

AMERICAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution: 1
(November 2020)

Introduced by: International Medical Graduates Section

Subject: ECFMG 2024 Accreditation Requirement for World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) Recognition

Referred to: Reference Committee _____
(_____, Chair)

1 Whereas, The exponential growth of the private sector medical schools, their varying quality of
2 medical education, clinical rotations, and accreditation requirements have become a severe
3 concern to ECFMG; and
4
5 Whereas, A standard global accreditation process would help ensure patient safety, good
6 quality clinical outcomes, and professional accountability; and
7
8 Whereas, There has always been a need for a transparent and rigorous method of accreditation
9 of medical schools, worldwide, to meet an internationally accepted standard; and
10
11 Whereas, After the international task force meeting in 2005, The World Health Organization
12 (WHO) and the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) jointly published Guidelines for
13 Accreditation of Basic Medical Education¹, which formed the basis of the 2013 WHO policy
14 briefing on medical accreditation and the 2016 International Association Medical Regulatory
15 Authorities (IAMRA) statement on accreditation of medical education programs²; and
16
17 Whereas, In 2010, ECFMG stated that effective in 2023, applicants for ECFMG Certification
18 would be required to be a student or graduate of a medical school accredited by a WFME-
19 recognized accrediting agency³; and
20
21 Whereas, During the last ten years, of the 130 - 147 countries whose medical students apply for
22 ECFMG certification, only 23 countries have obtained WFME recognition status, and only 13
23 more have applied⁴; and
24
25 Whereas, Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current deadline for implementing the
26 WFME based accreditation standards has been extended to 2024⁵. Given the time constraints,
27 it is unlikely that most countries will have their accrediting bodies obtain the WFME recognition
28 status by 2024; and
29
30 Whereas, One in four physicians in the U.S. is a graduate of an international medical school
31 who fills 54.6% of primary care specialty positions^{6,7} and fills in the physician workforce gaps
32 that would remain vacant; and
33
34 Whereas, IMG physicians have provided ongoing primary health care services to the American
35 people of equivalent quality to those who have completed medical school in the U.S.; and
36
37 Whereas, There is a predicted shortage of 21,400 to 55,200 primary care physicians and a total
38 physician shortfall of 54,100 to 139,000 by 2033, and the new prerequisites for WFME based
39 certification requirements will significantly limit the applicant pool for primary healthcare
40 positions, thus negatively impacting the health care of the nation; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, That the American Medical Association work with the state and specialty medical
2 associations and other stakeholders to apprise them of the ECFMG requirements and the
3 foreseeable shortage of IMG physicians in underserved populations and primary health care
4 settings to be prepared with alternative options (Directive to Take Action); and be it further
5
6 RESOLVED, That the AMA work with the Federation of State Medical Boards and ECFMG to
7 develop more robust communication channels with participating medical schools and explore
8 reasons for the low rate of accreditation and possible ways to address those barriers in meeting
9 accreditation requirements. (Directive to Take Action).

References

1. WHO/WFME Guidelines for Accreditation of Basic Medical Education <https://bit.ly/3j03bVB>, Accessed on September 19, 2020.
2. Policy Brief on Accreditation of Institutions for Health Professional Education World Health organization 2013; <https://bit.ly/32Unf6n>, Accessed on September 19, 2020.
3. 2023 Medical School Accreditation Requirement <https://www.ecfmg.org/accreditation/>, Accessed on September 12, 2020.
4. WFME Agencies with Recognition Status and applying <https://bit.ly/330jE6K>, Accessed on September 12, 2020.
5. ECFMG Medical School Accreditation Requirement Moved to 2024, <https://bit.ly/3429jqq>, Accessed on September 11, 2020.
6. Inside the numbers behind the record-setting 2019 Match; <https://bit.ly/364GyM4>, Accessed on September 20, 2020.
7. Press Release: Thousands of Resident Applicants Celebrate NRMP Match Results <https://bit.ly/3i7XqEp>, Accessed on September 15, 2020.
8. The Complexities of Physician Supply and Demand: Projections From 2018 to 2033, <https://bit.ly/2FW7RO9>, Accessed on September 23, 2020.