

**Calgary Medical Students’ Association (CMSA)**

*Post-Cumming School of Medicine (CSM) MD Program Accreditation (2016)*

***Accreditation Toolkit and Guide***

Having gone through the *new* CACMS accreditation process with 12 standards, and ~95 elements (95 elements for 2015-2016, 93 for 2016-17) the CMSA and CSM student accreditation team wanted to develop a quick guide and toolkit/e-repository to assist future medical societies when their school undergoes accreditation.

This resource is not intended to replace the CFMS Accreditation toolkit, nor the CACMS Role of Medical Students in Accreditation document, rather to provide additional resources and perspective.

*Disclaimer:*

*The CMSA produced this document in March 2016, and believe it to be accurate as of that date. Be aware that accreditation is a process in steady-state of evolution, please refer to CACMS documentation for the most accurate standards & elements.*

*The CMSA provides this document as a toolkit for medical societies based upon our own difficulties and experience, it should not be deemed as a complete document, or a replacement of other documents.*

*The CMSA cannot be held responsible for the outcome of your school’s accreditation.*

**Critical Websites to reference:**

CACMS (the most up to date accreditation resources will be posted here)

* CACMS Info page <https://www.afmc.ca/accreditation/committee-accreditation-canadian-medical-schools-cacms>
* CACMS Accreditation procedures <https://www.afmc.ca/accreditation/committee-accreditation-canadian-medical-schools-cacms/accreditation-procedures>
* CACMS Accreditation publications <https://www.afmc.ca/accreditation/committee-accreditation-canadian-medical-schools-cacms/cacms-publications>

CFMS Accreditation Toolkit

(this guide developed by the CFMS in 2015 is an excellent resource- available to medical society presidents)

CMSA Accreditation website

<http://www.calgarymsa.com/accreditation/>

**What you’ll find in the CMSA Accreditation Toolkit:**

* The entire Calgary ISA, as a single document, individual files (including appendices) and the ISA as .pdf and .word, and ISA infographic
* Calgary developed 51 student commentable elements & student assessment guidelines
* Pdf versions of Calgary ISA survey questions
* CACMS Role of Students document (2014)
* CACMS standards & elements and rules of procedure (2015)
* The CFMS Accreditation toolkit document
* Other useful articles and resource documents

**What is not included:**

* Other school ISAs (as these are proprietary)
* Our school’s MSS/DCI (it is on the CMSA accreditation site) nor other school’s MSS/DCIs
* The most up-to-date Elements and Standards (our toolkit includes resources as of March 2016, please check the CACMS site for the most accurate documents for your schools accreditation)

**Critical Tips & Lessoned Learned from Calgary’s Accreditation**

**Student Accreditation Committee**

* Start early. If possible, put together a student accreditation team approximately 2 years *before* the site visit.
* Have regularly scheduled meetings of the student accreditation team (monthly at minimum)
* Delegate work to working group, so that the bigger group is not bogged down
* Appoint 1 or 2 student report (ISA) leads who are **not** part of the medical society
  + This role will require a significant amount of work
* Medical societies should anticipate 10-25% of their time during the 2 accreditation preparation years will be dedicated for accreditation
* The student accreditation committee should be compromised of both Med Soc reps and students at large

**Resourcing**

* The student accreditation committee should be provided with an independent assistant/researcher to support the students (0.25FTE -24 to -6months, and 0.5FTE in -6 to 0 months)
  + Calgary did not do this, and we regret not having additional support
  + Ensure this person, or someone on your team has expertise in data set analysis and software (i.e SPSS, Mathlab, etc)
* Utilize lunches, ½ days off, prizes (all supported by medical school at the request of the student accreditation committee) to incentivize students to complete surveys
* Medical Society presidents to advocate and secure flexibility (i.e ability to get time off, flex days, etc) for those students working on accreditation

