertakes commissioned research on clinical, health service, health system and population health issues throughout Australia. Michael is a member of the Pharmaceutical Benefits Advisory Committee and a member of PBAC's Economic Sub-Committee. He also chairs the Sydney South West Area Health Service (Western Zone) Human Research Ethics Committee.

Michael has taught extensively in Stages 1–3 of the University of Sydney Medical Program since 1998, and supervises honours and PhD students. He has also undertaken projects analysing clinical teaching capacity for medical students in NSW public hospitals, and contributed to the planning of rural clinical and public health teaching programs in different parts of NSW.

Before returning to the University in 1998, Michael acted as CEO of the (then) NSW Cancer Council (1997–98), was Director of Research and Development in the NSW Department of Health (1994–98), and Deputy Director of Epidemiology there (1990–94).

During the 1980s he was Head of the Epidemiology Unit, National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety, and Senior Lecturer in the (then) School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine within the University of Sydney.

Michael is a graduate in medicine (1976) and public health (1983) of the University of Sydney. He held resident and registrar posts at Royal North Shore Hospital (1976–77), Sydney Hospital (1978), Crown Street Women's Hospital (1979) and Westmead Hospital (1980–81).

## Associate Professor Chris Dennis

STAGE 3 COORDINATOR AND ASSOCIATE DEAN OF USYD MEDICAL PROGRAM



Chris Dennis has been Head of the Department of Respiratory Medicine at Royal North Shore Hospital over the past eleven years.

He was a student at the University of Sydney and trained as an intern and resident at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. He did his advanced training in Respiratory Medicine at RPAH and became Clinical Superintendent (Medical) in 1988. He moved to Cambridge (UK) at the end of 1989 and joined the staff at Papworth Hospital as the Cardiopulmonary Transplant

Fellow. He returned to Sydney in 1994 and joined the staff in the Department of Thoracic Medicine at Royal North Shore Hospital.

His clinical and research interests include pulmonary vascular disease, interstitial lung disease and lung cancer.

He has extensive teaching experience at undergraduate and postgraduate levels going back to 1985. He is currently a member of the Committee for Examinations of the Royal

Australasian College of Physicians and he has been a member of the National Examining Panel of RACP since 1998.

Chris is married with four children. He is a keen sportsman and is interested in literature and music.

He is a dedicated clinical teacher and is committed to ensuring that the clinical training of students in the USydMP is of the highest calibre.





## OME staff spotlight

### Assessment and Evaluation team

#### Clinical Associate Professor Leo Davies

HEAD OF ASSESSMENT AND SUB-DEAN



Leo graduated from the University of Sydney MBBS in 1981. He undertook clinical postgraduate training in neurology at Sydney and Royal Prince Alfred Hospitals and became a fellow of the Royal Australasian College of Physicians in 1988. Subsequently, he undertook research training in neuropathology and neurophysiology at Royal Perth Hospital and then as a Harvard Research Fellow at the Massachusetts

General Hospital. He was awarded an MD from the University of Sydney in 1992. He has been a staff specialist at RPAH since 1991 and Head of Neurophysiology there since 1998. He has been involved with the preparation of clinical and written examinations for the RACP since 1998 and is currently a member of the Committee for Exams and of the Written Examination Committee of the RACP. He brings to the

OME a longstanding interest in medical education and, in particular, the acquisition of clinical skills.

Recreationally Leo is a keen but mediocre surfer and an aviation enthusiast who enjoys flying to country clinics in a plane of his own manufacture. He is the father of two children, one of whom is a medical student, and has great sympathy for those undergoing assessment.

#### Clinical Associate Professor Heather Jeffery

HEAD OF EVALUATION AND SUB-DEAN



Heather (MBBS, PhD, MPH, MRCP(UK), FRACP) has perinatal clinical, educational, research and administrative responsibilities for the large neonatal complex at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. Her maternal and child public health background has involved international consultancies and reports for the World Bank, UNICEF, Ministries of Health and non-government organisations. She is Director of the Universiti Sains Malaysia/University of Sydney exchange program in Medicine.

Specialist areas include child health experience in low, middle and high income countries including perinatal health care at primary, secondary and tertiary levels. Her experience has included situational analysis, planning, development, implementation and evaluation at country, state and district level. She has had particular interest in education and how to get evidence into practice with a focus on curriculum development, multi-professional skills training, 'train the trainer' experience, assessment, and evaluation at

undergraduate and postgraduate level in Medicine in Australia, Malaysia, the Balkans and Vietnam.

