



**THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION**

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**SENT BY FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION**

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**Dear Dr. Srisukri:**

**Some time ago, Dr. David A. Longanecker, Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary 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 the U.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 October 8, 1998 meeting, determined that the accreditation or approval standards used by the Ministry of University Affairs and the Thai Medical Council to evaluate the medical schools in Thailand are comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States. This determination of comparability will remain in effect for a period of four years from the date of this letter. Prior to the expiration of that period, the NCFMEA will seek to confirm that your standards and procedures for accrediting/approving medical schools in Thailand 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 four-year period.**

**As a result of the determination of comparability by the NCFMEA, any medical school in your country that is accredited or approved by the Ministry of University Affairs and the Thai Medical Council 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.**

**U.S. Department of Education**



**Staff Analysis  
of the  
Standards Used by  
Thailand**

**for the Evaluation of Medical Schools**

**October 8, 1998**

U.S. Department of Education  
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Prepared August, 1998

Background

At its September 1996 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) reviewed the information provided by Thailand's Medical Council concerning the standards and processes for the evaluation of medical schools in that country. Because it did not believe it had sufficient information on which to make a determination regarding the comparability of the Thai standards to those used to evaluate medical schools in the United States, the NCFMEA made no decision regarding comparability but rather requested additional information from the country. That information was reviewed at the March 1997 meeting of the NCFMEA, at which time the Committee determined that the standards used by Thailand to evaluate medical schools were not comparable to those of the United States.

Department staff has now received additional information from the Secretary-General of the Consortium of Thai Medical Schools. A key document included with the information is a booklet entitled Accreditation of Medical Schools in Thailand, which appears to be jointly published by the Ministry of University Affairs, the Medical Council, and the Consortium of Thai Medical Schools. The Department has also received English translations of five other booklets:

The Ministry of University Affairs:

Standards for Undergraduate Curricula  
Policies and Guidelines for Quality Assurance at the Higher Education  
Level--1996;

The Medical Council:

Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions  
Criteria for Medical Practitioners--1993  
Criteria for Medical Practitioners--1993 (Supplemented)--Appendix 4--  
Knowledge of Basic Medical Science.

The staff analysis that follows is based primarily on the information in these booklets.

According to the information provided by the country, medical schools in Thailand are accredited by not just one but three organizations, each with its own responsibilities

and duties. The three organizations are the Ministry of University Affairs, the Medical Council, and the Consortium of Thai Medical Schools.

The Ministry of University Affairs (MUA)

By law, the MUA has responsibility for approving and supervising the academic curricula of every university in Thailand and for evaluating the quality of these educational programs. The MUA's specific duties include the following:

1. Review new curricula and evaluate existing curricula to determine if they meet the criteria set forth in the MUA's academic standards. The MUA provided the following statement about those standards:

"The MUA will check academic programs to ascertain that they meet certain criteria, i.e., have the right concept, meet their objectives, have adequately good basic structure, appropriate duration of studies, number of credits, etc., for example:

  - Philosophy and objectives of the curriculum must meet the international standards of each discipline and must conform to the national university educational development plan.
  - Structure of the medical curriculum: number of semester credits must be not less than 210 and not more than 263 in the following categories:
    - a. General education must be not less than 30 credits.
    - b. Professional education must be not less than 180 credits.
    - c. Electives - not less than 6 credits.
  - Time span of the overall medical curriculum must not be less than 12 semesters."
2. Determine factors governing the quality of education, i.e. inspect institutions that apply to establish a medical curriculum and check whether they have met not only the general criteria such as numbers and appropriate qualifications of instructors, library facilities, educational media, and basis infrastructure but also the specific criteria established by the Medical Council (these are mentioned below under the description of the Medical Council).
3. Visit medical institutions to check the quality of various institutions. The MUA has established its own committee of external evaluators who make

site visits periodically to check the effectiveness of the institution's internal audit system. Documentation, including various reports reflecting educational quality such as lesson plans, handouts, lecture notes, references, examination papers, and results of teaching evaluation are evaluated during the site visits.

#### The Medical Council

The Medical Council was established by an Act of Legislation in 1968; it was subsequently restructured in 1992. The objectives of the Council are as follows:

1. To oversee the moral and ethical standards of medical doctors.
2. To enhance education, research, and career opportunities.
3. To strengthen unity and sustain the honor of the membership.
4. To assist, advise, and educate other organizations and the general public about medicine and public health and to disseminate information.
5. To act as a national representative of medical practitioners in Thailand.

