

WFME RECOGNITION

*NEAQA's experience
and
lessons learned*



What is WFME?

- The **World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)** is a global organization dedicated to improving the quality of medical education worldwide.
- WFME sets **international standards for medical education** and works to ensure consistency, transparency, and high quality across countries and regions.
- **WFME's Recognition Programme** delivers an independent, transparent and rigorous method of ensuring that accreditation of medical schools worldwide is at an internationally accepted and high standard.
- WFME evaluates compliance of accrediting agencies with pre-defined criteria.



BME Recognition Programme

➤ Established in response to two primary concerns:

1. The existence of an **accreditation system alone does not guarantee that the system will result in trustworthy decisions** on the quality of programmes in medical education; this requires the accreditation system itself to operate in a robust, transparent and norm-referenced way.
2. The **rapid expansion in the number of medical schools worldwide** has created a growing market for accreditation, and some private firms and individual consultants now offer an accreditation service of little worth.

BME Recognition Programme

- **WFME does not accredit individual medical schools!**
- WFME evaluates the legal standing, accreditation process, post-accreditation monitoring, and decision-making processes of an accreditation agency for programmes or schools of basic medical education (BME).
- **WFME Recognition Status** of an agency confers the understanding that the quality of medical education in its accredited schools is at an appropriate and rigorous standard.
- Through the Recognition Programme, WFME aims to ensure **patient safety** through **competent practising doctors**; and it aims to **protect medical students** from studying in poor quality schools.

BME Recognition Programme – BENEFITS



For everyone

the existence of an accreditation system that has not been recognised does not guarantee the quality of programmes

Students

protection against education in sub-standard medical schools

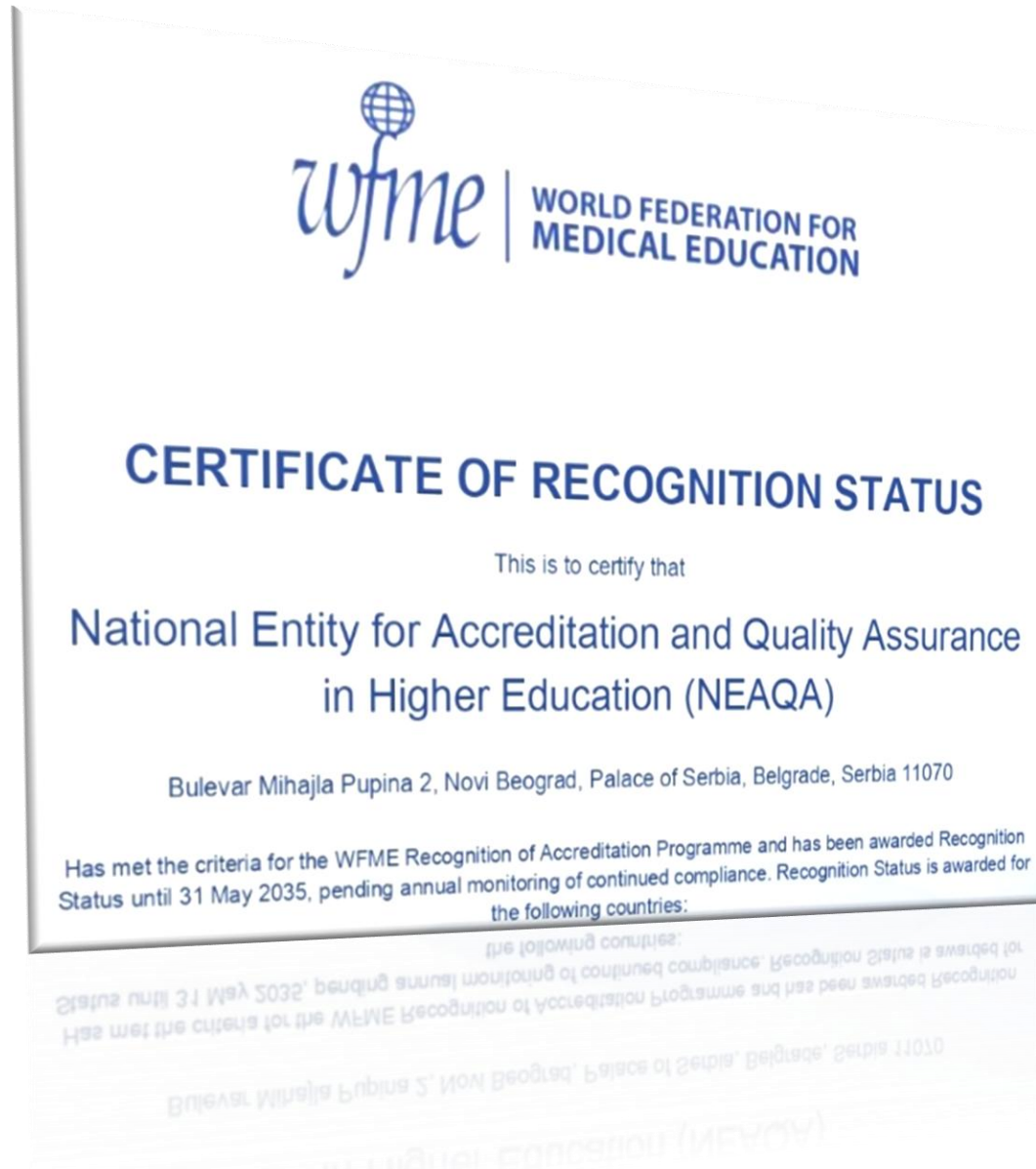
Employers

an authoritative measure of the quality of accreditation, and the standard of accredited medical schools

