



GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ACCM OPERATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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INTRODUCTION

We are living in unprecedented and challenging times. It is not certain when / if we will return to “business as normal” or when international travel will once again be feasible. A number of clinical, pre-clinical and headquarter inspections were cancelled this year and will need to be rescheduled. These guidelines have been developed to assist with prioritizing and conducting inspections in the next 12-18 months. This is intended to be a short term plan to cover the immediate COVID - 19 crisis and will be reviewed on a regular basis as the situation evolves and as additional information is gained from the schools and their local governments.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following general guiding principles are adapted from LCME¹ and WFME²

Guiding Principles for the Accreditation Process:

1. Flexibility and innovation without loss of integrity of the accreditation process and institutional value.
2. Balance between the different COVID-related needs and realities among schools and the equally different needs and realities among survey team members and ACCM members.
3. Respect for the planning and preparation schools have done to date without loss of appreciation of the factors of uncertainty including travel restrictions, social distancing requirements, testing availability and availability of hotels/ restaurants / appropriate group gathering capacity beyond the schools’, the survey teams’ or the ACCM’s control.
4. Balance between individual safety/public health considerations and the need to provide accreditation as close as possible to the scheduled accreditation cycle for each school.
5. Establishment of a process that mirrors to the fullest extent possible the interactions between the school and survey team in the pre-pandemic accreditation visit process.

While the wishes of the school will be considered during the scheduling process the final decision to defer a site visit will rest with ACCM. In instances where an

¹ <https://lcme.org/covid-19/>

² WFME Internet Based Seminar June 24th 2020

inspection was postponed after the school had submitted the necessary documentation, the school may be asked to submit updated information for the rescheduled visit.

ACCM INSPECTIONS

PRE-CLINICAL CAMPUS INSPECTIONS

The timing of a Pre-clinical Campus inspection will be determined by the Convenor according to a number of priorities. These include the expiry date of the current accreditation period and whether a school is on conditional accreditation or has problem areas identified on the databases, self-study questionnaire, clinical inspections or COVID-19 survey. A school due to appear before NCFMEA in the upcoming year may also be considered a priority.

Schools with full accreditation or mid-cycle accreditation inspections scheduled in 2020 will be notified that the 2020 date(s) will be used for a virtual inspection. This may extend to inspections scheduled for early 2021.

Step 1. Pre-inspection Preparation

The members of the inspection team review all of the documentation (self-study questionnaire, annual and cohort databases etc.) submitted by the school and speak by conference call to determine which elements of the written submission have sufficient documentation to be considered satisfactory and which elements require follow-up. The areas determined to be complete and satisfactory will be eliminated from the schedule for the virtual inspection.

Step 2: Virtual Inspection

The timing of the virtual inspection will be coordinated between the Team and the school. The duration will vary and the agenda will be scheduled over a number of days. The purpose of the virtual inspection is to clarify information and/or fill in gaps of information noted by the team in the materials submitted by the school.

Not more than six weeks before the inspection the Convenor shares with the school the elements/areas that will be addressed during the inspection and they collaborate to generate the schedule. The Inspection team may ask the school for additional materials at any point up to and including conclusion of the virtual

inspection. However, no school-generated updates/materials will be accepted at any point beyond 30 calendar days before the virtual inspection. The inspection report is based on the information available at the time of the virtual inspection.

Following the inspection, the Team reconvenes to determine whether or not there were areas of the standards in which performance was less than satisfactory and if there is a need for a second virtual inspection. If a second inspection is deemed necessary this will be communicated to the school leadership either during the exit interview or shortly thereafter.

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed to be unnecessary then the remainder of the post- inspection process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report, occurs as usual and the school receives a report for factual correction by email within ten days of the virtual inspection.

Step 3: Additional Virtual Inspection

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed necessary this may:

- a. Occur at any point after the first virtual visit and ideally in time for the report to be reviewed by the ACCM at the next scheduled Board meeting.
- b. Be of variable duration and may be as short as one day depending on the number of areas to be reviewed.
- c. Involve a limited number of team members and a smaller, targeted number of onsite session participants.

The remainder of the post-inspection process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report, occurs as usual.

Proposed Virtual Schedule

The standard schedule for a Pre-clinical Campus Inspection is outlined in detail in the *ACCM Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools of Medicine, Appendix 1*.