The Council's legal responsibilities are as follows:

1. To issue or cancel medical licenses to qualified practitioners.
2. To certify degrees and certificates offered by medical institutions.
3. To certify all curricula offered by medical institutions.
4. To approve the academic standard of medical institutions where specialty and subspecialty training takes place.
5. To issue licenses for medical practice in all specialties and subspecialties.

The Council consists of two types of members: members by position and members by election. There are 18 members by position, including the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health, the Director-General of the Department of Medical Services, and the Deans of every medical school in Thailand. The 18 members by election are elected by medical practitioners.

The accreditation of medical schools by the Council is conducted as follows:

1. **Certification of the medical curriculum.** Even though a medical curriculum has been approved by the MUA, the institution offering that curriculum must submit it to the Medical Council for review of the details of the curriculum such as courses provided, educational objectives, learning experiences, student evaluation, and so forth, to see if these meet the Medical Council's Standard for Medical Practitioners, which includes knowledge in basic medical and clinical sciences, clinical competencies, professional skills, and attitude.
2. **Certification of the medical institution.** The Medical Council has a set of criteria for the accreditation of a medical institution; these criteria are also used by the MUA in its evaluation of a medical institution. The criteria emphasize appropriate numbers and qualifications of instructors, clinical setting, and other factors. Examples of the criteria include the following:
  - a. The ratio of instructors to students must be 1:4.
  - b. The ratio of qualifications of instructors (Ph.D.: M.Sc.: B.Sc.) must be at least 30:60:10.
  - c. Teaching aids for microbiology, e.g., the ratio of the number of microscopes to the number of students must be 1:1.
  - d. Teaching hospitals must have at least 400 beds.
  - e. The ratio of patient hospital beds to students must be 5:1.
3. **Certification of the medical degree and the granting of medical licenses.** If the curriculum and facilities of the medical institution meet the Council's standards, then the Council certifies the degree and grants medical licenses to its graduates.

#### The Consortium of Thai Medical Schools

The Consortium was established in April 1989 by the Deans of all of the medical schools in Thailand for the purpose of collaboration among medical institutions, with a particular emphasis on medical education. The objectives of the Consortium are as follows:

1. To review, recommend, and help implement policy on medical and health sciences education.

2. To promote research and service in the health professions with the ultimate aim of improving the health of the population in line with government public health policy.
3. To foster collaboration and academic exchange in medical education and related fields.
4. To develop leadership and management skills among senior administrators in medical and other health professional institutions in Thailand.
5. To create an information network between schools of medicine and others in public and private institutions interested in medicine and its interface with public health and the health sciences.

The Consortium is engaged in a number of activities related to improving the quality of medical education in Thailand. Through regular meetings of its Secretariat, issues such as improving the criteria for the selection of medical students and improving faculty staff development are discussed. In addition, regularly scheduled conferences and seminars are held for "exchanging ideas, experiences, and solution to the problems encountered in curriculum development." Examples of topics considered at these conferences and seminars include the following: student assessment and evaluation, pre-clinical teaching, clinical teaching, and quality assurance in medical education. Finally, national medical education conferences are held every 7-8 years.

Although the Consortium is a private, non-profit organization without any legal authority, "its deliberations carry great impact on monitoring the quality of medical education in the country."

#### Summary of Findings

Thailand's three-level system for the accreditation of medical schools appears to be similar in many respects to that used to evaluate medical schools in the United States. As the country did not provide much information about the site visit process or certain other components of the accreditation system, Department staff has requested additional information about these aspects of the system and will present it to the NCFMEA at its October 1998 meeting should it be received by that time.

#### Staff Analysis

The National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation is charged with determining whether the standards of accreditation used by a foreign country to

accredit medical schools offering programs leading to the M.D. (or equivalent) degree are comparable to standards of accreditation applied to M.D. programs in the United States. In making this determination, the Committee uses the following guidelines which it has determined provide an appropriate framework for the thorough evaluation of medical schools offering programs leading to the M.D. (or equivalent) degree. The Committee wishes to make it clear that these are in fact guidelines and that a foreign country's review and approval process can differ substantially from these guidelines and still be determined to be comparable to the standards used in the United States, provided the foreign country can demonstrate that its standards and processes of evaluation are effective alternatives to those used in the United States.

