

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

OFFICE OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

NATIONAL COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN MEDICAL
EDUCATION AND ACCREDITATION

OPEN SESSION

Monday, March 30, 2009

United Kingdom

Type of Review: Redetermination 173

Committee Readers:

Dr. John Jucas

Mr. Paul La Porte

Department Staff

Mr. William James

Country Representatives: None

DR. DOCKERY: Have a safe trip home. Thank you very much. We'll next hear the United Kingdom, please. Mr. James, welcome back again.

MR. JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

DR. DOCKERY: And I notice in the - and I mentioned this to some of the staff earlier, that they offered to have video conferencing for their appearance today. And how seriously did you take that?

MR. JAMES: Well, I think that the answer is that we would have liked to have done that, but unfortunately it just was not feasible to do that

through the hotel here I think. I think it was even teleconferencing, I believe is what they were talking about. So it just, I think price-wise, just was not feasible for us to look at that. But we would have liked to have done that. I mean, that would have been ideal, I think.

DR. DOCKERY: I remember though that the price tag for that single event would have been \$7,000?

MR. JAMES: That's what I heard, yes.

DR. DOCKERY: So.

MR. JAMES: That's a great dive trip to Australia.

DR. DOCKERY: Yes. Roundtrip.

MR. JAMES: Exactly.

DR. DOCKERY: Mr. James.

MR. JAMES: Thank you. Good morning, members of the Committee. I will be presenting the application for reconsideration of comparability submitted by the United Kingdom which I shall refer to as the UK. The documents can be found at Tab N.

The UK was first reviewed at the fall 1995 meeting of the National Committee on Foreign Medical

Education and Accreditation. Continued comparability was granted at your fall 2001 meeting. In 2007 approximately \$19 million in student financial aid was awarded to students attending post-secondary institutions in the UK.

In its current application the UK outlined a process that is in most ways comparable to the evaluation process used to evaluate medical schools in the United States. However, the standards used by the UK to evaluate the medical education in some areas are broad and do not provide any specific guidance regarding to the guidelines outlined in the Department's questionnaire. For example, the standards neither provide any specific guidance on what subject areas should be included in the basic science component of the medical education curriculum, nor do the standards outline core clerkships that all students must have.

Department staff reviews of site visit reports verify that the teams do review the curriculum and some reports identified some basic science courses that are offered. However, the staff could not determine that the country requires all the elements of

the basic science as outlined in the guidelines to be taught in medical schools.

Similarly, site visits verify that teams evaluate the clinical portion of its medical education program, but there's no indication of what clinical rotations are required.

In other instances there were no standards, written standards, for some of the guideline requirements. For example, there are no written standards regarding the qualifications required by the chief academic officer of the medical school, or the involvement of the faculty in hiring, retention and discipline of faculty members.

In these instances the GMC, the General Medical Council, who is the entity responsible for accrediting the medical schools within the United Kingdom stated that these issues are under the purview of the universities.

The analysis of the country's application led staff to identify seven issues the committee may want to explore further with the country. These same issues were raised in the country's application in 2001 in a

meeting between a Committee member, Department staff, and the Chair of the General Medical Council's Education Committee was arranged to explore these very issues. As a result of that meeting, the country was able to satisfactorily answer all of the Committee's concerns. However, the Department's staff analysis of the country's current application and their response to the analysis of their application did not fully resolve the seven issues.

Therefore, you may want to gather more information from the UK on the following issues: whether the country has standards or how the country determines if the qualifications of the chief academic officer of the medical school are appropriate; the involvement of the faculty in the hiring, retention and discipline of faculty members; whether the country ensures that all basic sciences are included in the curriculum; whether the country ensures that all students must take all of the clinical clerkships described in the guidelines; whether the country requires disciplines that support the fundamental clinical subjects such as diagnostic imaging and pathology; how the country ensures that a

student is given the opportunity to challenge the accuracy of their student record; and finally, whether the country has written policies that require medical schools to obtain approval regarding offering new courses, major changes to the curriculum, or the assessment of the program. In summary, the Department staff believes that the medical education program is comparable in most ways to that used in the United States. Further, based upon the documentation submitted by the UK, based upon the review of those documents provided by the UK, Department staff believes that the graduates of medical schools are fully qualified to enter the field of medicine. The main difference between the process used to evaluate medical schools in the United States and the UK are in the lack of specificity of the standards in some areas.

There are, as you are aware of, no representatives from the UK present today. And that ends my prepared comments and I am now available to answer any questions.

DR. DOCKERY: Thank you, Mr. James. Are there questions from the members of the committee before

we go into executive session? If we could ask our
guests to please depart then.

BEGIN EXECUTIVE SESSION