

U.S. Department of Education



**Staff Analysis
of the
Standards Used by**

Dominica

for the Evaluation of Medical Schools

March 9, 2001

U.S. Department of Education

**Staff Analysis
of the Standards used by the
Commonwealth of Dominica
For the Evaluation of Medical Schools**

Prepared February 2001

Background

The Commonwealth of Dominica, West Indies, appeared before the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) in March 1997. At that meeting, it was established that the Medical Board of Dominica's Ministry of Health and Social Security is the body "charged with the responsibility for evaluating the quality of medical education in Dominica and for establishing the process through which such evaluation for approval of a medical school is carried out. The standards for certification are modeled upon those of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) of the American Medical Association, and to some extent, on the guidelines issued by the General Medical Council of the United Kingdom."

At the conclusion of its deliberations on Dominica, the NCFMEA voted to defer a decision regarding the comparability of Dominica's system for the evaluation of the one medical school in the country to that used to evaluate medical schools in the United States and to request additional information from Dominica on two issues: (1) the actual accreditation standards and judgement factors used by the Dominica Medical Board's site visitors and (2) the training program for site visitors and members of the Medical Board.

Dominica responded to the Committee's request for additional information in a report that was reviewed at the October 1997 NCFMEA meeting. After reviewing the report, the Committee determined that standards and processes used by the Commonwealth of Dominica were comparable to those used in the United States. The Committee also requested that Dominica submit annual reports of its accreditation activities with respect to the one medical school on Dominica. Beginning in August 1998, annual reports were submitted and accepted by the Committee.

At its September 2000 meeting, the Committee formally accepted the Board's report but indicated that at its March 2001 meeting it would review whether Dominica continues to have standards and processes for accrediting that are comparable to those used to accredit medical schools in the United States. For this review, it requested that Dominica submit information on how its standards and processes comply with the revised NCFMEA guidelines. In addition, it

requested that the Board provide information to the following issues discussed during the meeting:

- (1) *Complaints*: The Board's failure to respond to the U.S. Department of Education regarding the complaints about Ross University School of Medicine that the Department had referred to the Board's counsel in June 2000.
- (2) *Conflict of Interest*: The Board's failure to take appropriate action regarding the conflict of interest that developed when the Board's counsel began representing the Ross University School of Medicine.
- (3) *Change in Government*: The effect of the recent change in Dominica's government on the Medical Board of Dominica.

The staff analysis is formatted into two sections. Section I assesses how Dominica's standards and processes comply with the revised NCFMEA guidelines while Section II addresses Dominica's response to the three issues identified by the Committee.

The Department staff analysis is based on a review of the documents submitted by the Commonwealth of Dominica and observation of a site visit to Ross University School of Medicine from October 30 through November 2, 2000 conducted by the Dominica Medical Board. The purposes of the visit by the Dominica Medical Board were to investigate complaints lodged against Ross University School of Medicine and to ensure that a recent change in ownership at the University had not adversely affected the quality of education offered to students.

Dominica recently revised their standards to comply with the NCFMEA's new guidelines. The language of the standards in most instances mirrors the language used in the guidelines. Dominica states that the first full on-site review of its one medical school under the revised standards will occur no later than 2002.

Summary of Findings

Based on an examination of the written response provided by the Medical Board of Dominica and supporting documentation, Department staff concludes that:

- the standards and processes used by Dominica are quite similar to those used to evaluate and accredit medical schools in the United States, and
- Dominica has responded to the three issues of concern to Committee members.