## PART I: Accreditation/Approval Standards

### 1. Objectives

The accreditation/approval process used by the foreign country should determine whether the educational mission of the medical school serves the general public interest and whether its educational program is appropriate in light of the mission and objectives of the school. Approval should not be granted if it is determined that the educational program is inconsistent with the mission and objectives of the school.

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the program is legally authorized to provide medical education in the country in which it is located. Approval should not be granted to a program that is not legally authorized to provide such education.

#### Mission and objectives

According to Thailand's August 1996 response to the Department questionnaire, the educational mission of a medical school must serve the general public interest. In addition, all medical schools must follow or develop educational objectives that comply with the Medical Council's Standard Criteria for Medical Practitioners. The Medical Council's introductory section of its Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions states that the medical school curriculum should "...instill positive attitudes in continued education throughout the professional career in order to follow, apply and develop a rapid increase of knowledge of science and technology and efficiency, and also with a sense of morals, ethics and pride in being a doctor." Additionally, the criteria require that "The institute must organize the teaching and learning in such a way as to stimulate the learners to go on learning and be able to do self-directed and independent study." Finally, the criteria require that "The institute must organize the teaching and learning for learners to have direct experience in studying the public

health service and administration system as well as urban and rural community services."

### Legal Authorization

Medical schools in Thailand must be approved by both the MUA and the Medical Council in order to operate.

## 2. Governance

**The accreditation/approval process should determine whether there is an appropriate accountability of the management of the institution to an ultimate responsible authority external to and independent of the institution's administration. Approval should not be granted if the school lacks such a system of external accountability.**

According to Thailand's response to the questionnaire, both the MUA and the Medical Council have the authority to evaluate and approve medical schools. Thus, all medical schools are accountable to these authorities. The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions requires that medical schools function as part of a university, "be a tertiary level institute of education accredited by the Ministry of University Affairs," and "be a non-profit organization through the establishment in the form of foundation or fund with sufficient reserves to run long-term and with a representative from the Medical Council and the Ministry of University Affairs as committee members automatically through the post."

## 3. Administration

**The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the administration of the school is effective and appropriate in light of its mission and objectives. Approval should not be granted if it is determined that the administration is ineffective or inappropriate in light of the stated mission and objectives.**

**The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the chief academic official of the medical school is qualified by education and experience to provide leadership in medical education. Approval should not be granted if the chief academic official's credentials and training background are not appropriate for fulfilling his or her responsibilities.**

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the faculty are appropriately qualified to teach and are involved in decisions involving admissions and curriculum. Approval should not be granted to schools that fail to demonstrate appropriate faculty qualifications and faculty involvement in admissions and curriculum development and delivery.

#### Administration

According to Thailand's response to the questionnaire, the "administrative committee" of a medical school is composed of the Dean, the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, "Administration, Student Affairs, Research and Planning," Department Chairs, and a representative of the "Faculty Staff." Additionally, the Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions has provisions requiring that "The institute must establish an organization and administration which can operate to achieve the level of education following the given aspirations, namely the system of general administration, educational administration, development plan setting, [and] educational development and research" and that "The institute's administrators must not have a personal conflict of interests with the institute's administration."

#### Chief Academic Officer

Thailand's response to the questionnaire indicates that the chief academic official of the medical school must have experience in "teaching at least 3 years of University level. He/she also must have academic qualification in that field." The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions requires that "The Dean must be a person with leadership and qualifications accepted in academic circles of education, vocation and research and should be a member of the Medical Council, that is, she/he must be a doctor."

#### Faculty

The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions requires that the teaching staff's qualifications for undergraduate studies at a medical school be at least in the following ratio: 30 percent Ph.D./60 percent M.S./10 percent B.S. For graduate studies, there must be a faculty ratio at the medical school of at least one Ph.D to one M.S., with no B.S. faculty members. Additionally, the criteria state that consideration should be given to "suitability" and "teaching experience and aptitude."

#### **4. Educational Program**

The accreditation/approval process should examine whether the educational program of a medical school is of sufficient length to meet the mission and objectives of the school and to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become a qualified physician. Approval

should not be granted to a school that does not provide an educational program of at least 32 months in duration.

