

First Japanese Graduates of Australian Standardization Program

On April 6, 2005, the first Japanese graduates of the Murdoch University Bachelor of Health Science (Chiropractic) standardization program received their degrees at the Murdoch 2005 Graduation Ceremony in Perth, Australia. Twenty-five of the 29 graduates made the trip to Perth for the event. Professor Jim Reynoldson, head of the division of health sciences, and Professor Stefan Pallister, head of the school of chiropractic, presented the remaining four graduates with their degrees at a formal celebration in Kurashiki, Japan.

Entry into this program requires the student to have completed the Kansai Chiropractic School (KCS) three-year part-time course or its equivalent in Japan; to have met specific clinical requirements; and to have engaged in full-time chiropractic practice for a minimum of a further six months. The KCS program no longer exists, but all previous students who have qualified, numbering in excess of 800, are being strongly encouraged to enroll in Murdoch University's specifically designed, three-year standardization program.

Currently, 120 students are enrolled in the standardization program, which involves both self-directed learning modules and residency components. The students are all taught in Japanese, mostly by Murdoch and Southern California University of Health Sciences instructors, who lecture in English and utilize Japanese DCs as translators. The students complete self-directed learning modules, which have been compiled by the subject authors, and are then translated into Japanese. In addition, the students attend learning residency blocks (three per year of approximately one week each) involving lectures, workshops and unit exams.

Over the three years, two residency blocks are held outside Japan; initially, these were conducted in California (at SCUHS), but now take place at Murdoch University in Perth. These on-campus segments address anatomy dissection, radiology and other laboratory subjects; such facilities were not available at the KCS campus in Kurashiki, Japan.

This level of education, known as a Chiropractic Standardization Course (CSC), has also been offered by RMIT, the CMCC, and continues to be extended by Cleveland Chiropractic College International; hopefully, others will offer the course in the future. The standard represents that which is advocated as the basic minimum for future registration in Japan. The Australasian Council on Chiropractic Education (ACCE) and now the Council on Chiropractic Education Australasia (CCEA) have established accreditation standards for this level of chiropractic education. However, it is recognized by all participating in the program that it is only an interim educational measure which will be phased out as soon as possible and replaced by programs at the fully recognized international level. This has already been achieved by RMIT/Japan, which is currently undertaking the accreditation process for its four-year, full-time program.

The KCS/Murdoch development of a full Japanese chiropractic program, based upon the existing English equivalent in Perth, is progressing steadily through the planning process and hopefully will commence in 2006. As there is articulation between the standardization course degree and the full program, graduates from the Bachelor of Health Science (Chiropractic) program will be qualified

to continue into the second of the Murdoch double Bachelor degrees, for fully recognized international qualifications.

It is certainly hoped that all of the KCS graduates will eventually complete one of the standardization programs, although there is nothing at this stage to compel them to do so. Hopefully, in time, the government will recognize the standardization qualification as the registerable minimum standard for chiropractors in Japan. Certainly some of the graduates of the standardization program intend to ultimately complete the full, internationally accredited program, either at Murdoch or in Japan.

With a population in excess of 125 million and a strong tradition in natural healing methods, it is hoped that many more collaborative ventures will succeed in establishing internationally recognized accreditable chiropractic programs in Japan within the next few years.

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