Another successful year for the WBA program is drawing to a close bringing the number of candidates who have completed the program to 106 since 2011.

The department’s current period of WBA accreditation expires in January 2019 so it was timely to undertake a comprehensive evaluation to determine if the objectives and outcomes of the program are being met in Western Australia (WA).

The report, Evaluation of the Workplace-Based Assessment Program WA, provides valuable insights and will inform planning for 2018 and beyond.


Some excerpts from the report have been included in this Communiqué.

The consultation highlighted that a key component to the success of the program is the invested involvement of the assessors. It is appropriate therefore to focus on how assessors can be effectively supported to assist them in achieving consistency across the clinical dimensions and skills to ensure the goals of the program are achieved - safe clinical practice at the level of an Australian-trained intern at the end of the PGY1 year.

Finally, we are grateful to the WBA team at Bunbury Hospital for their contribution to this Communiqué.

The Communiqué is a forum to promote the program and share information across all sites, and contributions and suggestions are welcomed. Please contact us on wbawa@health.wa.gov.au

Dr John Keenan, Medical Advisor
Office of the Chief Medical Officer

Tell me and I forget
Teach me and I remember
Involve me and I learn

Benjamin Franklin
Exploring External Evaluation

The Department commissioned a WBA program evaluation by Hilleke van Osch Consulting to review and provide recommendations to streamline delivery of the program and improve candidate assessment planning.

Hilleke visited the 3 WBA accredited sites, Bunbury Hospital, Geraldton Hospital and Kalgoorlie Health Campus, conducting a total of 50 face-to-face interviews with candidates, supervisors, assessors, and hospital staff. Other key stakeholders identified by the Department were also invited to participate and provide feedback.

An online survey was developed and distributed to past and current candidates, supervisors and assessors who were unable to attend an interview.

Interview and survey feedback

A selection of quotes from candidates, supervisors and assessors collated from the evaluation interview and survey process

‘…Initially the requirements can be overwhelming but once everything has been planned and the candidate starts to do the cases, then things work as scheduled…’

‘…WBA program was the gateway to my medical career in Australia. Without doing WBA, I wouldn’t be in the same position as where I am today…At the moment, I am working as a GP registrar in rural NSW. I am thrilled about my medical career in Australia…’

‘…The year I spent at the WBA hospital was one of the best since I started working in Australia. It was a great opportunity to get experience in a regional area and at the same time enjoy the family-like environment of the workplace and yet have time to do many activities. Overall it was a great experience and highly recommended…’

‘… I think that the WBA is a great initiative…and I was so grateful to have had an opportunity to do it but I strongly feel that the WBA will only work if IMGs are seen as valued members of the medical workforce…. Please be mindful that no person leaves their country of origin without great sacrifice and deep thought. Many of us have left our country of origin because of violence and threat - this does not make us less committed to our work in Australia. We would not be here if we were not driven to be competent practitioners working in a medical system that is well resourced and efficient….’

‘…I have found the experience stimulating and it makes the work environment interesting and a place to look forward to. Candidates often ask clinically reflective and focused questions that showed that keen interest to engage in the Australian work force…’

‘…The WBA assessment is based on real world clinical setting, focus on intern level and is this doctor safe to practice. There is also the opportunity to use the first assessment as a learning assessment. Candidate receives feedback on areas to address for the future. Can then repeat assessment…’

‘…Supervision is a societal responsibility…formalised education and training is good for your own clinical practice…’

‘…Need calibration and training for all assessors. Workshop should include all WBA assessors to ensure same standards for all sites, all departments…’

‘…It was extremely difficult to provide an assessment relevant to a local PGY1 doctor… In reality I felt it fairer to try to incorporate a doctor’s evidence of attempting to up-skill themselves appropriately to work in the Australian health care system in a safe manner…’
Calibration refers to a process that ensures all assessors are applying assessment criteria and standards consistently.

Training should be undertaken prior to participating in WBA and at least every 12 months to develop:

- Assessor understanding of what is being assessed
- The standard of assessment
- The ability to apply these standards consistently

Assessment standard and characteristics

Safe clinical practice at the level of an Australian intern at the end of the PGY1 year

The assessment criteria to meet the standard vary between assessment types to ensure validity.

Page 2 of the assessment forms identifies the characteristics of a candidate who achieves a satisfactory level.

- Mini-CEX
- DOPS
- CBD

How can assessment consistency be achieved?

Consistency is achieved through developing:

- A further understanding of the dimension of performance to be judged.
- A consensus on standards.

Calibration sessions can explore:

- The meaning of the domains of performance in the different contexts in which they might occur.
- How assessors arrive at a judgement and attempt, through discussion and feedback, to improve inter-rater reliability

Professor Tim Swanwick, 2008

Assessing safe clinical practice

- Absolute standards that describe what a candidate must demonstrate to pass
- Longitudinal process incorporating multiple trained assessors and multiple assessment types
- Assessment across a wide range of patients, clinical dimensions, skills and settings

AMC WBAOnline

Effective assessors are the most critical component of workplace based assessment

What constitutes assessor ‘effectiveness’?