**Data Collection & Reporting Design**

* Utilize a 2 survey, plus (if required) focus group/sample survey data collection model
  + Pre-accreditation survey -16 to -12 months pre site visit
  + Analyze the pre-survey data
  + Accreditation survey -12 to -10 months pre site visit
  + Focus groups/sample surveys -6 to -4 months pre site visit
* Find the last ISA from your school AND interim accreditation student reports, utilize these as baselines/reference
  + Remember accreditation should be continuous quality improvement
* Review the last 2 (at minimum), ideally 4 years of CGQ data for your school
* Review national trends (ie wellness, burnout, national CGQ, etc)
* Look to academic literature to support arguments
* Look at lots of other ISAs as examples
* Where possible utilize survey questions used and validated in other ISAs/ research tools
* Provide your medical school accreditation committee the questions with time to provide feedback, as well invite them to provide questions
* Utilize an online survey tool (note entering survey questions into the software takes time)
  + Ensure this tool can export the data to your stats software

**Words of Caution about Likert scales & other methods**

* Be very careful with Likert scales
  + There is a recurrent error in AFMC likert scales. AFMC utilizes 3 different likert scales, 1 of which is asymmetric and non-equidistant. Unfortunately, this same scale is utilized in CGQ questions.
  + Spend some time in survey design addressing this (with your faculty and CACMS)
* Seek the assistance of a biostatistician (school to cover costs) in pre-survey design to ensure no errors in survey design/methodology
* Decide pre-survey launch whether or not your ISA will utilize more complex statistical tools, such as proportional odds, and integrate test requirements into the survey
* Qualitative data and open text boxes are excellent tools-just be sure to know how to analyze the data they provide

**ISA Report writing**

* Calgary’s first released ISA draft, was draft 4, and the final submitted document was draft 10
  + Anticipate many iterations
  + ISA writing should start around the same time as the pre-survey, and will take almost 1 year
* Make the penultimate version of the ISA available to the student body (for at least 1 month) and invited the entire student body and recent alumni to provide feedback. Host open houses. Capture all this feedback and use it to polish the document before final submission
* Early stages of ISA writing should be done by a small working group (no more than 5), which includes the medical society president, and a student expert on the school’s accreditation. This group should plan to meet for ½ weekly for a few months, with at least another ½ day of writing each week.
* After preliminary drafts of the ISA are complete, circulate to the medical school accreditation committee (as early as possible so that they can begin addressing student concerns) as well as circulate to the medical student accreditation committee, medical society council, and other critical students.
  + This process should be both formative and iterative
* Utilize focus groups or mini surveys to check if the needle has moved on hot topics, and/or to fill any gaps in the data.
* The ISA may have areas that are narrative, but the majority of the document should be based upon data, and supported by literature or policies

**Other lessons learnt**

* The accreditation preparation process is more important than the site visit
* The ISA writing process can be bumpy
* Students, faculty members, administrators and the school may not agree with what is in the ISA- this is likely because not all the data is positive.
* Be open, transparent and approachable by students, faculty and admin.
  + Calgary co-leads had innumerous 1-on-1 meetings
* The accreditation process is taxing on everyone. It’s tedious and stressful for students, faculty and admin.
* When disagreements occur, take a step back, reflect on the situation, and reground yourself with the notion that everyone wants the same outcome-a positive accreditation and the best school possible.
* Remember the ISA is Independent. While the school can disagree with aspects of the ISA, it is the students report, the faculty should not pressure, coerce, harass, intimidate, etc students. If they do, first try to resolve with members of senior administration, if that fails contact the CFMS VP Med Ed and/or CACMS to report
* Remember, the ISA is a requirement of accreditation. Students should not experience any personal retribution from the faculty/school for anything said in the ISA or the student meetings. If a student feels that principle has been compromised in any way, they should contact the CFMS VP Med Ed and/or CACMS to report

If you should have any questions about the Calgary accreditation process, please do not hesitate to contact:

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