She is both delighted and honoured to lead evaluation of the USydMP and welcomes the opportunity to unite with the expertise in the Faculty of Medicine so that this great educational asset is continually groomed and enhanced.



## WIN \$50 book voucher!

This is Kim Oates and Kerry Goulston after a hard day's work. Can you think of a suitable caption? To enter this competition, please email your caption by 30 November to [curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au). The winner will be announced in the next newsletter.

caption corner

# Staff spotlight



## Michael Thomas

YEAR 1 SUB-DEAN OF BDENT PROGRAM, SENIOR LECTURER



Dr Michael Thomas has been teaching at the University for 40 years, mainly in Biochemistry with a research interest in the structure and function of proteins. When he retired from the School of Molecular and Microbial Biosciences he accepted a part-time appointment in the Faculty of Dentistry, where he has been Sub-

Dean (Learning and Teaching), in particular coordinating BDent1, and Head of the Life Sciences Theme. For 20 years he was the Examiner in Biochemistry for the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons. For many years he was an Associate Dean in the Faculty of Science, a member of the Academic

Board representing Science and Director of the Centre for Human Aspects of Science and Technology. He has had a long interest in alumni relations, culminating as President of the Standing Committee of Convocation, now the Alumni Council.

## Manish Kumar Bhutada

YEAR 2 SUB-DEAN OF BDENT PROGRAM, LECTURER



Dr Manish Bhutada is Year 2 Sub-Dean for the Bachelor of Dentistry program in the Faculty of Dentistry.

Manish also coordinates the elective programs of international visitors to the Faculty, is involved with the clinical and non-clinical teaching of different disciplines within Dentistry and is associated with a number of professional and social organisations such as the Society for Neuroscience and the International Association for Dental Research.

Manish completed his PhD in the field of jaw function and orofacial pain at the University of Sydney and is the proud recipient of a number of awards for his research, including the IADR-NSW award and a nomination for the Young Lecturer Award, Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons. His current research interests include the use of complementary and alternative medicines and therapies in dentistry.

Manish has won 15 gold medals in yoga including the equivalent of the International Yoga Championship, is the author of

several publications on yoga including a book titled *Yoga for Health* and has been propagating, demonstrating and lecturing on yoga worldwide for the past 12 years. For his contribution to yoga, the Yoga Federation honored him with the title of 'Yogratna' (Gem of Yoga). He is currently researching the benefits of yoga for managing a number of oral and other head and neck conditions.

In his spare time Manish enjoys traveling, cooking, skydiving and following global economic and political trends.



## Staff spotlight

### CURRICULUM MATTERS

would like to continue featuring staff members of the Medical and Dental Faculties in each issue.

**We appreciate your contributions!**

Submissions can be emailed to:

[curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au)



## Student spotlight

# MedSoc and SUDUA meet

## What does SUDUA do?

SUDUA (which stands for Sydney University Dental Undergraduates Association) is the representative body for all dental undergraduate students. In 2001 the Faculty of Dentistry introduced the (graduate entry) Bachelor of Dentistry program (BDent). Sydney's dental and medical courses are very similar in structure; overlapping significantly for the first two years with MBBS and BDent students sitting side by side in lectures, tutorials, and Problem Based Learning (PBL). We are looking forward to developing a stronger relationship with our medical student colleagues (as well as all those within the Faculties of Health) with the aim of fostering closer working relationships after graduation between medical and dental professionals.

We support the University of Sydney's goal to maintain its position as Australia's

premier university, one of the top five universities in the region, and one of the top 40 universities around the world. We would like to maintain these goals for our dental program and, with the support of the University, increase both the Faculty of Dentistry's national and international recognition. We would also like to increase student involvement with DASUS (Dental Alumni Society) in order to help establish a stronger alumni support for the Faculty of Dentistry in the future.

**Jesse Wright**  
SUDUA President



CHRIS ANDERSEN (MEDSoc PRESIDENT), TESSA HO,  
JESSE WRIGHT (SUDUA PRESIDENT)

## What does MedSoc do?

The Sydney University Medical Society was founded in 1886 by Professor Thomas Anderson Stuart. It is the one of the oldest student societies in Australia. The Society's members include all current students (of whom there are approximately 1050) and graduates of the University of Sydney Medical Program.

