



# Health Professions Education Gazette

## ***Editorial Team***

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## **Accreditation in Medical Education; A historic perspective**

**Dr. Mohammed Elhassan Elsayed**

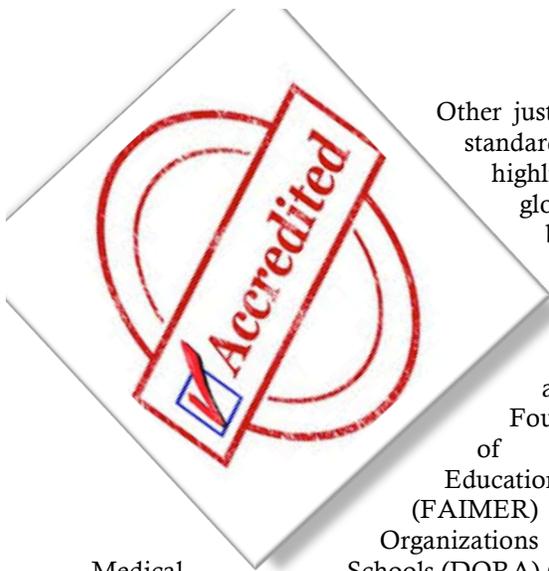
Accreditation is quality assurance process in education. Historically, the first attempts of accreditation in post-secondary education began in the USA in 1787 when the University of the State of New York was assigned to visit each college in the state to review its work (Harclerod 1980). In medical education, Between 1876 and 1903, representatives of medical colleges in the USA developed a register for medical colleges that met specific agreed-upon standards (El-Khawas, 2001). In 1905, the American Medical Association established its council on medical education, which produced a ten category system for rating medical schools. The first list of medical schools accepted by the association was published in 1907 (El-Khawas, 2001). This continues till the year 1910 when the work by Abraham Flexner (1910) can be considered as the start of real accreditation in the field (Boelen, 2002; Flexner, 1910) as it contains site visits also. In the last two decades, the need for accreditation in medical education rose in response to changes in medical practice and health care delivery systems (Abdalla, 2008).

This continues till the year 1910 when the work by Abraham Flexner (1910) can be considered as the start of real accreditation in the field (Boelen, 2002; Flexner, 1910) as it contains site visits also. In the last two decades, the need for accreditation in medical education rose in response to changes in medical practice and health care delivery systems (Abdalla,



*Globalisation and the cross-border movement of the health professionals, a major justification of standard setting*

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Other justifications for establishing standards must also be highlighted, including globalisation and the cross-border movement of the health profession (Schwarz, 2000).

Today, more than Ninety-two countries are registered with the Foundation for Advancement of International Medical Education and Research (FAIMER) Directory of Organizations that Recognize/Accredit Medical Schools (DORA) (FAIMER, 2009).

There are many definitions for accreditation in medical education; the common feature between all the definitions indicates that it is a process that aims to ensure quality in medical education (Abdalla, 2012). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines accreditation as "a voluntary peer-review process designed to test the educational quality of new and established medical programmes" (WFME, 2005).

The International Institute of Medical Education defines accreditation as "a self-regulatory process by which governmental, non-governmental, voluntary associations or other statutory bodies grant formal recognition to educational programs or institutions that meet stated criteria of educational quality. Educational programs or institutions are measured against certain standards by a review of written information, self-studies, site visits to the educational program, and thoughtful consideration of the findings by a review committee" (Wojtczak, 2002).

In a publication of the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME), the responsible body for accreditation of medical schools in USA and Canada, the accreditation is defined as "a process of quality assurance in postsecondary education that determines whether an institution or program meets established standards for function, structure, and performance. The accreditation process also fosters institutional and program improvement" (LCME, n.d.).

## Purpose/Rationale of Accreditation

The ultimate goal of accreditation is to improve the health status of communities, and it is one way to improve the outcomes of medical schools to match the changing health care delivery systems and produce practitioner who can serve societies by their health needs and expectations (Abdalla, 2012).

