

U.S. Department of Education

Taiwan

Prepared October 2012

Background

In March 2002, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) first determined that the accreditation standards used by Taiwan to evaluate medical education programs leading to the M.D. or equivalent degree were comparable to standards of accreditation used to evaluate medical education in the United States. The NCFMEA reaffirmed its prior determination of comparability in March 2009 and requested that Taiwan submit a report on the TMAC Guidelines for review at the Spring 2012 meeting of the NCFMEA. The country's report is the subject of this analysis.

Summary of Findings

Based on its review of the report submitted by TMAC, Department staff concludes that Taiwan has provided the information requested by the NCFMEA. Taiwan has been actively engaged in its plan to reform medical education in its country and has consulted with the Liaison Committee on Medical Education, or the LCME, in its efforts to review the country's standards. It appears that there are significant changes currently being undertaken to refine the standards and processes that were last determined to be comparable by the NCFMEA in March 2009. As reported by the country, Taiwan plans to pilot a draft version of its new standards in the fall of 2012.

Department staff also concludes that the accreditation activities during the reporting period appear to be consistent with the NCFMEA guidelines.

Staff Analysis

Current status of medical schools

Country Narrative

There are a total of 12 medical schools in Taiwan. The newest medical school, Mackay Medical College (MMC), was established in 2009 operating a seven-year program like all other schools. MMC has received yearly on-site visits by TMAC since 2010 and will continue to have yearly reviews until they have the first graduating class in 2016, after which they shall receive a full review. Below is the list of the medical schools in alphabetical order, their most recent date of accreditation and current status. See also Appendix 1.

- 1.Chang Gung University Oct 19 – 20, 2011 Fully accredited
- 2.China Medical University Nov 26 – 27, 2009 Fully accredited
- 3.Chung Shan Medical University Nov 16, 2011 Accredited with conditions
- 4.Fu Jen Catholic University Nov 3 – 4, 2011 Accredited with conditions
- 5.Kaohsiung Medical University Dec 3 – 4, 2009 Fully accredited
- 6.Mackay Medical College Nov 16 – 17, 2011 New school accreditation
- 7.National Cheng Kung University Dec 11, 2009 Fully accredited
- 8.National Defense Medical College Dec 11, 2011 Fully accredited
- 9.National Taiwan University Oct 19 – 22, 2009 Fully accredited
- 10.National Yang Ming University Nov 30 – Dec 1, 2009 Fully accredited
- 11.Taipei Medical University Nov 10 – 11, 2011 Fully accredited
- 12.Tzu Chi University Nov 30 – Dec 1, 2011 Fully accredited

Analyst Remarks to Narrative

The country has provided a list of its twelve operating medical schools as well as the dates of the schools' most recent accreditation. The country's newest medical school was accredited in 2011.

NOTE: The country provided additional information (attached below) after receipt of the draft staff analysis to clarify the date of the last accreditation decision as well as the most recent site visit date for each of its twelve medical schools.

Overview of accreditation activities

Country Narrative

In 2009, TMAC executed the evaluation of the long range objectives of the Ministry of Education (MOE) Medical Education Reform Program (refer to Appendix 2) in all medical schools in Taiwan, as well as accreditation reviews of school campuses and clinical clerkship sites. Particular attention was paid to follow-up observations on suggested items for improvement for each school as listed after the previous cycle of accreditation reviews. In 2011, TMAC conducted another round of accreditation reviews of 7 schools, including one new school accreditation. The on-site visits usually take place between October and December, and the meeting on accreditation decisions is held in the following March.

A point to note is that the National Taiwan University (NTU) underwent its

second cycle of full review in 2009. NTU was determined to be fully accredited in 2003 for the duration from 2004 to 2010, but in order to decrease the number of on-site visits so as not to disrupt the functioning of the school, NTU's second cycle of accreditation was brought forth to 2009 to coincide with its evaluation for the MOE's Medical Education Reform Program.

As mentioned in Question 1, TMAC started its accreditation of the newly established Mackay Medical College in 2010 and the visit lasted a day. The annual on-site visit was increased to 2 days the next year, and shall remain so until the first batch of students begin their clerkship when it shall last 3 days. The aim is to monitor the school's operations closely until it graduates its first batch of medical students.