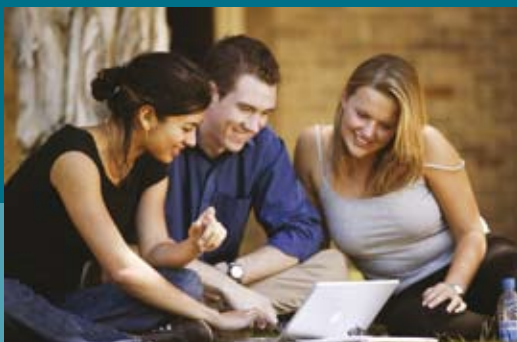
The aims of the Medical Society are to represent and advocate for all medical students and be actively involved in discussions and decisions affecting medical

education, training and careers by the Faculty, government and professional organisations; to provide financial assistance to members in need, including bursaries, educational and charitable grants and the sale of discounted text books; to raise awareness of pertinent issues through publications and seminars; and, finally, to provide a comprehensive calendar of social events and activities for its members and guests.

The Society has enjoyed working with the Medical Graduates Association and Faculty

of Medicine in strengthening the student experience and is very grateful for the excellent support that we have received. We look forward to expanding on the shared experience that the medical and dental students have during the first two years of our respective degrees and hope to work more closely with the Sydney University Dental Undergraduate Association.

**Chris Andersen**  
Honorary President  
Sydney University Medical Society



## Student spotlight Contributions welcome

Curriculum Matters would like to feature a student profile in each issue. We also welcome any other contributions from our students. Please contact us under [curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au) or 02 9036 6529 (Jutta von Dincklage).





## Activity report

Following the recommendations agreed at the July Faculty meeting, the Office of Medical Education has been established with sole responsibility for the management of the USyd Medical Program Review, including assessment and evaluation. The Program Head, three Stage Coordinators responsible for the content, delivery and assessment for each Stage, and the Heads of Assessment and Evaluation commenced their appointments in August 2007.

Administrative support led by a newly appointed Executive Officer has been consolidated under the Office of Medical Education with the transfer of key administrative officers. Expressions of interest have been sent out for remaining academic and administrative positions with the view to appointing most staff for this phase by the end of October. A hub for the USydMP is now located on Level 1 of the Edward Ford Building. The offices of the Stage Coordinators, the Heads of Assessment and Evaluation and the Executive Officer and Assistant are next to the PBL rooms in this precinct.

Overall, I believe that the transition to the new structure and management is running smoothly and I would like to publicly thank the Dean, the staff of the Dean's Office, Chris Roberts, Rebecca Mason and Simon Willcock for their support and guidance. I would also like to express our team's appreciation to Kerry

Goulston and Kim Oates for their wise counsel and tremendous energy in overseeing one of the most significant reviews in this Faculty.

### Activities to date

1. Visits to clinical schools and meetings with Block Coordinators and Theme Chairs

A series of visits to all clinical schools by the Dean and the OME team has commenced. These visits have been well received and provide a valuable opportunity for OME to establish contact with the Associate Deans and their staff. We are planning a meeting of all Executive Officers of the clinical schools, with subsequent visits by OME to each site to discuss OME support. We are also progressively meeting all Block Coordinators and Theme Chairs to discuss the implications of the Review recommendations and their plans for their Block/Theme.

2. Learning objectives

We have commenced work with Block Chairs to define a core curriculum with clear learning objectives linked to each week's teaching program and assessments to provide guidance for students. Teachers are being asked to provide a maximum of five bullet points outlining the broad content of their teaching activity.

3. Assessments

In 2008 there will be three written papers: a formative at the end of Block 1 (29 April), a

formative at the end of Block 3 (26 August) and a summative at the end of Block 5 (27 and 28 November). The Block 1 formative will comprise a 120 MCQ paper taken wholly from Block 1 content. The Block 3 formative will comprise a 120 MCQ paper taken from Block 1-3 content. The summative paper will comprise two 120 question MCQ exams with content from the whole year. The clinical assessment process (OSCE and Mini CEX) and portfolio assessment are currently under consideration by the Stage 1 Assessment Team.

4. Anatomy dissection option for all currently enrolled medical students

Expressions of interest have been invited from currently enrolled medical students to undertake a supervised anatomy dissection course in December 2007. The response has been overwhelming, with some 200 students expressing interest already (after only a few days). Students have been very appreciative of the goodwill of the Faculty, in particular, of the Discipline of Anatomy and Histology for offering this endeavour. The course will involve a minimum of 10 hours dissection of a particular part of the body.