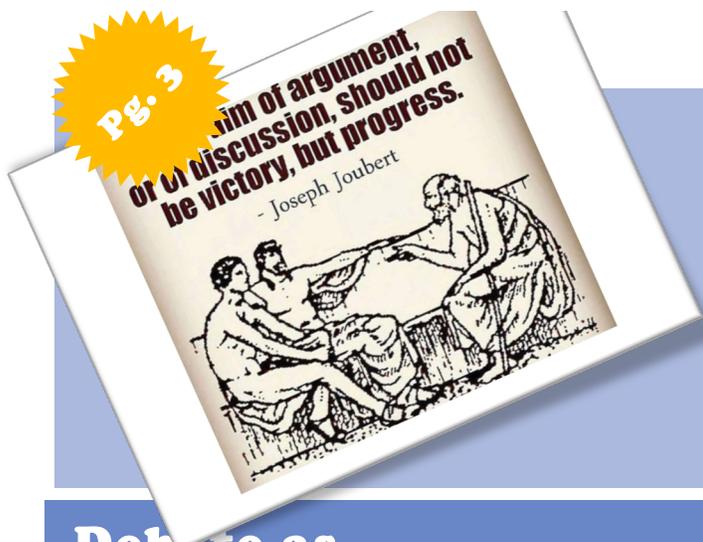
The accreditation standards direct the development of educational programmes, address the programme evaluations, (Schwarz, 2000). Recent advances in the of rules are the work led by the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) in collaboration with the WHO, with the aim to guide quality assurance for medical education to be used worldwide (WHO, 2001).

This work resulted in the publication of the document "Basic Medical Education WFME Global Standards for Quality Improvement" in 2003(WFME 2003) that has been updated till it reaches the last update in 2015 (WFME, 2015).



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## Debate as teaching-learning strategy in higher education

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Higher education success depends largely on the extent to which students are able to think critically and shape their independent opinions based on valid evidences and professional values. <sup>1</sup> Modern teaching strategies like problem-based, team-based learning and research-based learning, are becoming increasingly important in light of the numbers of students achieving low levels of essential competencies in critical thinking, communication and clinical decision making. <sup>2</sup>

One way to allow students to develop critical thinking skills is to use the debate as a teaching-learning strategy. Classroom debate is an active method of teaching and learning with increased acceptance in various disciplines, including medicine and health sciences. This tactic helps students to speak their minds about controversial issues using structured, scientific approach and enhance students' preparedness to defend or oppose a particular stance on a topic. <sup>3</sup> In debate, educators, typically divide the class into "pro" and "con," having students prepare arguments for both sides and then select a side to debate to present in front of the class. <sup>4</sup>

Utilizing debate allows students to understand limitations of their arguments, as well as those of the opposition. Students also discussed how their thinking may have changed or developed over the course of the assignment. Debate preparation enhance the talent of articulating an argument in its important terms, acquire and utilize data and evidence to sustain a principle, categorize and communicate information in a comprehensible

## Debate format? For educators to run a debate, they need to follow certain format:

- 1.** Prepare guidelines and a set of rules to assist students as they prepare for the debate.
  - a. Provide one interactive or practice session on how to run a debate in the classroom
  - b. Include a time frame in which they have to prepare for the debate and how they are to present their material (power point, demonstration, etc).
  - c. Share grading criteria (rubrics, guidelines) before the debate
- 2.** Allow students to choose the controversial topic and to form the team (with and against) and the moderator. The job of the moderator is to ensure the debate stays friendly and that everybody has a chance to participate.
- 3.** Assist students in finding resource about their debates and their structure. Research controversial, news-breaking and stimulating topics to encourage dynamic and energized classroom discussion. Students are more likely to be authentic when they debate a subject to which they can relate.
- 4.** Begin the debate, give students as much autonomy as possible.
- 5.** Allow students to state their opinions and make argument to convince audience and others using relevant resources.
- 6.** Evaluate the debate using some known criteria to students (peer evaluation is encouraged)

