



THE SECRETARY OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202

October 31, 2001

Ms. Helen M. Skardhamar
Education Section
General Medical Council
178 Great Portland Street
London, WIN6JE, England
United Kingdom

Dear Ms. Skardhamar:

At the September 6, 2001 meeting of the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA), the NCFMEA reviewed the information most recently provided by the General Medical Council (GMC) to reassess the comparability of the United Kingdom's standards to the standards used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States.

I am pleased to inform you that at the meeting the NCFMEA determined that the current accreditation standards used by the GMC to evaluate medical schools in the United Kingdom are comparable to the standards used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States (U.S.). This determination of comparability by the NCFMEA has a maximum duration of six years from the date of this letter, unless the Committee withdraws, extends or renews its determination prior to that date. Before expiration of the six-year period, the NCFMEA will seek to confirm that your standards and procedures for accrediting medical schools in the United Kingdom are still comparable to the accreditation standards applied to medical schools in the U.S. If so, its previous determination of comparability will be extended for another period.

The NCFMEA members wish to thank Professor Peter Rubin for attending the meeting to provide additional information regarding the status of medical accreditation activities in the United Kingdom. The members also wish to express their appreciation for the courtesies extended to Dr. Deal and Mr. James during their site visit to the GMC offices in July 2001. The information provided by Professor Catto and you during the July 2001 meeting was extremely helpful to the Committee's understanding of the United Kingdom's accreditation system for medical schools.

In an effort to keep apprised of the accreditation activities of the GMC, the NCFMEA has requested that the GMC submit annual reports to the U.S. Department of Education, with the first report scheduled for review at the September 2002 NCFMEA meeting. The purpose of the annual report is to provide the NCFMEA with a summary of accreditation activities, including the following information:

- **Overview of accreditation activities:** A summary of key activities by the GMC during the period covering August 2001 - June 2002, such as accreditation reviews conducted, accreditation decisions reached, accreditation conferences or training sessions held.
- **Summary of any changes or developments in the following areas:**
 - **Laws and Regulations:** Any changes in your country's laws or regulations affecting the accreditation of your medical schools.
 - **Standards, Processes and Procedures:** Any changes in the accreditation standards, processes or procedures that the GMC uses to evaluate and accredit medical schools.
- **Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities:** A listing of accreditation meetings and listing of on-site visits to medical schools and clinical clerkship sites planned for July 2002 - June 2003.

Please send the annual report by July 1, 2002, to the Executive Director of the NCFMEA at the address below:

Ms. Bonnie L. LeBold
Executive Director, NCFMEA
U.S. Department of Education
1990 K Street, NW - Room 7007
Washington, D.C. 20006-7563
U.S.A.

The Executive Director will contact you in the spring of 2002 to provide information regarding the September 2002 meeting and more details on submission of the annual report. In the interim, if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. LeBold at (202) 219-7009 (telephone), (202) 219-7008 (fax), or Bonnie.LeBold@ed.gov (e-mail).

As a result of the determination of continued comparability by the NCFMEA, any medical school in the United Kingdom that is accredited or approved by the GMC may apply to the U.S. Department of Education to participate in the Federal Family Education Loan (FFEL) program. If a medical school's application is approved, students enrolled in the school who are either U.S. citizens or permanent residents of the U.S. may receive FFEL loans to finance their medical education if they meet all other eligibility requirements. Medical schools that wish to participate in the FFEL program may obtain the proper application forms from the Foreign Schools Team at the following address:

U.S. Department of Education
Foreign Schools Team-Room 73C3
SFA/Schools Channel/CMO
830 First Street, N.E.
Washington, D.C. 20202-5340
U.S.A.

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Please note that it is not necessary for medical schools that are currently participating in the FFEL program to contact the Foreign Schools Team at this time; the status of those schools remains unchanged by the NCFMEA's decision of continued comparability.

Thank you very much for providing information regarding your country's accreditation of its medical schools. The NCFMEA members and the U.S. Department of Education appreciate your ongoing assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

Rod Paige

cc: Professor Peter C. Rubin
Dean of Medicine
University of Nottingham



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U.S. Department of Education



**Staff Analysis
of the
Standards Used by
The United Kingdom
for the Evaluation of Medical Schools**

September 6, 2001

U.S. Department of Education

Staff Analysis
of the Standards Used by the
United Kingdom
For the Evaluation of Medical Schools

Prepared February, 2001
Amended August 2001

The *bolded and italicized portions* of this February 2001 analysis reflect new information that was presented by the United Kingdom to support its comparability with the system of accreditation used in the United States to evaluate medical education. The balance of the text represents the analysis as presented at the February 2001 meeting of the NCFMEA.

Background

At its February 17, 1995 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the standards of accreditation used by the United Kingdom to accredit medical schools offering programs leading to the M.D. (or equivalent) degree were comparable to standards of accreditation applied to M.D. programs in the United States. The NCFMEA reviews the comparability of countries' standards on a periodic basis, and in June 2000, the United Kingdom was provided a copy of the NCFMEA's new guidelines and requested to provide information to demonstrate compliance with those guidelines. The information provided by the United Kingdom in response to that request is the subject of this analysis.

At its February 2001 meeting, the NCFMEA deferred a decision on whether the United Kingdom's accreditation process continued to be comparable to that used in the United States until further information could be gathered. On July 24, 2001 a representative from the NCFMEA and a member of Department staff met with representatives of the General Medical Council (GMC) to discuss, more fully, the GMC's role in the evaluation of medical schools in the United Kingdom.

Summary of Findings

In many respects, the system used by the United Kingdom to evaluate medical education in that country may be considered to be generally comparable to the evaluation/accreditation system used in the United States. However, it should be noted that there is, in the United Kingdom, a history of pedagogical autonomy among the