The inspection is conducted in a predetermined and structured format to ensure that all teams evaluate individual schools with uniformity and consistency.

Interviews will be scheduled over at least two days.

The following is intended as a general guide and the order, length or format may be modified at the discretion of the Convenor and /or as dictated by local circumstances or the content of the written submission.

Interview 1:

The Team meets with senior management and administrative staff including, if appropriate, members of the HQ team. The Team will meet with the school CEO (or equivalent) and CAO to confirm the structure and organisation of the school, to inquire about its strategy and future plans and any important issues that it is facing.

Interview 2

The Team meets with the Chair of the Board of Trustees and reviews the minutes of the Board and its role in providing broad institutional policies, selecting the CEO and CAO, securing financial resources, and overseeing management's performance of its duties and responsibilities with the CEO.

Interview 3

The Team meets with the clinical deans and course directors to discuss the management and integration of the pre-clinical and clinical science courses, oversight of multidisciplinary courses and senior electives.

Interview 4

The Team meets with the administrator for admissions and the Chair of the Admission Committee and the Chair of the Student Promotion and Evaluation Committee and reviews the minutes of these committee meetings.

Interview 5

The Team meets with the chief financial officer and CAO and reviews the most recently independently audited financial accounts, sources of income, debt, the budget planning process, the adequacy of financial resources, student fees and fees refunds policy.

Interview 6

The Team meets in a closed-door session with students who are selected by the student body. The Team elicits their views on the quality of the curriculum, the faculty and student support services and other matters pertinent to the ACCM

Standards of Accreditation and reviews the findings from the *Independent Student Questionnaire*.

Interview 7

The Team meets with faculty representatives from the pre-clinical science and the clinical science departments.

Interview 8

The Team meets with the Chair of the Curriculum Committee, all available department chairs, clinical deans and course directors in the pre-clinical and clinical science departments to review the school's curriculum content, delivery, implementation, and management. The team reviews the minutes of the Curriculum Committee and the school's process for obtaining student evaluation of faculty teaching effectiveness.

Interview 9

The Team may conduct a virtual tour of the facilities of the school including auditoriums/ classrooms teaching facilities, laboratories, clinical skills laboratory, student lounge, faculty and administrative offices, library and IT facilities. The team meets with the chief librarian, Head of IT and head of security.

Interview 10

The Team meets with Government officials and with any faculty not included in the above. A virtual tour of adjacent clinical sites may be conducted.

Interview: Exit interview

The Team meets with the school's academic leadership to provide initial feedback and to highlight any matters of concern that require urgent remediation.

CLINICAL SITE INSPECTIONS

The timing of clinical site inspections will be determined by the Convenor according to a number of priorities. These include areas of non-compliance identified on a previous inspection or in the documentation submitted annually by the school. The length of time since the last inspection or if this is a new site that has not yet been inspected will also be considered. Sites with more than 2-3 cores and sites with students from more than one of the ACCM accredited schools may also be given a higher priority.

Schools with clinical sites inspections scheduled in 2020 will be notified that the dates will be used for the first virtual component of the inspection. This may extend to clinical sites due for inspection in early 2021.

Step 1. Pre-Inspection Preparation

The members of the inspection team review all of the documentation (hospital questionnaire, annual and cohort databases etc.) submitted by the school prior to the virtual inspection and speak by conference call to determine which elements of the written submission have sufficient documentation to be considered satisfactory and which require follow-up.

Step 2. Virtual Inspection

The timing of the virtual inspection will be coordinated between the team and the school. The duration will vary and the agenda may be scheduled over more than one day. The purpose of the virtual inspection is to clarify information and/or fill in gaps of information noted by the team in the materials submitted by the school.

Not more than six weeks before the inspection, the Convenor shares with the school the elements/areas that will be addressed during the inspection and they collaborate to generate the schedule. The Inspection team may ask the school for additional materials at any point up to and including conclusion of the virtual inspection. However, no school-generated updates/materials will be accepted at any point beyond 30 calendar days before the virtual inspection. The inspection report is based on the information available at the time of the virtual inspection.

