

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Analysis
of the Report Submitted by

Canada

Prepared January 2004

Background

At its February 1995 meeting, and again at its March 2001 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the accreditation standards used by the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) to evaluate medical schools in Canada were comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States.

As part of its decision, the NCFMEA requested that the CACMS submit a report of its activities with respect to the accreditation of the medical schools in Canada. At its March 2002 meeting, the NCFMEA accepted the report submitted by the CACMS. The NCFMEA then requested that the CACMS submit another report in January 2004 on its accrediting activities. That report is the subject of the staff analysis that follows.

All Canadian medical schools are jointly accredited by the CACMS and the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME). The LCME is recognized by the Secretary for the accreditation of M.D. programs in the United States. The accreditation processes and standards spelled out in CACMS's booklet, ("Functions and Structure of a Medical School") used to evaluate Canadian medical schools are the same as those used in the United States.

In addition, one of the two co-chairs of the LCME is a voting member of CACMS, and several LCME staff sit (*ex-officio*) on CACMS as observers. Similarly, the CACMS Chair is a voting member of the LCME and the CACMS Secretary sits (*ex-officio*) on the LCME as an observer. CACMS is also represented on the critical subcommittees of the LCME.

To further support the cooperative endeavor, CACMS survey teams have an LCME representative, and a single survey report is considered by both committees independently. CACMS and the LCME have devised a number of mechanisms to resolve problems that may arise, albeit rarely, from divergent accreditation decisions.

Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the report submitted by the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS), Department staff conclude that the Committee has provided all of the information requested by the NCFMEA. Department staff also conclude that the country's accreditation activities during the past year appear to be consistent with the NCFMEA guidelines.

Staff Analysis

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

Overview of accreditation activities

October 1, 2002 -- CACMS met to consider the accreditation activities undertaken in the previous academic year:

- Full surveys were carried out at Dalhousie University and the University of Saskatchewan. Dalhousie University was afforded full continuing accreditation with the requirement of a progress report in two years. The University of Saskatchewan was placed on probation. A full survey must be carried out within two years to assess whether substantial compliance exists.
- A Secretariat visit was carried out at the University of Alberta and limited surveys were undertaken at McGill University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Western Ontario. McGill University was afforded full continuing accreditation. The University of British Columbia is undertaking an ambitious project that will see its first-year enrollment double from 128 to 256 students by 2010 with the establishment of two geographically separated campuses some distance from the central campus in Vancouver. The results of the limited survey were accepted and a further limited survey to specifically look at the issues associated with expansion was scheduled for the spring of 2004. The limited on-site survey of the University of Western Ontario, and Secretariat visit at the University of Alberta, resulted in no specific action pending those schools' next full surveys.
- Progress reports were reviewed from Memorial University of Newfoundland, the University of Calgary, McMaster University and Queen's University. All the progress reports were accepted.

November 26, 2003 – CACMS met to consider the accreditation activities undertaken in the previous academic year:

- The University of Sherbrooke and the University of Ottawa underwent full accreditation surveys in the spring of 2003. CACMS reviewed the survey report of the University of Sherbrooke and afforded full continuing accreditation for a period of eight years with the requirement for progress reports in 2004 and 2005. The University of Ottawa was also afforded full continuing accreditation with a recommendation that a Secretariat visit be carried out in one year. This latter is prompted by a very substantial increase in class size, a phenomenon not unique to Ottawa but occurring in a number of Canadian jurisdictions.
- Secretariat visits were carried out jointly with the LCME at Laval University and Queen's University for reasons related to expansion of class size. These reports were reviewed and accepted with no further action contemplated prior to the next full survey in the case of Laval and a progress report requested in 2005 from Queen's.
- A Secretariat consultation was carried out at the University of British Columbia to discuss plans for their two new regional campuses. This was held in anticipation of the limited site survey to be carried out in March 2004.
- Progress reports were received and reviewed from the University of British Columbia and the Dalhousie University. These were accepted with no additional activity requested. A progress report was due from the University of Montreal but was not received, and this will require follow-up with the newly appointed dean.

Summary of any changes or developments in the following areas

Laws and Regulations

The report noted no changes in the laws or regulations of Canada or any of its provinces that affected the accreditation of Canadian medical schools.

Standards, Processes and Procedures

The CACMS is considering increasing the frequency of its meetings from once a year to twice a year to better synchronize its activities with those of the LCME.

The report also noted that the LCME, with the CACMS, undertook a major rewrite a few years ago of the standards contained in the booklet entitled "Functions and Structure of a Medical School". (The revision was undertaken to make the document more readable and user-friendly; no substantial new standards were incorporated.) The current report noted that these standards have been relatively stable over the past couple of years with only a few minor changes.

Schedule for upcoming accreditation activities

- In 2004 a limited on-site survey is planned at the University of Saskatchewan (the one-year post-probation survey was completed).
- Full surveys at the University of Toronto and the University of Manitoba are also planned for 2004. (The report noted that Dr. Carol Ashenbrenner, the newly appointed LCME co-secretary at the AAMC, will be acting as an observer on the University of Toronto survey.)
- A limited survey is scheduled at the University of British Columbia in March 2004.
- A Secretariat visit at the University of Ottawa will be completed sometime before 2005.
- A new medical school, the Northern Ontario Medical School, is progressing satisfactorily. It has campuses in Sudbury, Ontario, and Thunder Bay, Ontario. The initial database has been submitted to the LCME for consideration at its February 2004 meeting. If the LCME feels the campuses are ready for their first visit for determining provisional accreditation then a survey will be carried out during the last week of March 2004.