- A commitment to the task of assessing and an ability to provide effective feedback
- Clinical expertise related to the patients involved in the assessments
- Assessment expertise related to providing discriminating, consistent assessments that are indexed to the standards of performance expected at the end of PGY1 level of training
- A system that provides for assessment time and assessor support
...Prior to the commencement of the WBA program at Bunbury Hospital in 2011, finding doctors to fill placements was an ongoing challenge, particularly in my previous clinical area of Emergency Medicine. WBA candidates become experienced in understanding the culture and population they are serving and learning about our local indigenous culture with many successfully completing WBA and going on to fill rural posts that could not otherwise be filled. I have seen the WBA program evolve and expand, with 61 candidates successfully completing at Bunbury Hospital to the end of 2016, and 13 candidates enrolled in 2017 ...

...The WBA program has introduced new recruits from the international stage, bringing with them their own expertise and culture to the region whilst addressing the shortage of hospital doctors. Our local population have also benefitted from this service by such experienced health care providers.

In our Emergency Department alone, past and present staff has come from Canada, United States of America, United Kingdom, Ireland, South Africa, France, Rumania, Germany, Iraq, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia and even New Zealand. I firmly believe that international graduates and local doctors can learn so much from each other...

...My involvement as WBA Program Director has challenged me in several ways. I've learned that organisation is the key in co-ordinating and recording the assessments that the candidates have to perform across all the specialties. For this I am grateful to my dear colleague and Medical Education Officer, Judi Gibbs, for keeping us up to date. I have also found it very important to establish good relations with all the hospital departments and my colleagues who have volunteered their time to help our WBA candidates and I am extremely grateful to them...

...I never realised that the “pastoral aspect” of the WBA Program Director job would be so prominent. I was quite astonished by the intricate maze international doctors have to navigate through the Department of Border Protection and Immigration, the Australian Health Practitioner and Regulation Agency and the Australian Medical Council. I feel the forthcoming years will present new challenges due to tightening of immigration policy but there will always be a demand for more doctors (local and international) at the rural level and programs such as WBA will continue to assist us in meeting this demand...

As the WBA Education Officer at Bunbury Hospital for the past 4 years, I have had the privilege of getting to know and support many fine doctors navigate the WBA trail to finally gain their general registration...

...My role is varied involving the day to day running of the program including fielding queries about how to become a WBA candidate, organising program orientation workshops for candidates, and assessor and supervisor workshops...

...One of the most rewarding parts of my role is providing constant support and encouragement to candidates throughout the program and watching their confidence grow as they move through the program assessments. Many of them start the WBA program nervous and anxious as to if they will be able to meet the program requirements on time - it is my role to keep them on track and put them at ease!...

Judi Gibbs, WBA Administrative Officer and Medical Education Officer
Where are they now?

Conversation with Dr Ghulam Murtaza

*Pictured with partner Nadia Hanif*

Dr Murtaza is working in general practice at Forrest Family Practice in Bunbury after successfully completing the WBA program at Bunbury Hospital in 2016.

“Hi. I’m an international medical graduate. When I moved from Perth to Bunbury with my family for WBA, I had several doubts. However, over the period of time I found Bunbury is one of the hidden gems in the southwest. The more you explore the more you’ll love it”.

“WBA at Bunbury Hospital is well organised for the candidates to pass through easily while gaining all the necessary skills and clinical teachings”.

“All the staff members, especially consultants and the administrative team are very supportive on every milestone towards your general registration”.

“Wherever you are If YOU have a chance! Don’t miss it.”

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**Successful candidates!**

**Bunbury**

Dr Zunaira Arshad
Dr Sameera Gamalath
Dr Sufyan Ibrahim
Dr Alok Kumar
Dr Priyanka Kumar
Dr Rahul Kumar
Dr Samia Mazahir
Dr Rajni Patel
Dr Rex Prabhu
Dr Saman Shafiezadeh
Dr Dhana Thummagunta

**Kalgoorlie**

Dr Antony Kurishingal Aloysius
Dr Joshua Thomas

**Geraldton**

Dr Binu Elizabeth Eappen
Dr Jinu Mary Eappen
Dr Sameir Farah
Dr Mercy Jegan
Dr Navin Mathew

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Looking forward to

**WBA FORUM AND ROUNDTABLE**

**PROPOSED DATE:**
March 2018

**AMC REPRESENTATIVES:**
Professor Kichu Nair and Mr Carl Matheson

**TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:**
WBA Development Group longitudinal study
Application of principles to the junior doctor cohort
Access to clinical rotations and experience
Providing effective feedback

Suggestions can be emailed to: wbawa@health.wa.gov.au

Watch this space for information on the 2018 AMC National WBA Workshop!