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İSKENDER SAYEK

HANS KARLE

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Quality Assurance Standards Task Force

Global Standards: Route for Accreditation in Medical Education in Europe

Iskender SAYEK¹

Hans KARLE²

¹ Department of Surgery, Faculty of
Medicine, Hacettepe University,
Ankara - TURKEY

² World Federation for Medical
Education, Copenhagen - DENMARK

Internationalisation and diversities in medicine have led to establishment of international standards in medical education in Europe as the free movement of doctors has become a reality. The World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) launched global standards in 2003 for Basic and Postgraduate Medical Education and for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of Medical Doctors. These standards covered nine areas (Table) with about 36 sub-areas for all three phases of medical education. Areas are defined as broad components in the structure, process and outcome, whereas the sub-areas are defined as the specific aspects of an area corresponding to performance indicators (1-3).

The Thematic Network on Medical Education in Europe (MEDINE), sponsored by the European Community, addressed educational, institutional and quality issues in European medical education within the framework of European initiatives. The thematic network comprised five Task Forces: 1) Tuning Task Force, 2) Quality Assurance Standards Task Force, 3) International Recognition of Qualifications Task Force, 4) Transparency and Public Understanding of Medical Education Task Force and 5) Links between Medical Education and Research Task Force (4).

The Quality Assurance Standards Task Force*** was led by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) and the Association of Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE). The objectives of this task force were: 1) to enhance overall standards of medical

Table. Areas of WFME Global Standards in the three phases of medical education (Trilogy).

Basic Medical Education	Postgraduate Medical Education	CPD of Medical Doctors
Mission and Objectives	Mission and Objectives	Mission and Outcomes
Educational Programme	Training Process	Learning Methods
Assessment of Students	Assessment of Trainees	Planning and Documentation
Students	Trainees	The Individual Doctor
Academic Staff/Faculty	Staffing	CPD-Providers
Educational Resources	Training Settings and Educational Resources	Educational Context and Resources
Programme Evaluation	Evaluation of Training Process	Evaluation of Methods and Competencies
Governance and Administration	Governance and Administration	Organisation
Continuous Renewal	Continuous Renewal	Continuous Renewal

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Correspondence

Iskender SAYEK
Department of Surgery,
Faculty of Medicine,
Hacettepe University,
Ankara - TURKEY

education in Europe through sharing of ideas, dissemination of best practice, and quality assurance, in conjunction with other European agencies such as ENQA and the regional ERA and making use of the work already carried out by the WFME, 2) to analyse how to adapt the WFME Standards to the European context of medical education and to the Bologna process in order to establish minimum requirements for accreditation of medical schools in Europe, and 3) to produce a set of quality assurance standards for medical education in Europe, building on and adapting existing work such as the WFME Global Standards framework: in basic medical education, in postgraduate medical training, and in continuing medical education (CME) for institutional self-evaluation and accreditation of undergraduate medical education programmes.

The Task Force adopted the WFME Global Standards with the European Specifications (5) and the areas were defined similarly (Table 1) as well as the sub-areas. The standards were formulated at two levels of attainment as 1) basic standards and 2) standards for quality development. The basic standards mean that fulfilment *must* be met, while the standards for quality development mean that fulfilment or intention to fulfil *should* be documented in accordance with international consensus about best practice. The European Specifications were formulated by changing some of the standards for quality development to the level of basic standards. These changes were made to set a higher level of standards in medical education in Europe. These standards could be used as a basis for internal and external peer-review of institutions and organizations that are responsible for the quality of medical education at the national level as well as accreditation criteria.

Members of the MEDINE Quality Assurance

Task Force

Dr. Hans Karle
 President
 World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)
 University of Copenhagen- Denmark
 (WFME - Chair)
 Professor, Dr. Herman J.M. van Rossum
 Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Institute of Medical Education
 The Netherlands
 (AMSE - Chair May 2005 – June 2006)

Professor, Dr. Maria Rosa Fenoll-Brunet
 Executive Committee member
 Association of Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE)
 Universitat Rovira i Virgili
 Facultat de Medicina i Ciències de la Salut
 Spain
 (AMSE – Chair July 2006 – September 2007)

Professor Leif Christensen
 Senior Advisor
 World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)
 The University of Copenhagen
 Denmark
 (Secretary General)

Professor David Gordon
 President
 Association for Medical Schools in Europe (AMSE)
 University of Manchester
 United Kingdom

Professor Roger Green
 University of Manchester, School of Medicine
 United Kingdom

Dr. Hannu Halila
 President European Union of
 Medical Specialist (UEMS)
 Medical Association of Finland
 Finland
 Stud.med., Christina Jensen-Dahm
 Faculty of Health Sciences

University of Copenhagen
Denmark

Professor Jadwiga Mirecka

Jagiellonian University Medical School
Krakow
Poland

Stud.med. Paul de Roos

European Medical Students' Association (EMSA)
The Netherlands

Professor Iskender Sayek

Medical Faculty
Hacettepe University
Turkey

Professor, dr. med. Dieter Scheffner

Medizinische Fakultät Charite

Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Germany

(until December 2006)

Dr. Sebastian Schubert

Medizinische Fakultät Charite
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Germany

(January 2007 -)

Dr. Christophe Segouin

Assistance Publique-Hôpitaux de Paris
France

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