

Council for Higher Education in Israel

**Guidelines for the Planning and Conduct
of Quality Assurance Survey Visits**

2023

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General Information

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of Council for Higher Education in Israel (CHE) Quality Assurance and Compliance with Standards processes for Site Surveys and summarize the responsibilities for Survey Teams and medical schools in preparing for and conducting a CHE survey visit.

Quality Assurance and the CHE

Quality Assurance serves the important general purpose of assuring the public, current students and applicants, government agencies, and professional groups that educational programs and institutions meet or exceed nationally accepted standards of quality for educational process and student outcomes. Quality Assurance by the CHE serves two specific purposes: (1) to determine if a medical education program is in Compliance with Standards and associated Elements and (2) to promote programmatic improvement.

The CHE accredits MD-granting medical education programs in Israel and conducts periodic Quality Assurance and Compliance with Standards reviews upon these programs. The CHE is the authority for the Accreditation and Quality Assurance of medical education programs leading to the MD degree. The CHE has been continuously recognized by the US National Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA) since 1999.

Quality Assurance and Compliance with Standards Reviews

Overview of the Steps in a Quality Assurance and Compliance with Standards Review

Quality Assurance/Compliance with Standards Reviews, typically occur on an eight-year cycle and consist of the following steps:

1. Completion by the institution being assessed of an *Institutional Self-Assessment (including Data Collection Instrument)* (ISA) and Student Survey, and the compilation of supporting documents.
2. Site visit by an independent international Quality Assurance Review Committee (hereinafter referred to as “Survey Team”) of International and Israeli medical education professionals, and preparation of a Quality Assessment Report (QA Report) for review by CHE’s Advisory Committee for Medical Education (ACME). From the QA Report, ACME produces a Compliance Report that is submitted to CHE for its Compliance with Standards decision.
3. Follow-up action on Quality Assessment by the CHE.

Documents Related to the Quality Assurance Process

Documents for Survey Teams

Survey Teams should review publications located on the CHE website (<https://che.org.il/en/council-higher-education-israel-medical-school-accreditation>).

- The ***Standards for Medical Education*** contains the Standards and associated Elements that will be used to review a program in that academic year.
- The ***Survey Report and Team Findings Guide*** contains the instructions for completing, reviewing, and submitting the survey report.
- The ***CHE Review Findings Template Medicine*** contains the specific questions that Survey Team members are expected to answer for each Element. Survey Team members complete their writing assignments using the template.

- The ***Survey Team Findings Template*** should be used to prepare the final list of Survey Team findings for review by ACME and CHE’s Quality Assurance Division and the Dean.
- The ***Visit Schedule Template*** contains a model schedule for the survey visit. This likely will be adapted based on discussions between the Survey Team and the school.

Documents for Schools

In addition to consulting the ***Standards for Medical Education*** and the ***Survey Report Template***, schools should review the following documents at the relevant stage of their self-study process.

- The ***Institutional Self-Assessment*** (which contains the ***Data Collection Instrument***) (***ISA***).
- ***The Role of Students*** outlines the roles and responsibilities of students in the QA process.
- The ***Guide to Institutional Self-Assessment*** describes the process for preparing the self-study report for a Quality Assurance/Compliance with Standards survey.
- ***Student Survey (Pre- Clinical)***
- ***Student Survey Clinical***

Survey Visit Structure and Survey Team Composition

Survey Visit Structure

The visit schedule template found on the CHE website provides a guide for Survey Visit planning. The Survey Team and the school’s Faculty Lead, should modify the template schedule, as necessary, to accommodate the distinctive characteristics of the school being visited.

Prior to a visit or during an initial team meeting during an on-site visit, the team should discuss areas of focus and additional information to be obtained during the visit.

The formal visit begins with a private entrance meeting with the University President, and then the Dean. During the visit, the Survey Team meets with faculty, students, administrators, staff, and representatives of clinical affiliates who can provide or clarify information related to the Standards and Elements. While meetings with faculty members and students typically take place without the presence of institutional leaders, the Dean’s participation is appropriate during some of the team’s meetings, especially those regarding finances. During the visit, the team develops and refines its list of findings. A report is created that will be provided to the Dean within one week of the conclusion of the visit. The report includes the Survey Team’s findings of areas where performance in Elements is unsatisfactory or satisfactory with a need for monitoring. These findings are preliminary and may be altered during the review of the draft report by CHE based on the information in the final survey report. The team’s findings, therefore, are not for widespread dissemination at this point and should be held confidentially by the school leadership.

Survey Team Size and Composition

The CHE is responsible for appointing the members of the Survey Teams. The Survey Team will typically consist of about four senior experienced international medical educators and at least one senior representative of Israeli medical education. Of the international team members, two will be physicians actively engaged in medical practice (“practitioners”), and two medical educators who hold or have held a faculty appointment at international medical programs (“educators”). Each Survey Team has a team Chair and a team Coordinator. The Survey Team may also include an additional CHE professional, public, or student member. Occasionally, upon approval from the CHE and with the medical school’s permission, an observer may join the Survey Team. Observers attend Survey Team meetings with school personnel and receive a copy of the survey package, after approval from the school’s Dean.

