



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

OCT 18 1999

SENT BY FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION

Mr. Naftali Weitman
Secretary
Council for Higher Education
P.O.B. 4037
Jerusalem 91040
Israel

Dear Mr. Weitman:

Some time ago, the U.S. Department of Education wrote to inform your country about a law passed in the United States in 1992 that changed the eligibility criteria for U.S. students who wish to finance their medical education in a country other than the U.S. with a loan through our country's Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program. Eligible students must enroll in a medical school that is eligible to participate in the FFEL program and that meets the accreditation or approval standards of the country in which the school is located.

Further, the accreditation or approval standards used by that country must have been reviewed by a panel of medical experts appointed by the U.S. Secretary of Education, which must have determined them to be comparable to the accreditation standards applied to medical schools in the United States. This panel of medical experts is known as the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA).

I am pleased to inform you that the NCFMEA, at its September 15, 1999, meeting, determined that the accreditation or approval standards used by the Council for Higher Education to evaluate the medical schools in Israel are comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States. The NCFMEA has requested that the Council for Higher Education submit by February 15, 2000, an interim report of its accreditation activities, with particular focus on the results of the on-site reaccreditation visit scheduled for January 2000. The interim report will be reviewed at the NCFMEA's March 2000 meeting. The Committee members also wish to express their appreciation to Dr. Carmi Margolis for attending the September meeting to share information regarding Israel's accreditation standards and processes.

This NCFMEA's determination of comparability has a maximum duration of four years from the date of this letter, unless the Committee withdraws, extends or renews its determination prior to that date. Before expiration of the four-year period, the NCFMEA will seek to confirm that your standards and procedures for accrediting or approving medical schools in Israel are still comparable to the accreditation standards applied to

medical schools in the United States. If so, its previous determination of comparability will be extended for another period. In the event that there are any substantial changes to the standards or procedures used by the Council for Higher Education for approving, evaluating or accrediting medical schools, please immediately notify the U.S. Department of Education of these changes. In addition, please immediately notify the U.S. Department of Education if there are any changes with respect to the accreditation or approval status of any of the medical schools recognized by the Council for Higher Education.

As a result of the determination of comparability by the NCFMEA, any medical school in your country that is accredited or approved by the Council for Higher Education may apply, if it has not recently done so, to the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the FFEL program. If a medical school's application is approved, otherwise eligible students enrolled in the school who are either U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. may receive loans to finance their medical education through the FFEL program. Medical schools that wish to participate in the FFEL program may obtain the proper application forms from the Foreign Schools Team at the following address:

Foreign Schools Team
U. S. Department of Education
Room 3674, ROB-3
7th & D Streets, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20407
U.S.A.

Please send the interim report that is due by February 15, 2000, to the Director of Accreditation and State Liaison at the address below. If you have any questions concerning the nature of the information that the NCFMEA is seeking, Dr. Kershenstein can be reached at (202) 708-7417 (telephone), (202) 708-9469 (fax), and Karen_Kershenstein@ed.gov (e-mail).

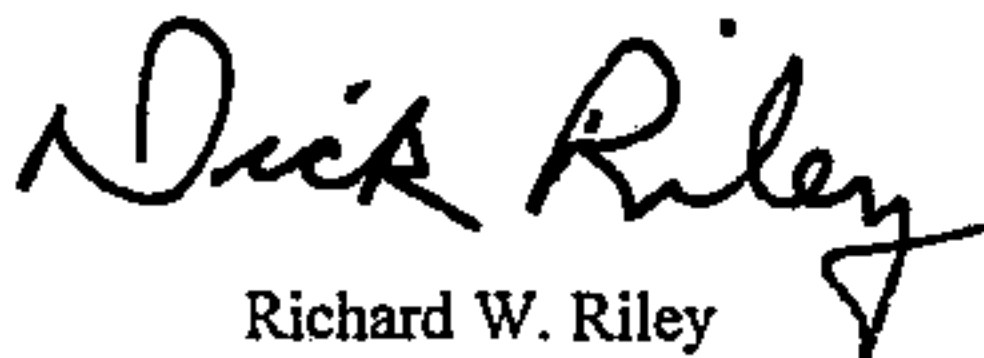
Dr. Karen W. Kershenstein, Director
Accreditation and State Liaison
U.S. Department of Education
Room 3012, ROB-3
7th & D Streets, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202-5244
U.S.A.

