

U.S. Department of Education
Staff Analysis
of the Report submitted by
Cayman Islands

Prepared July 2003

Background

This is a report to provide the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) with a summary of the accreditation activities of the Government of the Cayman Islands. The Cayman Islands has established no governmental body to conduct accreditation activities of medical schools. Rather, it has officially designated the Accreditation Commission on Colleges of Medicine (ACCM) as the entity responsible for reviewing and accrediting St. Matthew's University School of Medicine (St. Matthew's), the sole medical school located in the country. St. Matthew's relocated from the country of Belize to the Cayman Islands in April 2002.

At its September 5, 2002 meeting, the NCFMEA determined that the standards and processes used by the Cayman Islands to evaluate and accredit St. Matthew's were comparable to the standards and evaluation processes used to accredit medical schools in the United States. However, because the ACCM would not conduct a full accreditation review of the school at the Cayman Islands campus until 2003, the NCFMEA voted to limit the period of comparability to one year. The ACCM planned to conduct a full accreditation review of the school with NCFMEA and Department staff observing the review. Additionally, the NCFMEA requested the Cayman Islands to submit another report on the ACCM's accreditation activities for review at its September 2003 meeting, at which time the NCFMEA would determine whether to extend the period of comparability beyond one year.

Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the report submitted by the ACCM on behalf of the Cayman Islands, observations of the site visit conducted by the ACCM inspection team in March 2003, and a review of the supporting documentation, Department staff concludes that the Cayman Islands has provided all of the information requested by the NCFMEA. Department staff also concludes that the country's accreditation activities during the past year appear to be consistent with the NCFMEA guidelines.

Staff Analysis

The report submitted by the ACCM on behalf of the Cayman Islands consisted of the following:

- St. Matthew's University School of Medicine, Accreditation Report 2003 including Appendix 1 (ACCM visit to St. Matthew's, Grand Cayman Campus, June 2002 - extracted from ACCM Report 2002, pp. 16-21) and Appendix 2 (Reports on ACCM visits to St. Matthew's Clinical Sites, March 2003)
- Inspection Program 2003-2004
- Conclusion and Decision
- University Charter: Memorandum of Understanding
- Cayman Islands Education Law (1999 Revisions)
- Maine Department of Education July 8, 1999 Letter

In addition, one NCFMEA member and a Department of Education staff member observed the on-site visit to St. Matthew's conducted by the ACCM inspection team. Department staff also reviewed the institutional self-study and profile questionnaire and the ACCM inspection team's written pre-visit concerns and comments about the results of the site visits to the medical school and clinical sites.

Overview of accreditation activities:

The ACCM reported on its accreditation activities involving St. Matthew's. Between September 2002 and June 2003, the ACCM conducted both institutional and clinical site visits and rendered an accreditation decision. The ACCM inspection team visited the basic science campus of St. Matthew's in the Cayman Islands on March 25-26, 2003. The ACCM inspectors evaluated the 2003 Profile Questionnaire and Institutional Self Study and conferred with the medical school's administrators, the Caymanian Government education officials, faculty, and students. The review was quite thorough and the inspectors appeared to examine all of the relevant areas of the school's medical education program and operation in the Cayman Islands. The inspection team also visited three clinical facilities in hospitals located in the United States and in England. In addition, ACCM held two decision meetings on January 23, 2003 and June 6, 2003 during which it assessed St. Matthew's compliance with the requirements and conferred a probationary accreditation for one year.

Summary of any changes or developments in the following areas:

Laws and Regulations:

The ACCM clarified the legal authority under which the Caymanian Government chartered St. Matthews, by identifying the applicable provisions of the Education Law and accepting the University Charter "Memorandum of Understanding."

The ACCM also clarified the legal authority under which St. Matthew's is providing education in Maine.

As outlined in the ACCM's 2002 site report on St. Matthew's, St. Matthew's students are afforded the option of taking a Masters in Health Services Administration (MHSA) offered by St. Joseph's College, Standish, Maine, USA. This program involves students moving to Maine during their 2nd year. Students take two St. Joseph's MHSA courses during each of three semesters in the Cayman Islands and two courses at the St. Joseph's campus during each of 2 semesters in Maine. The remaining MHSA courses are taken during a summer residence program and by distance education. While in Maine, St. Matthew's students take their 2nd year (4th and 5th semesters) curriculum (pathology, pharmacology, a preparatory course in clinical medicine, and psychopathology). St. Matthew's staff at the St. Matthew's facility in Windham, Maine teaches these courses.

The ACCM submitted a copy of a letter of understanding issued by the Maine Department of Education. The Maine Department of Education has authorized the St. Matthew's medical school faculty to teach certain basic science courses in the medical school curriculum at or near Saint Joseph's College campus to students who are dually-enrolled in both institutions. However, Maine's authorization only applies to course offerings not to exceed two semesters and Maine does not intend to issue a license or to accredit St. Matthew's. In addition, Maine specifically prohibits St. Matthew's from soliciting students within the State, advertising or alluding to United States or Maine credit for the St. Matthew's University courses taught at or near St. Joseph's College, granting degrees in the state of Maine; offering a full degree course of study in Maine, or offering a full degree program at or near St. Joseph's College.

Standards, Processes and Procedures: No changes in the accreditation standards, processes or procedures were reported by ACCM in its continued monitoring of St. Matthew's.

Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities:

The ACCM inspection teams will visit St. Matthew's affiliated hospitals in the United States, United Kingdom, and Ireland, during the 2003-2004 academic year. In addition, the inspection team will visit the campuses in Grand Cayman and Maine in 2004, and hold Commission meetings in November 2003, January 2004 and May/June 2004. The ACCM will redefine the status of the accreditation for St. Matthew's not later than May 30, 2004.