



EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES

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**ECFMG to Require Medical School Accreditation for International Medical School
Graduates Seeking Certification Beginning in 2023**

PHILADELPHIA, PA — The Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG®) has announced that, effective in 2023, physicians applying for ECFMG Certification will be required to graduate from a medical school that has been appropriately accredited. To satisfy this requirement, the physician's medical school must be accredited through a formal process that uses criteria comparable to those established for U.S. medical schools by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) or that uses other globally accepted criteria, such as those put forth by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME).

Unlike in the United States and Canada, where LCME and the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools (CACMS) set standards for, evaluate, and accredit medical schools and programs, there are no universally accepted standards for evaluating undergraduate medical education internationally. An accreditation system comprised of rigorous standards and procedures helps ensure quality medical education, and quality medical education leads to quality health care. The ECFMG Board of Trustees has determined that it can enhance its protection of the public by incorporating medical school accreditation using globally accepted criteria into ECFMG's requirements for certification of international medical graduates (IMGs). Recognizing, however, that the efficacy of such a requirement depends on a universally accepted

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accreditation process, which does not currently exist, this requirement is not scheduled to take effect until 2023.

ECFMG's Board believes that this additional requirement for ECFMG Certification, and the timing of its implementation, will catalyze efforts to develop a formal accreditation process for international medical education that utilizes globally accepted criteria. While it is unlikely that a single entity would have the resources needed to accredit the world's 2,000 operating international medical schools, a viable model envisions evaluation and recognition by an internationally accepted organization, such as WFME, of the various bodies that accredit international medical schools. Such a process will have the effect of harmonizing accreditation standards, and creating a meaningful international accreditation system that will improve the quality of medical education and health care worldwide.

In the United States, IMGs comprise one-quarter of the physician workforce. ECFMG Certification is a prerequisite for IMGs to enter the U.S. health care system. ECFMG's decision to require medical school accreditation as a requirement for ECFMG Certification is a significant step in its continuing efforts to enhance protection of the public. It will also advance ECFMG's overall mission of promoting excellence in international medical education.

About ECFMG and ECFMG Certification

ECFMG is a private, nonprofit organization based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Its organizational members are the American Board of Medical Specialties; American Medical Association; Association of American Medical Colleges; Association for Hospital Medical Education; Federation of State Medical Boards of the United States, Inc.; and the National

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Medical Association.

For more than 50 years, ECFMG has promoted quality health care for the public by certifying IMGs for entry into U.S. graduate medical education (GME). ECFMG and its organizational members define an IMG as a physician who received his/her basic medical degree or qualification from a medical school located outside the United States and Canada. Through its program of IMG certification, ECFMG assesses whether these physicians are ready to enter U.S. GME; ECFMG Certification is a requirement for IMGs who wish to enter such programs. ECFMG Certification is also one of the eligibility requirements for IMGs to take Step 3 of the United States Medical Licensing Examination® (USMLE®). Medical licensing authorities in the United States require ECFMG Certification, among other requirements, for IMGs to obtain an unrestricted license to practice medicine.

In addition to its primary mission of certifying international medical graduates, ECFMG offers a variety of other programs and services to physicians educated abroad and other members of the international medical education, regulatory, and research communities.

For more information on ECFMG, including a background document on the new accreditation requirement titled “Requiring Medical School Accreditation for ECFMG Certification—Moving Accreditation Forward,” visit the ECFMG website at www.ecfm.org/accreditation.

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