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the curriculum provides an education in the sciences basic to medicine, a variety of clinical subjects, and various ethical, behavioral, and socioeconomic subjects pertinent to medicine. Approval should not be granted to a school whose educational program does not provide such a broad-based curriculum.

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the requirements for successful completion of the program of medical education conform to commonly accepted standards, with a particular focus on clerkships (or their equivalent) and other forms of clinical training. Approval should not be granted if such training is of insufficient breadth, is not conducted in suitable medical facilities, or is not adequately supervised.

#### Program length

The medical program is required to be not less than 12 semesters.

#### Curriculum

The curriculum must consist of not less than 210 or more than 263 semester credits structured as follows:

- a. General education must be not less than 30 credits, including at least six each in the humanities, social sciences, and language.
- b. Professional education must be not less than 180 credits, including 28 in internal medicine, 19 in obstetrics-gynecology, 18 in pediatrics, 28 in surgery, 6 in psychiatry, 14 in community medicine, etc.
- c. Electives - not less than 6 credits.

The curriculum must include, as the sciences basic to medicine, mathematics, physics, chemistry, and biology.

The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions has other curriculum-related provisions, including the following:

#### 2.1. Curriculum construction

- 2.1.1 The curriculum for Medical Science must have objectives in correspondence with the Medical Council's Criteria for Medical Practitioners.
- 2.1.2 The number of credits for the Degree of Medical Science must be according to the standards of the Ministry of University Affairs.
- 2.1.3 The institute must construct a curriculum that allows the learners to study foundation subjects for Medical Science such as Social Sciences, Economics, Science, Ethics and Medical Science and also instill in the learners competence and good judgment in how to solve scientific problems and research procedures as well as to have positive attitudes as good doctors.
- 2.2 The organization of teaching and learning
  - 2.2.1 The institute must organize the teaching and learning in such a way as to stimulate the learners to go on learning and be able to do self-directed and independent study.
  - 2.2.2 Those in the Medical Science Program should have the opportunity to study in the same class as those from other schools such as Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, etc.

#### Clerkships

There must be three years of clinical training, all of which must "rotate in specific department[s] including University Hospital, General Hospital, special Care Hospital/Centre, and Community Hospital. Other provisions relating to clerkships and clinical training in the Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions include the following:

- 1.10 The institute must have a medical premises for training.
- 1.11 The medical premises should be close to the academic institute to give the fastest and most convenient access for the Pre-Clinical medical students to contact the patients.
- 2.2.3 The teaching and learning of foundation subjects for Medical Science should be organized for the learners to have both direct experience and be able to apply it clinically, to promote extracurricular activities to foster leadership, team-work and positive attitudes in being good doctors.
- 2.2.4 Pre-Clinical education may be organized in the form of subject-based or integrated. The integration can be vertical in conjunction with continuity

from Pre-Clinical to Clinical subjects and/horizontal, that is a mixture of Pre-Clinical subjects. The form of organization must provide for the students to be able to do manual practice in laboratory investigation according to the Medical Council's Criteria for Medical Practice.

**2.2.5 The Pre-Clinical studies:** The institute must organize the teaching and learning for the learners to study patients who have major or common problems in Thailand thoroughly and directly on the patients under the teaching staff's supervision, and also to study the patient's integrated care and treatment, namely physical and psychological health problems, and related factors such as socio-economic status, the patient's culture, family, community, including the use of appropriate technology.

**3.2 At least 14 main branches in medical service as follows:**

- 3.2.1 General practitioner**
- 3.2.2 Obstetric and gynecology**
- 3.2.3 Surgery**
- 3.2.4 Medicine**
- 3.2.5 Pediatrics**
- 3.2.6 Orthopedic surgery and physical therapy**
- 3.2.7 Ophthalmology**
- 3.2.8 Oto-rhino-laryngology**
- 3.2.9 Psychiatry**
- 3.2.10 Forensic medicine**
- 3.2.11 Pathology**
- 3.2.12 Radiology**
- 3.2.13 Anesthesiology**
- 3.2.14 Social medicine/Preventive and social medicine**

**3.3 The number of in-patients and out-patients who come for the service in each division of service units must be sufficient for the students to practice under the guidance and supervision of the teaching doctor and also to study integrated patient care and treatment through the different levels of academic year and service branches as follows:**

**Major subjects (Branches 3.2.1-3.2.6)**

**Fourth- and fifth-year students:** Each student must take care of 50 out-patients a year on average and give direct care and treatment to at least 1-2 new in-patients per week.