If you would like information regarding the March 2000 meeting, or if you are interested in attending or sending a representative to that meeting, please contact Ms. Bonnie LeBold, Executive Director of the NCFMEA, at (202) 260-3636 (telephone), (202) 260-5049 (fax), or Bonnie_LeBold@ed.gov (e-mail).

Page 3 – Mr. Naftali Weitman

I want to thank you for taking the time to respond to our requests for information about your accreditation or approval standards for medical schools. I very much appreciate the interest you have taken in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dick Riley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and "R".

Richard W. Riley

cc: Professor Carmi Margolis, M.D.
Vice Dean for Medical Education
Ben Gurion University

U.S. Department of Education



**Staff Analysis
of the
Standards Used by**

Israel

for the Evaluation of Medical Schools

September 15, 1999

Staff Analysis
of the Standards Used by
Israel
for the Evaluation of Medical Schools

Prepared August 1999

Background

At its October 1998 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that Israel's standards for the evaluation of its medical schools were not comparable to those used in the United States. This determination was based on the information Israel submitted about its evaluation of its medical schools. The Summary of Findings section of the staff analysis that was presented to the NCFMEA at that meeting illustrates the principal reason the Committee reached its determination of noncomparability:

"Since Israel does not have a process to [re]evaluate its medical schools once they are initially approved, it does not appear that its system of evaluating and approving its medical schools is comparable to the system used in the United States."

Israel has now submitted new information, including notification that it has established a permanent committee responsible for the re-evaluation of medical schools in Israel. Israel also submitted the standards the permanent committee will use to evaluate medical education in the re-evaluation of its medical schools and noted that these were "...generally based on those of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) in the United States."

The staff analysis that follows is based on the new information Israel provided. Department staff notes that this information does not include specific responses to the Department's questionnaire.

According to the information provided, the official decision (Decision No. 9/257) to have a permanent "Committee for Re-Evaluation of Medical Schools in Israel" was passed by the Council for Higher Education on February 23, 1999. The entire decision reads as follows:

Council for Higher Education Decision No. 9/257
of February 23rd, 1999

"The Council for Higher Education is deciding to establish a permanent committee that will be responsible for the evaluation process of medical

schools in Israel. The goal of the committee will be to ensure the maintenance of recognized standards for medical education and the training of the physicians in Israel. The evaluations will be conducted once every 5 years, and the report will be submitted to the Council for Higher Education."

There are four medical schools in Israel. All four are supported by public funds. The dates the schools are scheduled for site visits under Israel's new process are as follows:

Jan 2000	Ben-Gurion University of the Negev: The Joyce & Irving Medical School
Jul 2000	Technion - Israel Institute of Technology: The Rappaport Faculty of Medicine
Jan 2001	The Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School.
Jul 2001	Tel Aviv University: The Sackler School of Medicine

Summary of Findings

Based on a review of the information submitted, it appears that Israel has developed plans to operate a system for the reevaluation of its medical schools that is comparable to the system used in the United States. Department staff bases this conclusion on the fact that most of the provisions Israel submitted to the Department are based on the system used by the LCME in the United States.

However, before a decision on comparability of Israel's new system can be made, there are several issues that need further examination:

- (1) Israel has not submitted important information necessary to answer several issues about its accreditation/approval process, such as documentation of the laws governing the evaluation process and information about the site evaluation and decision-making processes.
- (2) Israel will not conduct its first site visit until January 2000, and the last of its four scheduled site visits until July 2001. For this reason, it is difficult to make determinations about Israel's new reevaluation system until these visits are concluded and the processes for reevaluation and decision-making are completed for the first time.
- (3) Israel's submission deals only with the "reevaluation" of its medical schools and does not provide standards or procedures for the evaluation of a medical school seeking its initial approval.