

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Analysis
of the Report Submitted by

Slovak Republic

Prepared: June 2009

Background

In September 2007, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) first determined that the Slovak Republic's standards and processes to evaluate medical education programs leading to the M.D. (or equivalent) degree are comparable to the standards of accreditation used to evaluate medical education programs in the United States. Additionally, the NCFMEA requested that the Slovak Republic submit a report on its accrediting activities for review by the Committee in September 2009.

The Accreditation Commission (Commission) of the Government of the Slovak Republic is the entity responsible for evaluating the quality of medical education in the Slovak Republic.

This analysis provides a review of the Slovak Republic's report of its accreditation activities and includes the following areas:

- Current status of medical schools
- Overview of accreditation activities
- Laws and regulations
- Standards
- Processes and procedures
- Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities.

Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the report submitted by the Commission, Department staff concludes that the Slovak Republic has provided the information requested by the NCFMEA. It appears that there have been no major changes in the standards and processes that were last determined to be comparable by the NCFMEA in September 2007. Department staff also concludes that the accreditation activities during the past two years appear to be consistent with the NCFMEA guidelines.

Staff Analysis

Current Status of Medical Schools:

The Slovak Republic continues to have four undergraduate medical schools, three of which remain fully accredited. The fourth medical school, Slovak Medical University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Medical Specialization Studies, is provisionally accredited with a decision on full accreditation expected on October 18, 2009. The school submitted its application for complex accreditation on January 22, 2009.

Overview of accreditation activities:

The Commission accredits medical schools for a period of six years. Each program receives a full review as it begins a new accreditation cycle and submits annual reports to the Commission. Since the September 2007 NCFMEA meeting, the Commission has undertaken the following accreditation site visits:

- January 2009
Comenius University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Medicine
Comenius University in Bratislava, the Jessenius Faculty of Medicine in Martin
- April 2009
Safarik University in Kosice, the Faculty of Medicine
- May 2009
Slovak Medical University in Bratislava, the Faculty of Medical Specialization Studies

New members were appointed to the Accreditation Commission in 2008. The Commission is composed of 21 members and the country also provided a list of its new members.

Laws and Regulations:

The country's Higher Education Act 131/2002 was amended in 2007 and several changes were made. The notable change pertaining to medical education is found in Section 83, Clause 13 of the law which requires the Commission to ask the Ministry of Health for his/her opinion as to whether the graduates of a program fulfill the conditions required for a career in the health professions.

In 2007, regulations pertaining to the Commission were amended to specify the Commission's procedures for accreditation in greater detail. The statute of the Commission was also changed in 2008, and outlines how the Commission will structure its work teams.

Standards, Processes and Procedures:

There have been no significant changes to the Commission's standards, processes and procedures since they were last approved by the NCFMEA in 2007. The Commission relies on the Criteria for Accreditation of Higher Education Study Programs as it is outlined in law, as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

The Commission also highlighted some notable activities pertaining to its accreditation of medical programs. One activity involves the coordinated efforts of three medical programs to develop and distribute tests to students to see how well they retained the content from their respective programs. The programs plan to conduct the tests on an annual basis and to use the results for further analyses and comparisons across programs. Another activity is the relocation of all basic science departments of the Faculty of Medical Specialization Studies to the newly reconstructed campus of the Slovak Medical University in Bratislava. The move allowed students better access to science equipment and resources.

Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities:

In addition to the site review schedule cited above, which includes reviews of both teaching and research premises as well as teaching hospitals and clinical clerkships, the Commission has also met on a regular basis (convening 11 meetings) since the September 2007 NCFMEA meeting. During these meetings, the Commission has devoted the majority of their time to the complex accreditation of Slovak universities and their medical programs.

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