

Name: Israel	Meeting Date: 09/19/2016	Response Submit Date: 08/26/2016	Status: Final Review	Type: Redetermination
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U.S. Department of Education

Redetermination of Comparability for Israel

Prepared September 2016

Background

At its September 1999 meeting, the National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) determined that the accreditation standards used by the Council for Higher Education (CHE) to evaluate medical schools in Israel were comparable to those used to evaluate programs leading to the M.D. degree in the United States. A CHE decision in February 1999 authorized the establishment of a permanent committee, the Committee for Re-Evaluation of Medical Schools (hereafter, Committee), as the CHE entity responsible for the evaluation of medical schools in Israel.

At its September 2001, September 2002 and March 2004 meetings, the NCFMEA accepted the periodic reports submitted by the CHE on its accreditation activities in Israel. During its 2008 meeting the NCFMEA continued to find the CHE standards comparable to those used in the United States. In addition, the NCFMEA accepted the periodic report submitted by CHE during its April 2013 meeting.

Israel was originally scheduled to be reviewed at the Fall 2014 NCFMEA meeting, but had asked to be rescheduled due to personnel changes that had delayed compilation of the agency's application narrative and documentation. Israel submitted its application in February 2015 and Department staff requested additional information regarding numerous areas, which were due by July 5, 2015. (The NCFMEA did not meet in Spring 2015.)

Israel never responded to the Department's questions. Therefore, on July 28, 2015 Department staff wrote to Dr. Varda Ben-Shaul and Daniella Sandler informing them that as a result of its failure to respond by the deadline Israel could not be placed on the Fall 2015 NCFMEA agenda, and would be rescheduled for the Spring 2016 NCFMEA meeting. On July 29 Daniella Sandler responded that Israel would send the material needed for the spring 2016 meeting. Since the materials were never received, Department staff again wrote to Israel on January 4, 2016 and asked that Israel's intentions be conveyed to the Department of Education expeditiously. As done previously, the email again noted that failure to submit the necessary information "could adversely affect Israel's continued positive listing by the NCFMEA in 2016." After some email exchanges and an additional request from the country for a delay, the country's current application for a redetermination of comparability was received by the Department on July 14, 2016.

Based on the information provided, it appears that the country has an evaluation system that remains substantially comparable to that used to accredit medical schools in the United States. While the CHE has provided substantial information regarding the country's quality assurance system standards for medical education in Israel, there are some areas where further information may be helpful. Those issues are noted in the Summary of Findings and the Staff Analysis sections.

(For an overview of related issues found by the international team that evaluated the Israeli medical schools for the CHE, the reader is encouraged to peruse Exhibit 22, which is the General Report on Israeli Medical Schools produced in August 2014 by the Committee for the Evaluation of Medical Study Programs.)

Summary of Findings

Additional information is requested for the following questions. These issues are summarized below and discussed in detail under the Staff Analysis section.

-- It is unclear how many medical schools in Israel that admit American students use MCAT scores in admitting those students.

[Admissions, Recruiting, and Publications, Question 1]

-- The actual effect of the transitional provision to reduce the number of non-Israeli citizens admitted to medical schools is unclear.

[Admissions, Recruiting, and Publications, Question 4]

-- It is unclear if the introductory Hebrew lessons offered to English-speakers at selected medical schools are sufficient for interpreting the Hebrew medical charts used in clinical training. [Admissions, Recruiting, and Publications, Question 5]

-- It is still unclear how the CHE expects each medical school to use the data resulting from national examinations for those not practicing medicine in Israel. In addition, it is still unclear how the CHE itself evaluates the relevant performance data that is

reviewed. Furthermore, it is still unclear if the CHE would consider establishing any benchmarks to compare student achievement results from the accredited medical schools. [Student Achievement, Question 4]

-- It is still unclear how the evaluators verify the actual conditions at the local training sites where the students are being educated and trained. [Onsite Review, Question 1]

-- It is unclear if any Israeli medical schools utilize any international clerkships in countries other than India. [Onsite Review, Question 2]

-- It is unclear how the CHE fulfills the NCFMEA expectation that a comparable accreditor will conduct timely on-site evaluations of all core clinical clerkship sites as part of its standard accreditation process. [Onsite Review, Question 3]

-- It is unclear how Israel's use of clinical sites in India will change now that India is no longer on the list of foreign countries found comparable by the NCFMEA. [Onsite Review, Question 5]

-- The NCFMEA may wish to inquire what concrete steps will be taken in the near future to meet the recognized need for more detailed student performance data. [Accrediting/Approval Decisions, Question 3]

-- It is still unclear if the CHE has any plans to incorporate the performance of graduates on licensing examinations into its medical school accreditation decision-making process anytime in the near future. [Accrediting/Approval Decisions, Question 4]

Staff Analysis