Role of the Medical School in the Quality Assurance/Compliance with Standards Process

The Faculty Lead (FL) and the Institution Quality Assurance Coordinator (IQAC) fill two critical roles. The FL should be appointed by the Dean well in advance of the survey visit.

Faculty Lead (FL)

The FL should be a senior faculty member who may also hold an administrative position and who is knowledgeable about the medical school and its educational program. This individual should be able to identify institutional policies and information sources and ensure participation by members of the administration, faculty, and student body before and during the survey visit. Ideally, the FL will be familiar with CHE survey visit processes and the intent of Standards and their Elements and may previously have served on a Survey Team.

The school must ensure that the FL has appropriate administrative support, financial resources, and release time from other duties to accomplish the responsibilities associated with this role. The FL has the following responsibilities:

- Answer questions during ISA preparation
- Assign specific questions/sections of the ISA to individuals with the appropriate institutional knowledge
- Coordinate and ensure adequate support for the ISA and Student Survey
- Ensure that each aspect of multi-part ISA questions are fully addressed
- Synthesize all narrative ISA responses into a cohesive, factually, and stylistically consistent document
- Ensure factual accuracy, consistency among the sections, and clarity in the ISA
- Coordinate the activities of the Self-Assessment Task Force (SATF)
- Ensure the self-study addresses institutional strengths, areas of concern related to Standards and Elements, and strategies to address identified problems
- Develop the survey visit agenda in collaboration with the Institution Quality Assurance Coordinator (IQAC)
- Serve as the school's primary point of contact for the CHE and IQAC.

Institution Quality Assurance Coordinator (IQAC)

The IQAC is the designated permanent Quality Assurance Coordinator at each institution who provides guidance, support, and advice throughout the QA/Compliance process. The IQAC remains in continuous coordination with the CHE on matters of QA at the institution. The IQAC is not responsible for developing or reviewing the content of the ISA. For on-site visits, the IQAC will typically make hotel reservations for the team (if needed), coordinate ground transportation for the visit, schedule meeting rooms for the survey visit, and schedule the necessary faculty and staff identified for sessions during the survey visit.

Survey Visit Preparation and Logistics

Reviewing Survey Team Membership

A draft list of Survey Team members is sent to Deans about four months prior to the survey visit. The Deans should inform the CHE promptly if there are concerns about any team member due to a conflict of interest or other valid reasons.

Hotel Arrangements and Ground Transportation

CHE's QA Review Coordinator is responsible for booking any needed hotel accommodation and/or ground transportation for the Survey Team. A suitable meeting room should be reserved for daily team meetings. The CHE QA Review Coordinator may seek assistance from the Institution Quality Assurance Coordinator (IQAC).

Meals

The school should provide meals (i.e., breakfast, lunch), beverages, and snacks during the time the Survey Team is at the school.

Survey Team's "Deliberation Room" at the Medical School

The Survey Team requires a “deliberation room” at the school equipped with a computer and printer. The home room should have a conference table large enough to accommodate Survey Team meetings with school personnel. A second meeting room is needed for sessions in the case that the Survey Team divides.

The IQAC should provide access to a set of materials in the Survey Team deliberation room. This may include a copy of the ISA, Student Survey, updates provided to the Survey Team before and during the visit, and any other documents requested by the Survey Team, such as course evaluations or syllabi.

All individuals involved in the site survey visit, including Survey Team members, should have name tags.

Gifts to Survey Team Members

The school must not provide gifts to Survey Team members (e.g., food baskets at the hotel, school memorabilia, etc.).

Submission of the Survey Package/Briefing Book and Updates**Survey Package Submission**

Twelve weeks prior to the date of the first day of the survey visit, the Dean's office should submit the survey package according to instructions provided by the CHE.

A complete survey package consists of the following:

- Completed Institutional Self-Assessment (with Data Collection Instrument) – ISA
- Appendixes (supporting documents for each section of the ISA)
- Student Survey analysis

Updates to the Survey Package

Both the Survey Team members and the CHE review the documents in the survey package. If any updating is required prior to the survey visit, the CHE or the IQAC communicates the details to the FL. Updated materials can usually be provided up to 30 calendar days before the visit, as needed. No additional information will be accepted by the team of the CHE after the Survey Team provides its report at the conclusion of the visit.

Student Involvement

A well-conducted Student Survey with a high response rate and a thoughtful analysis of the data (together termed the Independent Student Analysis) provides a necessary contribution to the ISA and useful information for the Survey Team for survey visits.

For information about the role students play in the survey process, see *CHE Role of Students* found on the CHE website. Students should be provided access to this document. In addition to developing the Student Survey, student participation can contribute an important perspective to the self-study task force.

All Survey Teams meet with students during on-site visits. Students should be selected well in advance of the survey so they may provide meaningful input from their own perspectives and that of the student body as a whole. Students should receive a copy of the Student Survey Analysis. A broad range of students should meet with Survey Team members to ensure that the team has access to truly representative information and perspectives. The Survey Team will seek student opinions about a variety of topics related to the medical education program, student services, and the learning environment, including student counseling services, health services, financial aid, and the role of students in institutional policy-making and educational program evaluation. Students also can serve as guides for Survey Team tours during on-site visits.