Following the inspection, the Team reconvenes to determine whether or not there were areas of the standards in which performance was less than satisfactory and if there is a need for a second virtual inspection. If a second inspection is deemed necessary this will be communicated to the school leadership either during the exit interview or shortly thereafter.

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed to be unnecessary then the remainder of the post- inspection process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report occurs as usual.

Step 3: Additional Virtual Inspection.

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed necessary this may:

- a. Occur at any point after the first virtual visit.
- b. Be of variable duration and as short as one day depending on the number of areas to be reviewed.
- c. Involve a limited number of team members and a smaller, targeted number of onsite session participants.

The remainder of the post-inspection process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report, occurs as usual.

Proposed Virtual Schedule

The standard schedule for a Clinical Site Inspection is outlined in detail in the *ACCM Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools of Medicine Appendix 3*.

The inspection is conducted in a predetermined and structured format to ensure that all teams evaluate individual clinical sites with uniformity and consistency. Interviews may be scheduled over more than one day. If a clinical site is being inspected on behalf of more than one school, students and faculty will be interviewed separately for each school.

The following is intended as a general guide and the order, length or format may be modified at the discretion of the Convenor and /or as dictated by local circumstances or the content of the written submission.

Interview 1

The Team interviews a representative group of medical students from the school who are participating in clinical cores (including family medicine) and in senior electives. The students must be selected by the student body and should include students who have completed each of the core clerkships. *In order to meet this latter requirement, it may be necessary to invite students who have completed their core clerkships and are no longer at that site to participate in the interviews.*

Interview 2

The Clinical Dean for the School will be interviewed at regular intervals during the accreditation cycle or as deemed necessary by the Convenor but will not be interviewed in the course of every clinical site inspection for the school.

Interview 3

The Team interviews the hospital medical education/clerkship director, the Clinical Department Chairs, course director/coordinator and/or preceptors/residents involved in medical student education for each core.

Interview 4

The Team interviews senior hospital executive(s).

Interview 5

The Team may conduct a virtual tour of the clinical facilities especially if this is the first time the site has been inspected by ACCM, ideally led by the medical students. The tour includes inspection of major clinical departments, ambulatory facilities, the hospital library and IT facilities and sleeping quarters for students on call.

Interview 6: Exit Interview

At the end of the visit the inspection team may interview key personnel to seek clarification on matters arising. If there is some significant area of noncompliance requiring immediate attention this should be mentioned at this time.

HQ INSPECTIONS

The timing of HQ inspections will be determined by the Convenor according to a number of priorities. These include areas of non-compliance identified on a previous inspection or in the documentation submitted annually by the school. The length of time since the last inspection or a new site that has not yet been inspected will also be considered. Schools with HQ inspections scheduled in 2020 will be notified that the dates will be used for the first virtual component of the inspection. This may extend to HQ sites due for inspection in early 2021.

Step 1. Pre-inspection Preparation

The members of the inspection team review all of the documentation (annual and cohort databases, financial reports etc.) submitted by the school prior to the virtual inspection and speak by conference call to determine which elements of the submission have sufficient documentation to be considered satisfactory and which elements of the written submission require follow-up.

The topic areas determined to be complete and satisfactory are eliminated from the schedule for the virtual inspection.

Step 2. Virtual Inspection

The timing of the virtual inspection will be coordinated between the team and the school. The duration will vary and the agenda may be scheduled over more than one day. The purpose of the virtual inspection is to clarify information and/or fill in gaps of information noted by the team in the materials submitted by the school.

Not more than six weeks before the inspection the Convenor shares with the school the elements/areas that will be addressed during the inspection and they collaborate to generate the schedule. The Inspection team may ask the school for additional materials at any point up to and including conclusion of the virtual inspection. However, no school-generated updates/materials will be accepted at any point beyond 30 calendar days before the virtual inspection. The inspection team report is based on the information available at the time of the virtual inspection.

Following the inspection, the Team reconvenes to determine whether or not there were areas of the standards in which performance was less than satisfactory and if there is a need for a second virtual inspection. If a second inspection is deemed necessary this will be communicated to the school leadership either during the exit interview or shortly thereafter.

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed to be unnecessary then the remainder of the post- inspection process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report, occurs as usual.

