

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Analysis of the Annual Report

Submitted by  
Australia/New Zealand

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### Background

At its February 1995 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the accreditation standards used by the Australian Medical Council (AMC) to evaluate medical schools in Australia and New Zealand were comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States.

The NCFMEA reviews the comparability of countries' standards on a periodic basis. During its March 2001 meeting, the NCFMEA again reviewed the AMC standards and processes and concluded that they remained comparable to the standards used to accredit medical schools in the United States. As part of its decision, the NCFMEA requested that the AMC submit annual reports of its activities with respect to the accreditation of the medical schools in Australia and New Zealand. The information provided by the country in response to that request is the subject of this report.

NOTE: As the Australian accreditation standards and processes are used to assess medical schools in both Australia and New Zealand, acceptance of these standards means that medical schools in both countries may qualify as institutions of higher education under 34 CFR 600.55.

### Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the annual report submitted by the Australian Medical Council, Department staff concludes that the Council has provided all of the information requested by the NCFMEA. Department staff also concludes that the country's accreditation activities during the past year appear to be consistent with the NCFMEA guidelines.

## Staff Analysis

The AMC reported on the following three categories of information as requested by the NCFMEA:

### Overview of accreditation activities:

During the past year the AMC held its accreditation meetings on June 7 and October 30, 2001 to consider accreditation actions, periodic and annual reports, and other matters of interest.

- 1) Accreditation actions: The AMC granted continued accreditation to two universities and extended accreditation at one university for one year while the school develops a priority plan to address the AMC's concerns.
- 2) Other reports:
  - One university was informed by the AMC's Medical School Accreditation Committee that the school's plans to make major changes to its accredited medical course are likely to comply with the AMC Accreditation Guidelines. Based on the Committee's recommendation, the AMC invited the school to submit more detailed plans for consideration by an AMC assessment team.
  - The plans of another Australian university to establish a new medical school were reviewed by the AMC's Medical School Accreditation Committee. Based on the Committee's recommendation, the school was advised that its proposal required significant additional development before the AMC would proceed to a full assessment.
  - In addition, two schools that had introduced new medical courses submitted satisfactory mid-term reports on their successful implementation. Consequently, their accreditation was extended to the maximum of five years.
- 3) Other AMC activity:
  - The "Working Party to Review Accreditation Guidelines" is currently developing its recommendations into specific proposals for change to be considered by the AMC in 2002.

- The AMC is developing a proposal to review and accredit specialist (postgraduate) medical education and training.
- The Australian government is funding nine new rural clinical schools. Consequently, the AMC's Medical School Accreditation Committee asked the nine medical schools that were awarded the rural clinical schools to report on the status of this initiative.
- The AMC and the Medical Council of New Zealand held a joint meeting since the New Zealand medical schools participate in the AMC accreditation process.

Summary of any changes or developments in the following areas:

Laws and Regulations:

The annual report did not report any significant changes in the laws or regulations of Australia or New Zealand that affected the accreditation of their medical schools.

Standards, Processes and Procedures:

The AMC approved new membership provisions to broaden the base of its Medical School Accreditation Committee. The new groups include those responsible for intern training, the medical students' association, and the body representing health consumer organizations. The membership provisions and the list of Committee members are appended to the annual report as Attachments 1 and 2, respectively.

The annual report notes that international developments in medical education are being considered as the AMC reviews its guidelines and procedures. They include the World Federation for Medical Education's "International Standards in Basic Medical Education," the Association of American Medical Colleges' "Medical School Objectives Project," and the new standards developed by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education. The new AMC Accreditation Guidelines will be published in July 2002.

Schedule for upcoming accreditation activities:

- The Medical School Accreditation Committee will meet in April, June and October 2002.

- Accreditation considerations for 2002 will include six universities in Australia and New Zealand.
- A workshop will be held in 2002 for the Medical School Accreditation Committee, and the AMC assessors, on the new AMC Accreditation Guidelines to be published in July 2002.
- Formal papers to document the AMC's developing accreditation process will be written on the history of the accreditation process, the new guidelines, and an evaluation of the success of the assessment process in contributing to improvements in the quality of medical education.