FUNCTIONS AND STRUCTURE OF A MEDICAL SCHOOL

Standards for Accreditation of Medical Education Programs Leading to the M.D. Degree

Published April 2015
Standards and Elements Effective July 1, 2016
Introduction

Accreditation is a voluntary, peer-review process designed to attest to the educational quality of new and established educational programs. The Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME®) accredits complete and independent medical education programs leading to the M.D. degree in which medical students are geographically located in the United States or Canada for their education and which are operated by universities or medical schools chartered in the United States or Canada. Accreditation of Canadian medical education programs is undertaken in cooperation with the Committee on Accreditation of Canadian Medical Schools. By judging the compliance of medical education programs with nationally accepted standards of educational quality, the LCME serves the interests of the general public and of the medical students enrolled in those programs.

To achieve and maintain accreditation, a medical education program leading to the M.D. degree in the U.S. must meet the standards contained in this document. The accreditation process requires a medical education program to provide assurances that its graduates exhibit general professional competencies that are appropriate for entry to the next stage of their training and that serve as the foundation for lifelong learning and proficient medical care. While recognizing the existence and appropriateness of diverse institutional missions and educational objectives, the LCME subscribes to the proposition that local circumstances do not justify accreditation of a substandard program of medical education leading to the M.D. degree.

The LCME regularly reviews the content of the standards and elements, and seeks feedback on their validity and clarity from its sponsor organizations and members of the medical education community. Changes to existing standards and elements that impose new or additional compliance requirements are reviewed by the LCME’s sponsoring organizations and are considered at a public hearing before being adopted. Once approved, new or revised standards are published in Functions and Structure of a Medical School (F&S) and in the relevant version of the Data Collection Instrument (DCI), which will indicate when the changes become effective. Such periodic review may result in the creation or elimination of a specific standard and/or element, or a substantial reorganization of F&S content.

The F&S is organized according to 12 accreditation standards, each with an accompanying set of elements. Each of the 12 LCME accreditation standards includes a concise statement of the principles that represent the standard. The elements of each standard specify the components that collectively constitute the standard; they are statements that identify the variables that need to be examined in evaluating a medical education program’s compliance with the standard. The LCME will consider the totality of a program’s responses to each of the elements associated with a specific standard in their determination of the program’s compliance with that standard.

As you read through this document, please note the following:

- The 12 standards are organized to flow from the level of the institution to the level of the student
- As a background reference, tables at the end of this document provide a mapping of the standards as formatted for academic year 2014-15 to the standards and elements format in place for academic year 2016-17.