

## **UJ Department of Chiropractic Achieves International Accreditation**

### **Background**

The Department of Chiropractic was established in 1993, with the first output of graduates in 1999. The programme is a structured course work Masters degree, where students are required to complete a minor dissertation, course work and clinical requirements prior to being awarded the M.Tech Chiropractic qualification. The programme has had approximately 180 graduates over the 10 year period of graduates, with approximately 20 graduates per year. The department has currently got 210 registered students, and 5 staff members.

As one of the strategic plans for the department, international accreditation via the International Council for Chiropractic Education (ICCE) was approached in 2002, to determine the process for formal application for international accreditation. The Council for Chiropractic Education is an international organisation that reviews programmes in terms of set criteria, to determine standards of chiropractic training, to facilitate international quality of chiropractic education and training. The Council indicated that the European Standards for Chiropractic Education and training would be more aligned to the South African Context, as the education system was more similar.

The European Council for Chiropractic Education (ECCE) was then approached, to initiate formal application for accreditation.

### **Process for Programme Accreditation**

The initial phase was to approach the Council on Higher Education (CHE), as the previous SERTEC accreditation was potentially not appropriate for the process, as the HEQC was now the agency of local accreditation. In line with the new programme requirements, a specific minimum standards document was compiled, that indicated all minimum requirements for chiropractic programmes in South Africa. This was approved by the CHE and the Allied Health Professions Council (AHPCSA), as a document against which the programme would be measured.

The CHE on site evaluation was conducted in 2007, and the programme received full accreditation with no recommendations.

The process for ECCE accreditation was then initiated, with submission of application for accreditation in 2008, and subsequent submission of a self evaluation portfolio (aligned to the specific standards of the ECCE) was submitted in 2009. This portfolio was approved, and the site evaluation and verification was approved for 2010.

The 3 day site evaluation was conducted in September 2010, by a delegation from various chiropractic programmes in the European region. This evaluation comprised of specific site evaluation (physical structures and evidence as indicated in the portfolio), and direct interviews with all relevant stake holders. This was completed, and a report compiled, for submission to the ECCE Committee on Accreditation.

The Head of Department of Chiropractic, Dr C Yelverton, was invited to attend the ECCE council meeting in Frankfurt, in November 2010, where the outcome of the evaluation would be communicated.

The UJ Chiropractic programme was awarded full international accreditation by the ECCE for a period of 3 years (the maximum period for initial accreditation), which indicates that the chiropractic programme is on par with the accredited institutions in Europe.

The report indicated various strengths and weaknesses as indicated by the panel, with the UJ programme having no areas of concern, and achieving all the standards as prescribed by the ECCE. The Department was commended by the panel and ECCE on the high quality of chiropractic education and training within the institution, the quality of the self evaluation portfolio, and the manner in which the site visit was conducted.

#### **Future processes related to ECCE accreditation**

The Department is required to submit annual reports to the Committee on Accreditation, indicating where we have initiated changes if required as indicated in the report from the panel. The ECCE will conduct a follow up site visit in 2013, and thereafter accreditation for a period of 5 years will be allocated.

#### **Conclusion**

As is evident, the Department has been working for many years to achieve this milestone. The process would not have been possible without the commitment of the department, and all the staff that have assisted for many years.

The Department would like to thank all those that have assisted and supported us throughout this process, to achieve this accolade for the programme and institution.