Accrediting Agencies

an indicator of international best practice

Global mark of recognition



ECFMG Recognized Accreditation Status

- In 2010, **ECFMG** introduced medical school accreditation by a recognized accrediting agency.
- This initiative is now known as the Recognized Accreditation Policy.
- “**Recognized accreditation**” means that the accrediting agency of a medical school has itself been reviewed and recognized by an external quality assurance organization.
- WFME is one of the organizations approved by ECFMG.





WFME Recognition Process: Overview

1

**Letter of
Intent**

2

**Preliminary
application:**

**Eligibility
check**

**(Self-assessment
through the
WFME Portal)**

3

**Full
application**

**(Self-assessment
through the
WFME Portal)**

4

**Site visit
&
Decision-
making**

**(Medical faculty
& Agency)**

5

**Report,
Decision
&
Follow-up**

Enhancing the quality of medical education worldwide

Welcome!

THE WFME PROGRAMME FOR RECOGNITION OF ACCREDITING AGENCIES FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION

WFME Recognition Programme

The Recognition Programme delivers an independent, transparent and rigorous method of ensuring that accreditation of medical schools worldwide is at an internationally accepted and high standard. WFME evaluates compliance of accrediting agencies with pre-defined criteria.

This portal will allow you to access and complete all elements of the WFME Recognition Process - submission of the Preliminary Application and the Full Application, finalising the details of the WFME site visit to your agency, reviewing the WFME Recognition Report and completing the annual monitoring after the WFME Recognition Status is awarded.

Period 1



[View Preliminary Application](#)

[View Full Application](#)

[WFME Recognition Report](#)

[Update Assessed Programmes](#)

[Download Certificate](#)

I. Letter of intent: tips and tricks

- State your intention clearly!
- List the medical schools that you accredit!
- Present your agency's legal basis!
- Emphasize your mandate and independence!
- Commit resources and readiness!
- Highlight expected outcomes!
- Close with openness and cooperation!



2. Preliminary application: requirements

➤ Purpose:

- To avoid problems later in the process (eligibility, missing documents, agency not ready)
- Ensures the agency is capable of undergoing recognition before a full application is accepted

➤ Submission through the WFME Portal:

- **Answer:** Complete sentences, explanation of how the agency meets each criterion (or why not, with context)
- **Criterion:** Each answer corresponds to a WFME Recognition Programme Criterion (or sub-parts)
- **Guidance:** WFME provides prompts, but you can add more info if relevant
- **Supporting evidence:** Organogram of agency's internal structure/external relationships (e.g., ministries, other agencies) & Agency's legal status (law or official rules establishing authority, independence, mandate)



2. Preliminary application: requirements

➤ **Style / Effort level**

- No suggested word count (answers can be short)
- Same document can serve as evidence for multiple criteria
- Upload only relevant documents (avoid generic accreditation docs not related to medicine)
- Only limited annexes required (unlike full application)
- No official translations needed (just working English versions or extracts)

➤ **Tip**

- Even though it's a “light screening”, agencies should still engage early with medical faculties, especially the one that will host the WFME-observed site visit, to provide accurate medicine-specific context



3. Full application: requirements

- **Narrative self-evaluation** of the agency against all WFME criteria
(legal basis, standards, procedures, independence, transparency, quality improvement)
- Detailed description of **how criteria are met**, with references to supporting documents
- Upload of **mandatory annexes**:
 - Accreditation standards and procedures manuals
 - Guidelines for self-evaluation (template) and site visits
 - Sample accreditation reports and decision templates
 - Legal act/statute, organisational charts
 - Peer-review policies and training materials
 - Financial overview (5 years)
- Submission through the **WFME Portal** (at least **8 weeks before site visit**)
- Ahead of the WFME site visit, agencies must also provide:
 - The medical HEI's **self-evaluation report** (incl. one example from another HEI)
 - Agency's (peer-review) **accreditation report** for that HEI



3. Full application: requirements

- ✓ Requires **comprehensive annexes** (unlike preliminary phase)
- ✓ **No certified translations** needed – only relevant extracts in English
- ✓ Heavier than preliminary: essentially a **self-study of the agency**
- ✓ **Engage closely with medical faculties** for medicine-specific data
- ✓ Particularly important: **prepare carefully with the HEI** that will host the WFME-observed site visit

