



# **THE WFME PROGRAMME FOR RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING AGENCIES FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION**

**Recognition criteria for agencies accrediting medical  
schools**

August 2012

## **I. Background**

### **A. Scope of Authority**

The accrediting agency must be an entity that is authorised and recognised by the government (i.e., either or both of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education where the school is located) or by entities that are authorised or recognised by an appropriate professional or scientific association as having the authority to accredit education programmes and schools that award the MD degree or its equivalent.

### **B. Acceptance of the Accreditation Agency by Others**

The accrediting agency's decisions must be made known and accepted by other organisations, such as professional licensing bodies, governments, educational institutions, employers, etc.

### **C. Substantive Changes**

The accrediting agency must inform WFME of any substantive changes in the scope of activities of the agency, the procedures for accreditation, or standards for accreditation.

**A. Existence and Availability of Standards**

The accrediting agency must use predetermined standards for accreditation.

The standards must be accessible to the medical school undergoing the review, and must be available to the general public.

**B. Type of Standards**

The accreditation agency must use medicine specific standards, or standards possessing similar characteristics.

The Standards must be a comprehensive set of standards such as the WFME Global Standards or similar Standards, such as the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) Functions and Structure of a Medical School, or the Australian Medical Council (AMC) Standards for Assessment and Accreditation of Medical Schools.

**C. Appropriateness of Standards**

The accrediting agency must have a system to determine that the standards are sufficiently rigorous and appropriate to ensure the quality of the education or training provided at accredited medical schools.

**D. Review of Standards**

The accrediting agency must have a system for periodically reviewing and updating the standards to ensure that they are adequate to evaluate the quality of education or training provided by the medical schools under review, and are relevant to the educational or training needs of the students.

### **III. Accreditation Process and Procedures**

#### **A. Medical School Self-Study**

The accrediting agency must require medical schools seeking accreditation to prepare an in-depth self-study that addresses compliance with the standards.

The accreditation agency must provide guidance on completing the self-study.

#### **B. Site Visit**

The accrediting agency must conduct a site visit (or visits) to a medical school prior to making a decision on accreditation, and must assess elements pertaining to the school's facilities and resources, students, faculty, curriculum, etc.

The site visit must include the main campus of the school, and include branch campuses or additional locations of the school and clinical core clerkship rotation sites affiliated with the school, as appropriate.

The accrediting agency must ensure that sufficient information is collected to determine compliance with the agency's standards.

The site visit must be of sufficient duration, and the site visit team of appropriate size and qualifications.

The accreditation agency must provide guidance on conduct of the site visit.

#### **C. Reports**

A written report of findings must be created based on information provided by the medical school and gathered during the site visit.

The accrediting agency must provide guidance on structure and content of the report.

The medical school undergoing the review must have the opportunity to respond to the report prior to deliberation of the accrediting agency.

#### **D. Qualification and Training of Individuals Associated with the Accrediting Agency**

The accrediting agency must have and implement policies regarding the qualifications, credentials and experience of

the individuals who establish the accreditation standards the individuals who participate in the on-site reviews of medical schools

the individuals who create the reports detailing the school's compliance with the standards the individuals who make accreditation decisions

The accrediting agency must have a training process for new members of the accrediting agency individuals who participate in on-site reviews individuals who create reports

## **E. Accreditation Decisions**

The accrediting agency must have documented processes and procedures that ensure accreditation decisions are based on compliance with the standards.

The accrediting agency must conduct a decision-making meeting where a report based on an on-site review is adequately discussed and debated.

The accrediting agency must define a quorum to conduct business.

The accrediting agency must make a fair accreditation decision based on the information included in the report.

The accrediting agency must use information on the performance of recent graduates of the medical school in making accreditation decisions.

## **F. Activities Subsequent to Accreditation Decisions**

The accrediting agency must have procedures for allowing a medical school that does not meet standards to come into compliance.

The accrediting agency must monitor medical schools throughout the duration of an accreditation period.

The accrediting agency must have and implement a policy regarding the reporting of any substantive changes made, or anticipated to be made, to the educational program or other aspects of an accredited medical school.

The accrediting agency must require medical schools to be re-evaluated periodically after a positive accreditation decision.

## **G. Complaints**

The accrediting agency must have procedures to investigate complaints from students, graduates, or other individuals regarding accredited medical schools.

## **IV. Accreditation Agency Policies and Resources**

### **A. Controls against Conflicts of Interest**

The accrediting agency must ensure that individuals involved in the accreditation process or decision for a specific medical school have no conflicts of interest that would potentially inhibit them from making objective decisions.

### **B. Controls against Inconsistent Application of Standards and Procedures**

The accrediting agency must make certain that the standards and procedures for accreditation of medical schools are applied consistently to all schools that seek accreditation.

### **C. Administrative and Fiscal Responsibilities**

The accrediting agency must have sufficient administrative and fiscal capability and independence to carry out its accreditation activities with regards to its scope of responsibility.

### **D. Due Process**

The accrediting agency must notify medical schools in writing of any adverse accreditation actions or decisions and describe the basis for such action.

The accrediting agency must have an appeal process for adverse actions, including policies to ensure that individuals involved in the appeal process have no conflicts of interest that would potentially inhibit them from making objective decisions.

### **E. Maintenance of Records**

The accrediting agency must maintain full records of accreditation review documentation, including self-studies, on-site evaluation team reports, the medical school's responses to on-site reports, periodic review reports, decisions, and any other pertinent correspondence and materials.

The accrediting agency must have implemented record-keeping policies, including policies related to data security.

## **F. Availability and Dissemination of Information**

The accrediting agency must make available to medical schools and to the public information on the types of accreditation granted and the procedures medical schools must follow in applying for accreditation.

The accrediting agency must ensure that medical schools undergoing review and pertinent licensing or authorising agencies are notified of accreditation decisions.

There must be a publicly available directory of accredited medical schools and accreditation decisions.