

## **Guidelines for handling Appeals by Medical Schools against the accreditation decisions of the Review Team and the Accreditation Unit**

The Accreditation Unit (AU) of the Sri Lanka Medical Council (SLMC) allows a four-week period, following conveying the "Pre-final decision" to the Dean for an applicant medical school to appeal against the Pre-final decision. When such an appeal is received by the AU, following guidelines shall be followed to appoint "Two Appeal Boards". The membership of the two Appeal Boards would depend on the nature of the two types of appeals that the AU would receive: (a) appeals to change the wording or minor factual errors of the Review Report; (b) appeals against the pre-final accreditation decision of the AU of the SLMC.

### **Appointment of the Appeal Boards**

#### **A] Appeal Board 1: Appeals to change the wording or minor factual errors of the Report with pre-final decision**

The members of Appeal Board 1 would be appointed by the Head of the AU with the ratification of the other Accreditation Unit members. This would be appointed to inquire about appeals against the wording and/or minor factual errors of the Report with the pre-final decision of the AU.

The membership of Appeal Board 1 would be two members of the AU and the team leader of another past Review Team (**Total of 3**). All members must declare 'no conflict of interest' upon being appointed. If any of the above members have a declared conflict of interest, then the AU shall unanimously decide on another nomination with equivalent credentials to replace the member concerned.

The most senior member of the Appeal Board shall chair the Appeal Board.

#### **B] Appeal Board 2: Appeals against the pre-final accreditation decision**

The members of Appeal Board 2 would be appointed by the Head of the AU with the ratification of the Accreditation Unit. This would be appointed to inquire about appeals against the pre-final decision conveyed to the Dean.

The membership of Appeal Board 2 (**total of five**) would be as follows.

- Two retired Professors who have been previously trained by the AU as reviewers with at least 10 years of experience as a reviewer in undergraduate medical programme reviews.
- Two members from the pool of reviewers who did not function as reviewers for this particular review under consideration but have taken part in more than two medical programme reviews.

All AU members should unanimously decide on the nomination of the above four members.

- The lay member of the AU Committee. This person is an ex-officio member who is the Director of the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission.

All members must declare 'no conflict of interest' upon being appointed. If any of the above members have a declared conflict of interest, then the AU shall unanimously decide on another nomination with equivalent credentials to replace the member concerned.

The Appeal Board would be chaired by the most senior professor.

### **Processing of the appeals**

The contents of the appeal, along with the Report with the pre-final decision and the SER of the medical school, would be shared with the members of either of the Two Appeal Boards (as applicable) by the AU at least one week prior to the date of the meeting of the relevant Appeal Board. This is to ensure that all members have studied the contents of the appeal. On the day of the Appeal Board meeting, the chair of the Board would lead a discussion taking each standard within each section into consideration, as necessary. If so warrants, only the section/s that led to the adverse decision would be considered by the Board.

Where necessary, Appeal Board 1 has the provision for inviting the team leader of the review team, only as an informer, if clarifications on certain matters appealed are needed. However, the team leader of the current review under appeal will not be a member of Appeal Board 1. As such, the team leader will be invited only where necessary to answer certain questions from the members of the Appeal Board.

The minutes of the meeting will be kept by one of the members of the Board, elected by the Board members to be the secretary to the Board. The chair of the Board may adjourn the meeting and resume on a mutually agreed day.

### **Arriving at the final decision on the appeals**

The decision of either of the Two Appeal Boards shall be through consensus. If the Board is unable to achieve a consensual decision, then the majority decision (arrived at through a process of voting) would be considered the decision of the Board. The Appeal Board should provide the Appeal Board Report containing their decision to the Head of the AU within two weeks from the date of appointment.

### **Communicating the decision on the appeal to the applicant medical school**

The decision of either of the Two Appeal Boards would be communicated to the Head, AU through a formal report. The report should include the reasons for the decision and the minutes of the Appeal Board meeting/s. Then the Head of AU shall communicate the decision to the SLMC for ratification. Thereafter, the relevant medical school shall be informed of the Final Decision by the SLMC.

Accreditation Unit/SLMC

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