

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Analysis
of the Report Submitted by

The Philippines

Prepared August 2007

Background

In March 1999 the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the accreditation standards used by the Medical Education Accreditation Council (MEAC), the accrediting body that evaluates medical schools in the Philippines, were comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States.

At its September 2002 meeting, the NCFMEA was informed that the MEAC was no longer the accrediting body for the country and that the accrediting function was being preformed by the Commission on Medical Education (CME), a review entity for medical education within the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU). Concerned about the ability of the Philippines to continue to have comparable standards for the accreditation of medical schools, the NCFMEA requested that the Philippines submit a report on the accreditation activities involving Philippine medical schools since June 2002 (the date of the last report submitted by the Commission on Higher Education), and information on the standards and processes used by PAASCU to accredit Philippine medical schools for review at its March 2003 meeting. The NCFMEA also requested that it be given an opportunity to observe PAASCU conduct an accreditation review.

In March and September 2003 the NCFMEA questioned the agency about the standards and processes used by PAASCU in its accreditation activities, and the roles and responsibilities of the various entities involved in Philippine accreditation, which included the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), PAASCU and the CME. NCFMEA members also wanted to know more about PAASCU's review process to discover whether it focused on quality improvement, compliance with established standards, or both. The NCFMEA voted to defer acceptance of the agency's report and again requested a detailed description of PAASCU's standards and processes used in accrediting Philippine medical schools. It also requested once again that NCFMEA be invited to observe an accreditation review of a Philippine medical school in order to gain first hand knowledge of how the agency's standards and processes are implemented.

At the NCFMEA March 2004 meeting, the NCFMEA determined that the Philippines has in operation a system for the evaluation and accreditation of its medical schools that is comparable to the system used in the United States. It was understood after reviewing the separate roles of CHED and PAASCU in the medical school evaluation process, that PAASCU was the designated body that is responsible for recurrent evaluation of the quality of medical education in the Philippines. The NCFMEA requested a report on PAASCU's accreditation activities for review at its September 2005 meeting.

At the NCFMEA March 2007 meeting Dr. Munoz reported that the July 2005 site visit by PAASCU to the University of Santo Tomas Faculty of Medicine and Surgery in Manila was satisfactory and without issues.

Since the NCFMEA did not meet in September 2005 to consider the report requested at its March 2004 meeting, that report is now being reviewed. In response to the draft staff analysis, the country also provided updated information on their report to include the country's accreditation activities from 2005 to 2007.

Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the report submitted by the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities regarding the accreditation activities of its Commission on Medical Education, Department staff concludes that the Philippines has provided all of the information requested by the NCFMEA that was to be reported on during the 2004 to 2007 period, and any changes made during that period to the agency's standards and processes had no substantial affect on the standards and process that were determined to be comparable by the NCFMEA in March 2004. Also, the country's accreditation activities during that period appear to be consistent with NCFMEA guidelines.

Staff Analysis

With respect to the Commission on Medical Education's accrediting activities the Philippines provided the following information:

Current Status of Medical Schools

The Commission on Medical Education reports that from 2004 to 2005 that there were a total of 15 medical schools eligible for accreditation. Of these, the Commission reports it granted initial accreditation to two schools, one that would have been considered for reaffirmation in December 2006 and the other in May 2007. There were five medical schools that were candidates for accreditation and eight medical schools that had applied for accreditation.

In its 2007 update of the status of its medical schools, the Commission reports that it granted reaccreditation to one medical school for a period of five years, that it conducted preliminary surveys to four candidate schools and is preparing for formal surveys to three applicant schools. It also has received five applications for accreditation from five of the country's eligible medical schools.

Overview of accreditation activities

The Commission reported that during the review period of 2004 to 2005 it conducted preliminary surveys, formal surveys and accreditation visits to its candidate and accredited medical schools. It also conducted orientation workshops for self-study coordinators and training for its site team visitors. During this reporting there were ten colleges of medicine working on their self-studies in preparation for their preliminary survey visits.

During the 2005 to 2007 period PAASCU conducted visits to six medical schools, four preliminary surveys and two resurveys. Four medical schools are now in candidate status. The agency performed reaffirmation visits to two medical schools accredited in 2003, conducted training workshops for its commissioners, site evaluation team members, and self-study coordinators. The agency also reported that its accreditation commission met regularly to review the results of accreditation visits, make accrediting decisions, discuss issues and plan various activities.

Laws and Regulations

The Commission provided a copy of its revised policies and guidelines effective in March 2006. The new regulations now contain more detailed guidance on program specifications and professional competency standards and also identifying the levels for program accreditation in the Philippines, specifying that the Commission can only grant a level one accreditation, which is for a three-year period, after a formal survey.

Standards, Processes and Procedure

The Commission reports that it now uses the 2006 revisions of its standards and procedures to accredit medical schools.

Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities

The Commission provided a copy of the schedule for the training of its site visitor teams, and orientation workshops for self-study coordinators during the 2004 to 2005 period. The agency reported that there were ten applicant schools, and three candidate schools preparing for preliminary surveys, and two schools preparing for formal surveys.

During the 2007 to 2009 period the agency is scheduled to visit three medical schools, conduct orientation seminars, and training sessions for its commissioners and site evaluation team members. In April 2008 a workshop is

scheduled to revise the survey instrument for reviewing the basic medical education program.