Step 3: Additional Virtual Inspection

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed necessary this may:

- a. Occur at any point after the virtual visit depending on urgency and priorities.
- b. Be as short as one half- day depending on the number of areas to be reviewed.
- c. Involve a limited number of team members and a smaller, targeted number of onsite session participants.

The remainder of the post-visit process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report, occurs as usual.

Proposed Virtual Schedule

The standard schedule for the administrative headquarter Inspection is outlined in detail in the *ACCM Procedures for the Accreditation of Schools of Medicine Appendix 4*.

The inspection is conducted in a predetermined and structured format to ensure that all teams evaluate HQs with uniformity and consistency. Interviews may be scheduled over more than one day. The format will vary depending on which administrative functions are conducted at the HQ and on the location of the HQ in relation to the pre-clinical campus.

The following is intended as a general guide and the order, length or format may be modified at the discretion of the Convenor and /or as dictated by local circumstances or the content of the written submission.

Interview 1

The Team meets with senior management and relevant administrative team members. This may include financial and admissions staff.

Interview 2

The Team meets with the senior academic staff at the site. This may include the Chair of the Admissions committee if Admissions are administered from the HQ.

Interview 3

The Team may conduct a virtual tour the facility.

Interview 4

The visit concludes with a brief exit interview.

FIFTH SEMESTER INSPECTIONS

The timing of fifth semester inspections will be determined by the Convenor according to a number of priorities. These include areas of non-compliance identified on a previous inspection or in the documentation submitted annually by the school. The length of time since the last inspection or a new site that has not yet been inspected will also be considered. If the administrative headquarters and semester five programme are co-located, a combined inspection may be carried out.

Schools with fifth semester inspections scheduled in 2020 will be notified that the dates will be used for the first virtual component of the inspection. This may extend to fifth semester sites due for inspection in early 2021.

Step1. Pre-Inspection Preparation

The members of the inspection team review all of the documentation (annual and cohort databases, financial reports etc.) submitted by the school prior to the virtual inspection and speak by conference call to determine which elements of the written submission have sufficient documentation to be considered satisfactory and which require follow-up. The topic areas determined to be complete and satisfactory are eliminated from the schedule for the virtual inspection.

Step 2. Virtual Inspection

The timing of the virtual inspection will be coordinated between the team and the school. The duration will vary and the agenda may be scheduled over more than one day. The purpose of the virtual inspection is to clarify information and/or fill in gaps of information noted by the team in the materials submitted by the school.

Not more than six weeks before the inspection the Convenor shares with the school the elements/areas that will be addressed during the inspection and they

collaborate to generate the schedule. The Inspection team may ask the school for additional materials at any point up to and including conclusion of the virtual inspection. However, no school-generated updates/materials will be accepted at any point beyond 30 calendar days before the virtual inspection. The inspection team report is based on the information available at the time of the virtual inspection.

Following the inspection, the Team reconvenes to determine whether or not there were areas of the standards in which performance was less than satisfactory and if there is a need for a second virtual inspection. If a second inspection is deemed necessary this will be communicated to the school leadership either during the exit interview or shortly thereafter.

If an additional virtual inspection is deemed to be unnecessary then the remainder of the post- inspection process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report occurs as usual.

Step 3. Additional Virtual Inspection

If an additional virtual inspection is necessary this may:

- a. Occur at any point after the first virtual visit depending on urgency & priorities.
- b. Be as short as one half-day depending on the number of areas to be reviewed.
- c. Involve a limited number of team members and a smaller, targeted number of onsite session participants.

The remainder of the post-visit process i.e., finalization of the Inspection report occurs as usual.

Proposed Virtual Schedule

The following is intended as a general guide and the order, length or format may be modified at the discretion of the Convenor and /or as dictated by local circumstances or the content of the written submission.

Interview 1

The Team meets with medical students from the school who are participating in the Semester five programme.

Interview 2

The Team meets with the faculty/teaching staff who deliver the Semester five programme and the administrative team which supports it.

Interview 3

The Team may conduct a virtual tour of the facilities (especially if this is the first time the site has been inspected by ACCM), ideally led by the medical students.

Interview 4: Exit Interview

At the end of the visit the inspection team may meet with key personnel. At this time the Team may choose to seek clarification on matters arising. If there is some significant area of noncompliance requiring immediate attention this should be mentioned at this time.