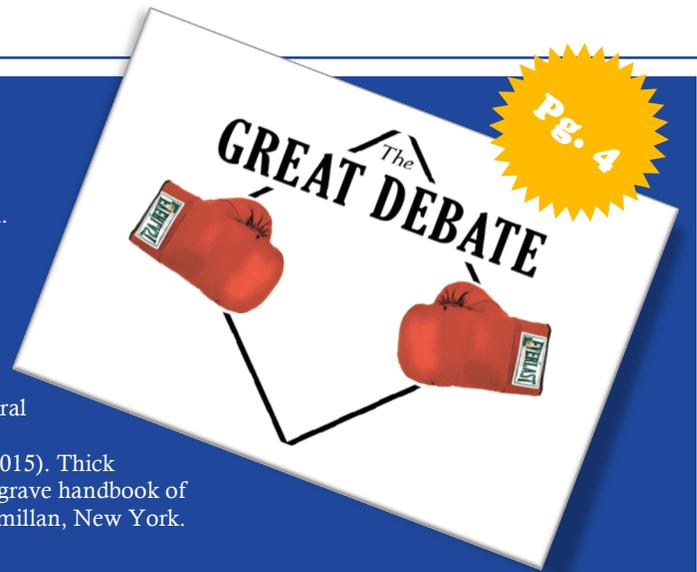
## Essential tips to conduct the debate

- I.** Introduce the topic
- II.** Assign the Affirmative and the Negative team
- III.** Give Time for Research
- IV.** Keep Track of Time
- V.** Remind students that debate must be formal and structure using WIN-WIN approach

*In conclusion, debate in higher education is not about come to class "to fight" rather than utilizing win-win approach to critically think, analyze, and give an impromptu speech. It is a simple and great tool to engage students in their own learning and hone their reasoning and persuasion skills.*

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## Testimonial by Master's Student

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Like many other students, I was unsure of what to expect when I applied for the MHPE program. Nonetheless, I was excited about the unique opportunity to enhance my leadership skills. From a young age, the concept of leadership has always intrigued me. Moreover, its relation and application to health profession made me curious. Therefore, I enrolled in the program to comprehend the intricate relationship that leadership has with the health professions. I found the faculty passionate providing varied learning experiences to enhance my understanding of the program. As the program progressed, all my uncertainties vanished because of the relevance and applicability of the knowledge I gained. Thus, although I chose to major in this program out of curiosity, it is a decision that I will always live to celebrate. I feel elated now that I am approaching the completion of my program. Since enrolling to the program, I have acquired crucial knowledge whose application to real-life situations will not only impact lives positively but also encourage high standards of job executions. Every module I have learned so far aims to improve all aspects of health profession education.

Also, I am happy that I have expanded my knowledge about leadership as I can start right now to make appropriate and impactful change. Therefore, through this program, my objectives of understanding the impact of leadership on health professions have been met.

Another critical factor that I have achieved in the program is to advance my knowledge about teaching. I am passionate about sharing information. However, in today's world, one can easily get confused with the plethora of information available. Through the program, I have learned to validate the information I share with others as an educator. I am well placed to teach undergraduate students courtesy of the program. Not only do I have the ability to think critically but I can also influence others to become critical thinkers who contribute to society positively.

All the benefits that build up by enrolling in this program point to a potentially fruitful career. The current job market is very competitive. It requires people who can provide permanent solutions to the dynamic problems that others are facing. To this end, the course has prepared me well for my career ambitions. As an educator, I am well equipped with the knowledge to initiate positive change in my field of practice. Moreover, the program prepares one with many opportunities for career advancement. Thus, I feel well equipped to tackle any challenge that I may face in my career path.

I am looking forward to being an educator in the health professions field. I realize that being an educator aligns well with my desires and life goals. It puts me in a position to share my knowledge and experiences with others. It will allow me to inspire others in their practice, thereby, influencing the outcome of the tasks that they conduct. My main aim is to improve standards of practice. Therefore, being an educator puts me in a pivotal position to influence the lives of the people with whom I will interact constructively. This ambition comes from the way the course has impacted me. I have a better understanding of the dynamics of the world and wish to contribute by initiating positive change in my field of specialization.



## A Short note by the Editor

Dr. Shaista Salman Guraya



Health Professions Education has become an integral part of health related campuses. Therefore University of Sharjah is endeavoring to increase the momentum of HPE at the institution level. But for whom we are doing all this? "Patient safety" the brand-new construct in HPE is revolutionizing the educational realm. Point to ponder is that who will help us to safe guard this construct? This is the high time to realize. Yes! You got it right. Students are the one who will help us to achieve this. To work as health professions educator, you can no longer rely on your basic instincts or talents to facilitate our students. Now you need to invest your efforts in Teaching and learning, Curriculum Development, Assessment and your Continuous Professional Development. That's all about us to facilitate in doing so. We would be glad to welcome your suggestions and inputs in helping us to shape our roadmap for this evolutionary journey.

### **Future goals of Medical Education Center**

- ✚ To expedite the development process of website of medical education center
- ✚ To maintain the gazette on monthly basis
- ✚ To generate a taskforce of educators in health professions education to revolutionize the learning environment at our institution
- ✚ To facilitate faculty in acquiring best practices in health professions education
- ✚ To come up with a competency based faculty development program in collaboration with Maastricht University.



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