

# CARIBBEAN OVERSEAS TERRITORIES: MEDICAL SCHOOL ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE

## REFERENCE NOTE

### I Summary

This reference note sets out Her Majesty's Government (HMG) policy for accreditation of new and developing medical schools in the Caribbean Overseas Territories. The reference note lists the procedures that must be undertaken before a medical school can receive **full accreditation**.

### II Background

Since 2003 the General Medical Council (GMC) has not had the jurisdiction for accrediting medical schools outside the UK. After a careful examination of the options, HMG has concluded that the Caribbean Accreditation Authority for Education in Medicine and Other Health Professionals (CAAM-HP) is an appropriate body to take on this role.

To attract prospective students a new medical school will want to have a listing on one or both of the World Health Organisation (WHO) World Directory of Medical Schools and the International Medical Education Directory (IMED-FAIMER). HMG should be able to endorse such listings after CAAM-HP is satisfied that the school is ready to take in its first year of students and award **provisional accreditation**.

The terms Licensing and Accreditation are sometimes used incorrectly. In this **reference note** the terms are correctly used as follows: licensing refers to the approval by the territory government for the establishment and continuing operation of the educational institution whilst accreditation refers to the recognition of the qualification(s) issued by the institution by an (approved) independent external authorising body.

### III Actions for Territory Government

Medical schools must be licensed and accredited before accepting students.

### IV Process for Licensing of Medical Schools

This section applies to the licensing of any new or existing medical school even if it has a valid CAAM-HP accreditation.

The territory government must ensure that the appropriate legislation and government oversight and enforcement structures are in place in order to enable it to complete the actions listed below.

The territory government must also complete the following actions before licensing a new or existing medical school or an existing school is re-licensed:

- a) Ensure that there is no automatic right of entry to the territory's medical register for graduates of a medical school in the territory. The territory government must ensure that the medical register is protected, is fully regulated and that such regulations are sufficiently robust to ensure that medical graduates are not automatically entered onto the medical register. This will ensure that students do not leave the territory already registered to practise within it and so will avoid giving them basis to claim a reciprocal entitlement to registration elsewhere.
- b) Ensure that residence permits of medical students terminate on completion of the course of study.
- c) Ensure that they carry out the necessary due diligence on prospective schools prior to issuing operating licences.

#### **V Process for Accreditation for Medical School**

This section applies in addition to Section IV to any medical school that is not CAAM-HP accredited.

- a) The medical school in the first instance should contact the territory government, which will set out the accreditation process as outlined here. If an existing medical school has already put a proposal to the territory government, the territory government should inform the medical school of the accreditation procedure.
- b) Once the territory government has issued the licence the new school should approach CAAM-HP to make preparatory arrangements for an initial detailed evaluation of its readiness to admit a first year class. If these arrangements are satisfactory, CAAM-HP grants the programme **initial provisional accreditation**.
- c) Over the next four years, CAAM-HP will undertake a rolling programme of checks and reports during the **provisional accreditation** period. An interim survey is conducted during the first year of teaching; a second interim survey is conducted during the second year of the initial class, including the planning for the clinical teaching in years three and four. CAAM conduct a consultation survey in the third year.
- d) The survey for **full accreditation** is undertaken in year four. Once **accredited** a programme is then so designated for a period of five years before a fresh review, unless there is an apparent cause for earlier investigation.
- e) A programme judged by CAAM-HP not to be of sufficient compliance with its standards is designated as **accredited on probation**. If on further review the programme is still not compliant, it is deemed **not accredited**. HMG would be notified by CAAM-HP in good time if a school failed to achieve **full accreditation**. HMG would then write to WHO and/or IMED/FAIMER to request to have the listing removed or updated. **Not accredited** or in some circumstances **accredited on**

**probation** status would be cause for the territory government to suspend or withdraw the school's licence.

- f) The following actions by the CAAM-HP affecting accreditation are subject to appeal:
- i. assignment of probationary status
  - ii. withdrawal of accreditation
  - iii. denial of accreditation
  - iv. refusal to consider accreditation

The CAAM-HP website, [www.caam-hp.org](http://www.caam-hp.org), has full details setting out the appeals and complaints procedures and the withdrawal of accreditation.

## **VI Actions for British Government**

- a) To attract prospective students a new school will want to have a listing in one or both of the World Health Organisation World Directory of Medical Schools and IMED/FAIMER (for the North American market). HMG should be able to endorse such listings after CAAM-HP is satisfied that the school is ready to take in its first year of students and award **provisional accreditation**.
- b) When the medical school receives **provisional accreditation** from CAAM-HP, and has received licensing from the territory government, the medical school should approach HMG, through the Governor's Office. Once the Governor's Office is satisfied that the appropriate licensing and accreditation is in place, HMG will write to WHO and/or IMED/FAIMER. WHO and IMED will publish entries in their guides that make clear that the school is in receipt of **provisional accreditation** from CAAM-HP - i.e. "the school has **provisional accreditation** from CAAM and is working to be accredited by [year]".
- c) The medical school can then refer to this status of **provisional accreditation** in its marketing literature. HMG will then inform World Health Organisation (WHO) and/or IMED/FAIMER by letter which would make it clear that the accreditation is provisional, and that any listing must indicate on what basis the accreditation has been given.

OTD  
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