### Tessa Ho

Associate Dean and  
Head of USYD Medical Program





# Important dates and contacts

## Important dates

### ASSESSMENT DATES

**Stage 1 Required Formative Assessment (RFA) 3 – written**

Friday 16 November 2007

**Stage 2 Observed Structure Clinical Examination (OSCE)**

Tuesday 20 November 2007 &  
Wednesday 21 November 2007

**Stage 2 Written Supplementary**

Thursday 13 December 2007 &  
Friday 14 December 2007

**Stage 2 Observed Structure Clinical Examination (OSCE) Supplementary**  
Tuesday 15 January 2008

**Stage 3 Written Supplementary**

Thursday 29 November 2007 &  
Friday 30 November 2007

### 2007 STAGE CONCLUSION OF CLASS DATES

**Stage 1** Thursday 15 November 2007

**Stage 2** Friday 16 November 2007

**Stage 4** Friday 30 November 2007

### 2008 STAGE COMMENCEMENT DATES

**Stage 1** Friday 15 February 2008

**Stage 2** Friday 15 February 2008

**Stage 3** Wednesday 23 January 2008

**Stage 4** Monday 10 March 2008

### ORIENTATION WEEK

Tuesday 12 February 2008 to  
Thursday 14 February 2008

## OME contacts

NAME	POSITION	ROOM	PHONE	FAX	EMAIL
<b>ACADEMIC STAFF</b>					
<b>Tessa Ho</b>	Associate Dean (Curriculum) and Head of USyd Medical Program	Room 108 Edward Ford	9036 6430	9351 8529	tessah@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Wendy Hu</b>	Senior Lecturer Core Curriculum	Room 114 Edward Ford	9036 6431	9351 8529	wendyhu@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>STAGE COORDINATORS</b>					
<b>John Mitrofanis</b>	Stage 1 Coordinator, Associate Dean, USyd Medical Program	Room 108 Edward Ford	9036 6428	9351 3196	zorba@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Michael Frommer</b>	Stage 2 Coordinator, Associate Dean, USyd Medical Program	Room 114 Edward Ford	9351 4394	9351 7218	mfrommer@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Chris Dennis</b>	Stage 3 Coordinator, Associate Dean, USyd Medical Program	Room 114 Edward Ford	9036 6439	9351 8529	cdennis@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>HEADS OF ASSESSMENT &amp; EVALUATION</b>					
<b>Leo Davies</b>	Head of Assessment and Sub-Dean	Room 108 Edward Ford	9515 7565	9515 7564	ldavies@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Heather Jeffery</b>	Head of Evaluation and Sub-Dean	Room 114 Edward Ford	9515 8248	9550 4375	hjeffery@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF</b>					
<b>Karen Scott</b>	Executive Officer	Room 130a Edward Ford	9036 6561	9351 8529	kscott@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Celina Aspinall</b>	Learning and Teaching Support Manager	Room 208e Edward Ford	9351 5111	9351 3196	celinaa@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Christiana Katalinic</b>	Learning and Teaching Support Officer – Stage 1	Room 208e Edward Ford	9351 6296	9351 3196	christiana@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Nahid Atalla</b>	Learning and Teaching Support Officer – Stage 2	Room 208e Edward Ford	9351 7068	9351 3196	natala@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Kylie Galloway</b>	Learning and Teaching Support Officer – Stage 3	Room 130a Edward Ford	9036 7186	9351 3196	kgalloway@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Pieta Joy</b>	Assessment and Evaluation Coordinator	Room 222 K01 – Mackie	9351 2584	9351 6646	pietaj@med.usyd.edu.au
<b>Jutta von Dincklage</b>	Executive Assistant	Room 130a Edward Ford	9036 6529	9351 8529	juttavd@med.usyd.edu.au

### EDITORIAL INFORMATION

**Editors:** Jutta von Dincklage, Celina Aspinall

**Editorial Committee:** Tessa Ho, Tom Rubin, Karen Scott, Beth Quinlivan, Amanda Durack

**Photos:** Tim Harland, Celina Aspinall

All correspondence should be directed to [curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au](mailto:curriculummatters@med.usyd.edu.au).

**Mail:** Office of Medical Education  
Edward Ford Building (A27)  
Fisher Road  
University of Sydney  
NSW 2006

**Phone:** 02 9036 6529  
(Jutta von Dincklage)

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