**Sixth-year students:** Each student must care for at least 5 out-patients per day.

## Minor subjects (Other branches)

The number of patients for the teaching and learning must be at least half of those in the majors.

## 5. Medical Students

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the medical school admits only those students who possess the intelligence, integrity, and personal characteristics that are generally perceived as necessary to become effective physicians. Approval should not be granted to a school that fails to admit qualified students.

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the medical school carefully monitors the progress of students through the educational program and graduates only those students who successfully complete the program. Approval should not be granted if the school fails to monitor students for satisfactory academic progress.

### Admissions

According to Thailand's response to the Department's questionnaire, there are three criteria for the selection of students:

1. Academic background: students must have had 12 years of schooling, they must have demonstrated academic achievement in Thai, English, physics, chemistry, mathematics, biology, social sciences, and humanities.
2. Physical health.
3. Mental health.

According to the questionnaire, the admissions process is controlled by the MUA or "by the permission of the University Board of Trustees."

Additionally, the Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions has the following four provisions regarding the admission of medical students:

- 3.1 The institute must determine definite criteria, selection methods and the number of those to enroll in each academic year. The Medical Council must be informed about the possible increase in the number of students after the accreditation of the institute by the Medical Council for

evaluation and only after the Medical Council's approval, is such an increase then allowed.

- 3.2 As for the learners' qualifications, the Ministry of University Affairs' Criteria for the acceptance of applicants to the Medical School must be used.
- 3.3 Part of the selection of those to enroll must be done by the Ministry of University Affairs through the University Entrance Examination for each Academic year. The institute can choose the number of those to enroll - not more than half of the total number of those screened by the Ministry of University Affairs.
- 3.4 The number of the institute's student enrollment for each academic year is subject to the standards of resources of learning and the standard of the training hospital.

#### Monitoring of Students

Thailand's response to the questionnaire indicates that the monitoring of students is done by the medical school and supervised by the "Faculty Board of Medicine." There are no formal requirements for any external examinations for students in a "government medical school," but it would appear from the country's response that there may be for private medical schools.

The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions has the following three provisions under "2.4 Evaluation":

- 2.4.1 The institute must determine the definite criteria and evaluation methods for going up to the next level and graduation and make them known to all the teaching staff and learners.
- 2.4.2 Evaluation must correspond to the educational objectives.
- 2.4.3 A periodic evaluation must be done for further development and to be more up-to-date and practical.

#### 6. Resources for the Educational Program

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the medical school has physical facilities that are quantitatively and qualitatively adequate for the size and scope of the educational program, as well as the

- size of the student body. Approval should not be granted if the facilities are inadequate.

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the faculty provides effective teaching and is of sufficient size to provide the scope of the educational program offered. Approval should not be granted if there is an insufficient number of qualified faculty.

The accreditation/approval process should determine whether the medical school has a library sufficient in size, breadth, and depth to support the educational program. Approval should not be granted if the library is inadequate.

#### Physical facilities

Thailand's response to the questionnaire confirms some of the information provided in the accreditation booklet about required resources and provides the following additional information:

#### Space

There must be--

1-18 square meters (sq.m.) per person in each teaching or seminar classroom.

3-4 sq.m. per person in each laboratory classroom.

7 sq.m. per person in each dormitory.

.15 sq.m. per person in each cafeteria.

9-18 sq.m. per person in administrative office space.

1.5 sq.m. per person in the library.

The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions has lists of specific requirements for each of the above categories.

#### Faculty

There must be--

A ratio of 30:60:10 of Ph.D., M.S., and B.S. degrees.

A faculty-student ratio of 1:4.

A full-time staff-student ratio of 1:8.

In addition to the above requirements for the faculty, the Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions states that the "teaching staff" must have "teaching experience and aptitude."

#### Library

There must be--

50 books per undergraduate student.

75 books per postgraduate student.

100 books per faculty member.