Since TMAC had not recruited new members for on-site visits during the period, no training sessions were held. However, the accreditation team, which is headed by a TMAC council member, usually convenes on the day before the accreditation at a hotel for a pre-on-site visit discussion to go through the key points of the visit and delegate roles and responsibilities.

One of the main tasks of TMAC during this period was the revision of accreditation standards, and numerous meetings, workshops and conferences were arranged for the purpose. Please see Appendix 3 for the schedule of TMAC's activities since 2009, Appendix 4 for the accreditation decisions, and answers to Question 4 for detailed activities concerning the new standards.

Analyst Remarks to Narrative

The country has provided a summary of its accreditation activities to include a robust schedule of seven accreditation reviews of medical schools and clerkship sites, as well as monitoring activities. The country states that it is also in the process of evaluating the long range objectives of the Ministry of Education (MOE) Medical Education Reform Program, a six-year plan (2003-2009), whose objectives the country has provided as an attachment. Hand-in-hand with its long range objectives, the country has been revising its accreditation standards as discussed in the "Standards" section of the country's report.

The country has provided a summary, with attendant attachments that specify dates, of its key accreditation activities as requested by the NCFMEA.

Laws and regulations

Country Narrative

TMAC has made no new changes in its laws and regulations since September 2007. However, since TMAC has moved its affiliation from the National Health Research Institute to the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan (HEEACT) in January 2006, and because the MOE has given the authority of releasing the accreditation results of all institutions of higher

education to the latter, TMAC has been announcing its accreditation decisions at HEEACT's official website since 2009 instead of submitting a report to the MOE.

Another crucial change was the decision by the Deans' Conference (held twice a year and attended by all deans of medical schools in Taiwan) to shorten the duration of medical education from 7 to 6 years in 2013 by postponing the internship to after graduation from medical school. The decision was reached upon prior research and deliberations by an ad hoc committee established in 2008. As a result, drastic changes in the curriculum were expected, and TMAC requested that all schools hand in the curriculum map for their new medical education program in April 2012 for review.

Analyst Remarks to Narrative

The country reports no changes to its law and regulations. However, the country has experienced a major change in its provision of medical education by shortening the duration of medical education from seven to six years in 2013, and postponing the internship to after graduation from medical school. Such change had been broached and researched by an ad hoc committee in 2008. All medical schools were therefore required to provide attendant changes to their curricula to conform with the new requirements to TMAC in April 2012 for review.

Operationally, the country has also experienced a change in how it releases accreditation decisions which, since 2009, is conducted via the Higher Education Evaluation and Accreditation Council of Taiwan's (HEEACT) official website, and not as a direct report to the Ministry.

Standards

Country Narrative

At the meeting on March 12, 2009, TMAC council members decided to extensively revise its accreditation standards. The Sub-committee on Standards was established for this purpose and it comprised of 5 council members and 2 external members. There were four phases to the work:

Phase 1: Preparatory phase. An International Conference on Medical Education and Accreditation was held between July 27 – 29, 2009. TMAC invited 3 secretaries from the LCME – Dr. Dan Hunt (LCME Co-Secretary, 2008-2009 Senior Director, Accreditation Services), Dr. Barbara Barzansky (LCME Co-Secretary, 2007-2008 Director, Undergraduate Medical Education) and Dr. Robert Sabalis (Assistant LCME Secretary and Director, LCME Surveys and Team Training) – to share LCME's experiences and accreditation standards.

Phase 2: Draft of new standards. From March 1 to 13, 2010, TMAC invited the Chair of the Sub-committee on Standards during the period LCME undertook the task, Dr. Michael Reichgott, to Taiwan. During the fortnight, intensive discussions were held whereby LCME's standards, TMAC's old standards, and

problems uncovered during TMAC's past experiences in accreditations were compared and contrasted. A draft of the new standards was drawn up in English and given to the 4 LCME expert consultants for advice. In August, the latest revised standards from LCME were also incorporated where appropriate, and the draft finalized for translation into Mandarin Chinese. The translated draft and revision process were announced at the Deans' Conference on October 29, 2010, thereafter, time was allowed for schools to conduct discussions about the new accreditation standards amongst their faculty, staff and students. On November 15, a forum was held to invite representatives from each school to exchange their opinion on the new standards, and their suggestions were incorporated where appropriate.

