



## Issue focus

# Medical testing

Universities are increasingly admitting new students based on more than just their academic results. In health-related fields especially, greater emphasis is being placed on the need for students to have a wider skill set, in particular logical reasoning and problem solving, the ability to communicate well and understand people, as well as the ability to work effectively in a team. Future doctors and other health professionals need to understand more than just medical theory – it is crucial they have the aptitude to work effectively with colleagues and patients in practice.

ACER works with universities in the United Kingdom and Ireland, among other countries, to develop, manage and evaluate selection tests for undergraduate medical and health-related programs. The use of professionally developed and marked secure tests, in combination with academic results, assist universities in selecting the most suitable students from a large pool of well-qualified applicants.

ACER developed the Graduate Australian Medical School Admissions Test (GAMSAT), which is used by universities in Australia to select students for graduate medical programs, and is now also utilised in the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland. GAMSAT UK is used exclusively by such universities as St George's University of London and Nottingham University for entry into medicine and dentistry courses. GAMSAT Ireland, another adaptation

of the test, was developed for the selection of medicine and veterinary medicine students at five universities in Ireland.

GAMSAT evaluates the ability of students to understand and analyse material, think critically about issues and organise and express thoughts in a logical and effective way. Problem solving is a major focus of the test.

ACER has also developed, in consultation with the University of Ulster in Northern Ireland, the Health Professions Admissions Test (HPAT), which assesses a range of attributes considered to be important for the study and later practice of the health professions. HPAT has been designed to complement academic achievement by providing assessment of skills in the areas of reasoning, understanding and working with people and written communication. An additional test, HPAT-Ireland, is used by medical

schools in Ireland to measure logical reasoning and problem solving, interpersonal understanding and non-verbal reasoning. Both HPAT and HPAT-Ireland place a strong focus on general skills and personal abilities and do not test academic knowledge.

In Australia and New Zealand ACER conducts the Undergraduate Medicine and Health Sciences Admissions Test (UMAT) to assist in the selection of candidates for study in medicine, dentistry and health science programs at universities. UMAT was designed to assess general attributes and abilities gained through prior experience and learning. Specifically, UMAT focuses on critical thinking and problem solving, and understanding people and abstract non-verbal reasoning. These abilities are considered crucial for students in their studies and later practice of professions in the health sciences. Students complete the test during their final year of schooling.