The Medical Council's Criteria for Certification of Medical Institutions has a separate section on the "Standard for Tertiary Level institute library." Within this section, there are general and specific requirements for all medical school libraries, such as the following:

The library must be located where the teaching staff and learners can have easy access. If there are different campuses, affiliated institutes or hospitals for training those who live far away from the institute, a library service must be provided on those sites.

Apart from the texts and journals, it is necessary to have equipment to facilitate additional search for technical data such as an index medicus, CD ROM and to coordinate with other medical science libraries.

The area to keep books and bound journals should be 60 square meters per 10,000 copies and an area for books should be prepared to double every ten years.

#### PART II: Accreditation/Approval Evaluation Procedures

1. There should be a clearly recognized body responsible for evaluating the quality of medical education in the country and that body should be legally authorized to accredit/approve medical schools offering educational programs leading to the M.D. (or equivalent) degree.

Information provided by the country indicates that medical schools in Thailand are accredited by three organizations, each with its own responsibilities and duties. The three organizations are the Ministry of University Affairs (MUA), the Medical Council, and the Consortium of Thai Medical Schools. A review of the descriptions of the responsibilities and duties of each by Department staff confirmed the authority of the MUA and the Medical Council to accredit/approve medical schools. The authority of the Consortium is less clear as none of the objectives included in the booklet, Accreditation of Medical Schools in Thailand, explicitly refers to the accreditation or approval of medical institutions and/or their curricula.

The August 1996 response of the Thai Medical Council to the Department's questionnaire confirmed the authority of the MUA and the Medical Council to accredit medical schools in Thailand.

- 2. The accreditation/approval process should include effective controls against conflicts of interest and inconsistent application of the accreditation/approval standards.**

The August 1996 response of the Medical Council on this issue states that the Council "is the body to control the conflict amongst the organizations and the evaluator. Also, the [Consortium of Thai Medical Schools] plays [an] active role [in] follow[ing] the activities of medical schools."

It would appear from this response that the question asked by the Department on the questionnaire may have been misunderstood. Elsewhere in the Medical Council's response it is stated that the on-site evaluators, most of whom are physicians, educators, and educational evaluators, do not make the accreditation decision concerning a specific school. They only make a recommendation, which the Medical Council will review before making the final decision. This serves as a quality control mechanism for ensuring that the standards are consistently applied. However, there is no indication in the information provided how the Council controls for conflict of interest in its decision-making when the Deans of all of the medical institutions in the country are members of the Council.

- 3. The accreditation/approval process should provide for the regular reevaluation of approved medical schools in order to verify that they continue to comply with the approval standards.**

According to the information provided by the country, an institution "that passes review [by the MUA] will receive a certification and will be subjected to periodic review every 3 to 4 years." This is confirmed by the August 1996 response of the Medical Council to

the Department's questionnaire, which states that the "frequency of visiting school[s] is approximate[ly] every 4 years."

4. The accreditation/approval process should normally include a thorough on-site review of the school (and all its geographically separated sites, if any) during which sufficient information is collected to determine that the school is in fact operating in compliance with the accreditation/approval standards. This review should include, among other things, an analysis of the admission process, curriculum, qualifications of the faculty, and facilities available to medical students. If there is not an on-site visit, there should be some appropriate alternative that ensures a thorough review of the school for compliance with the accreditation/approval standards.

The MUA has established its own committee of external evaluators who make site visits periodically to check the effectiveness of the institution's internal audit system. Documentation, including various reports reflecting educational quality such as lesson plans, handouts, lecture notes, references, examination papers, and results of teaching evaluation, is evaluated during the site visits.

As the country's previous responses have not provided much information about the structure of the site visits, Department staff has requested more information. Staff has also requested information on any self-study or other type of report medical schools must prepare as part of the accreditation process. If this information is received before the October NCFMEA meeting, staff will forward it to the Committee.

5. The accreditation/approval process should use competent and knowledgeable individuals, qualified by experience and training in the basic or clinical sciences, responsible for the on-site evaluation, policy-making, and decision-making.

As mentioned previously, the country has indicated that the on-site evaluators are mostly physicians, educators, and educational evaluators. It is not clear how these individuals are selected or how they are trained to carry out their responsibilities.

Department staff has requested additional information about the selection and training processes.

No information was provided about the decision-makers on the MUA. Department staff has requested this information as well.