Phase 3: Revision and discussion. Between January and May 2011, the Sub-committee on Standards and TMAC council members held numerous further discussions and revisions of the new accreditation standards. Attention was paid to the particular situation in Taiwan's medical schools and the feasibility for evaluation of each standard. Dr. Reichgott was again consulted as to the determination of "must" versus "should" standards for Taiwan.

Phase 4: Pilot testing. On July 6, 2012, TMAC council members decided that members of the Sub-committee on Standards should take the opportunity to test the feasibility of evaluation of each new standard in all 5 of the full on-site visits during the new round of accreditation reviews at the end of 2012. Each of the five council members who serves in the Subcommittee will join one of the TMAC site visit teams in these five schools, but the observation of this individual will not affect the accreditation decision. Their findings shall be the basis of the final version of new accreditation standards by TMAC. Please refer to Appendices 5 and 6 for TMAC's original version and draft of new standards respectively.

Analyst Remarks to Narrative

Since 2009, the country has been working to incorporate extensive changes to its standards, based on direct consultation with the LCME, and revision and discussion among its medical schools. According to the country's narrative, the iterative process of standards revision entailed consultation with LCME staff, and discussion regarding the feasibility of the attendant changes for medical schools in Taiwan based on feedback from faculty, staff, and students of Taiwan medical schools.

The country is currently piloting the new standards for five accreditation reviews which will take place near the end of 2012. The country will send the council members leading the standards revision as observers for the site visits, to provide further feedback for the adoption of the final version of the standards by TMAC.

The country has provided its original standards and a draft of its new standards for the Committee to review; only the proposed standards appear to be accessible.

Processes and procedures

Country Narrative

Basically, the processes and procedures of accreditation have not undergone any major changes. However, since the accreditation standards are under revision, the entire process -- from the selection and training of site visitors, evaluation procedures to the form of report, etc-- will be revised after the new standards are finalized.

Moreover, TMAC will seriously consider incorporating self-assessments by students in the future when the self-assessments by students are mature. In April 24 – 25, 2010, the International Federation of Medical Students' Association – Taiwan organized a workshop on students' self-assessment and they invited two LCME members who represent medical students to share with them the process and experiences. A questionnaire and procedure for self-assessment were drawn up by the students. Annual surveys had been conducted in Taiwan since 2010, but it is still under testing and revision.

Analyst Remarks to Narrative

As stated in the previous section, the country is undergoing an extensive change to its standards based on consultation with the LCME. As a result of these changes, the entire process of the accreditation review - to include selection and training of site visitors, evaluation procedures - will also be revised.

The country has also stated in its narrative, its intention to incorporate student self-assessments into the accreditation process. Presumably, this entails each student's assessment of the quality of the medical program and the student's reflections on his/her performance relative to it. More information on the nature and use of the student self-assessments is requested.

NOTE: The country provided additional information (attached below) after receipt of the draft staff analysis to clarify that student self-assessments are study surveys.

Schedule of upcoming accreditation activities

Country Narrative

At the meeting on June 28, 2012, TMAC council members discussed the schedule and focus of the accreditation visits this year, which will be held from October to December. Altogether 5 schools will receive the 4-day full review, 1 school will have a follow-up visit and the newly established Mackay Medical College shall have its third new school accreditation this year. Those second cycle full reviews shall be conducted according to TMAC's bylaw, and 2

overseas Taiwanese professors will partake in each of these accreditation visits. In early April this year, the schools were notified to hand in their self-evaluation package by September 15, and the school undergoing the follow-up visit should provide a written report on how it has improved in accordance with the suggestions made by TMAC in the 2009 accreditation. TMAC's liaison officers have been coordinating with these schools to determine the schedule and activities of each on-site visit.

Currently, the upcoming schedule is as follows:

- 1.Oct 16 – 17, 2012 National Taiwan University Follow-up visit
- 2.Oct 24 – 25, 2012 Mackay Medical College New school accreditation
- 3.Nov 5 – 8, 2012 National Yang Ming University Full visit
- 4.Nov 20 – 23, 2012 Taipei Medical University Full visit
- 5.Nov 26 – 29, 2012 China Medical University Full visit
- 6.Dec 11 – 14, 2012 Kaohsiung Medical University Full visit
- 7.Dec 17 – 20, 2012 National Cheng Kung University Full visit

Analyst Remarks to Narrative

The country has provided detailed information on its forthcoming five full accreditation reviews and follow-up visits to medical schools in the fall of 2012. The country has provided all the information as requested by the NCFMEA.