TIPS &
TRICKS 

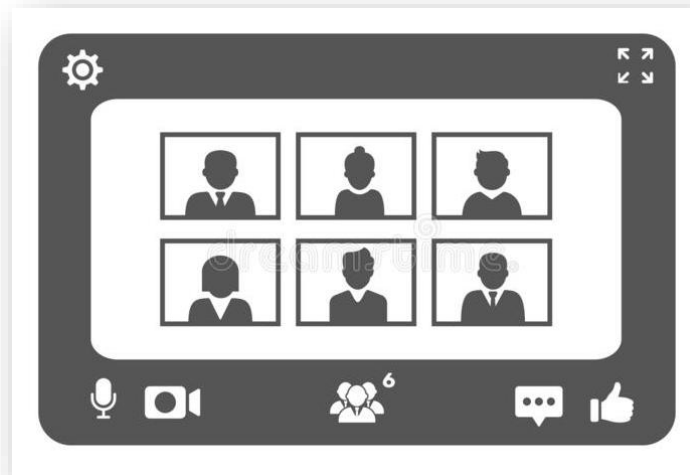
4. Site visit: peer-review

- WFME Recognition Team (3–5 experts) visits the agency & medical HEI
- **Observation of a live accreditation (peer-review) site visit** at one medical HEI (must be fully operational, with students present)
- Meetings with agency management, reviewers, HEIs & stakeholders reps.
- Visits must be of **sufficient length** and cover a wide range of facilities/stakeholders
- **WFME team does not evaluate the medical school itself!**



4. Site visit: decision-making

- Recognition Team also observe how accreditation decisions are made
*this took place during a NEAQA's Commission for Accreditation session
- The meeting was held online (via Zoom), WFME experts joined remotely
- Purpose:
 - WFME verifies that decisions are transparent, consistent, and based on published standards
 - Complements the observed site visit at the medical faculty



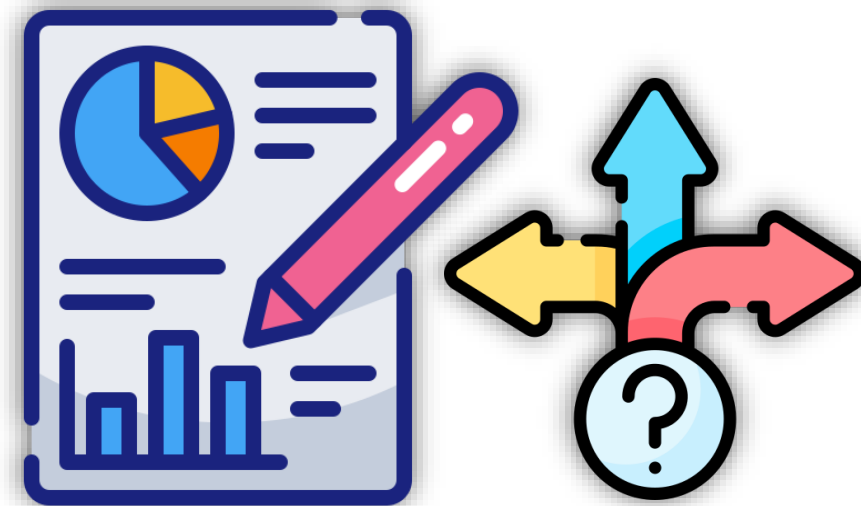
4. Site visit: practicalities

- Agency must arrange and cover local logistics (hotel, local transport, interpretation if needed)
- WFME Secretariat arranges international flights; agency is invoiced
- Professional conduct is expected: no gifts, no unnecessary hospitality
- Agency arranges online decision-making process (session via ZOOM)



5. Report, Decision & Follow-up

- WFME Recognition Team prepares a draft report after the site visit
- Agency receives the draft and may submit factual corrections/comments within a set deadline
- WFME Recognition Team finalizes the report and submits it to the WFME Recognition Committee
- Recognition Committee takes the final decision:
 - **Recognition**
 - **Recognition with conditions,**
 - **Deferral, or**
 - **Denial**
- Agency is notified in writing
- Decision is published on WFME website



5. Report, Decision & Follow-up

- Decisions are usually accompanied by **conditions**
- Agencies are expected to address deficiencies within a strict deadline (usually 6–18 months, depending on issue)
- Recognition is now granted for a maximum of 6 years (10 years in NEAQA's case, under previous rules)
- Agencies must submit **annual monitoring reports**
- **Annual fee** (USD 2,000)
- The process ends with recognition, but continues with annual monitoring and quality improvement



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Plan early** – recognition takes 18–24 months
- **Budget realistically** – fees are high (USD 60,000 + travel + annual fee)
- **Engage stakeholders** – inform and prepare medical HEI(s)
- **Expect conditions** – WFME almost always sets follow-up requirements
- **Communicate closely with WFME Secretariat** – very supportive
- **Strategic benefits outweigh the challenges!!!**



The background features a dynamic design with thick, flowing blue and red lines that sweep across the frame. A prominent circular graphic, composed of concentric blue and red rings, is positioned in the lower-left quadrant. The overall aesthetic is modern and professional, with a color palette dominated by blue and red.

Thank you for your attention!

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17/09/2025 CEENQA bi-monthly meeting