The Survey Visit

Developing the Survey Visit Schedule

Shortly after receiving the survey package, CHE contacts the IQAC and FL about the visit schedule, which can use the survey visit schedule template posted on the CHE website as a reference. The visit schedule should be customized for the characteristics of the institution, for example, the presence of a regional campus, and based on a pre-review by the Survey Team to identify areas requiring more information/explanation.

The entrance meeting with the University President and faculty Dean should be scheduled well in advance (around the time that the date of the survey visit has been set), so that the dates and times can be locked into their schedules. Other individuals with whom the Survey Team will meet should also be informed about the visit dates and told that their availability and participation are expected for the duration of the visit.

The IQAC and FL should ensure that individuals participating in the visit know the time and location of their meeting(s) with the Survey Team. Tours of education facilities and, if scheduled, of one or more clinical affiliates should be led by student guides. The administrators of affiliated clinical facilities should be advised that Survey Team members may be visiting patient care units but will not be viewing patient records or other confidential information. The Survey Team will NOT be meeting with the directors of these facilities during the tours unless the Survey Team Coordinator agrees to such meetings as part of the visit schedule. Such meetings may occur as part of a scheduled session during the visit.

The Survey Team Report

The Dean will receive a written copy of the Survey Team Report by one week after the conclusion of the visit. The initial Survey Team findings are subject to revision during the review of the survey report and should be held confidential by the school leadership.

Survey Report Review by School

After initial review by the CHE, the Survey Team Coordinator will send the Dean the draft Survey Report. It is the Dean's responsibility to ensure that the draft report is carefully reviewed and that written corrections of errors of fact are sent to the Survey Team Coordinator. Comments related to the team findings should not be included. The Survey Team Coordinator, in consultation with the Survey Team Chair, considers the Dean's comments and makes those changes they consider to be appropriate. The team Coordinator then notifies the Dean of the changes that have been made. If the Dean has remaining concerns about the process of the visit, he or she may send a letter to the CHE. The Dean's letter is reviewed by the CHE when it considers the survey report. No information related to survey report content or Survey Team findings may be included in the letter to the CHE.

The initial Survey Team findings do not necessarily represent the final findings of the CHE. In its review of the Survey Report, the CHE may add, delete, or modify findings of performance in Elements. After receipt of the QA/Compliance Report from the ACME, the CHE also will decide on the program's Compliance with each Standard, and any required follow-up.

The Dean and the institution's chief executive will receive the final Survey Report. An accompanying letter contains the final CHE findings related to performance in Elements and Compliance with Standards, the status of the medical education program, and any request for follow-up. Once the letter arrives, the Dean and the chief executive may release the Survey Report and the letter at their discretion.

Role of the Survey Team in the QA/Compliance Process

Duties of the Survey Team Chair

Overview

The Survey Team Chair serves as the official voice of the team and leads its deliberations during the survey

visit. The Chair leads the Survey Team's discussions as the team works to develop its findings.

Review of the Survey Package

As soon as the survey package becomes available, the Survey Team Chair should review the school's ISA. Any potential problem areas (i.e., Elements that could be unsatisfactory or satisfactory with a need for monitoring) or areas requiring more information/explanation should be communicated to the Survey Team Coordinator before the survey visit begins so that they can contribute to the visit schedule and be compiled into an initial set of summary findings to be discussed at the initial team meeting.

The Survey Visit Schedule

The Chair works with the Survey Team Coordinator to finalize the visit schedule. The Survey Team Chair should review the draft visit schedule with the Survey Team Coordinator to ensure that Standards and Elements are appropriately explored, and that attention is given to potential problem areas.

The Survey Report

The Survey Team Chair is responsible for drafting sections of the QA Report. QA Report sections should address the questions in the *CHE QA Report Template*. When the QA Report and summary team findings have been compiled, the Chair should carefully review them to confirm that the summary team findings are sufficiently documented and supported in the survey report narrative and appendices.

Duties of the Survey Team Coordinator

Overview

The Survey Team Coordinator works with the school's FL and IQAC to plan and finalize the survey visit arrangements, including the survey visit schedule and logistics, and assigns team members to review specific Standards/Elements. The Survey Team Coordinator is responsible for oral and written communication with the school and other team members, and for communication with CHE. All contact between the school and the Survey Team should be through the Survey Team Coordinator. The Survey Team Coordinator is responsible for synthesizing and finalizing the survey report from the written findings and narratives prepared by Survey Team members.

Review of the Survey Package

The Survey Team Coordinator reviews the school's ISA to ensure that it is complete and up to date; if important omissions are discovered, the Survey Team Coordinator asks the school's IQAC and FL to supply the missing materials. The CHE also screens the survey package but does not review these materials in detail. The Survey Team Coordinator should be familiar with the major findings of the ISA, Student Survey Analysis, and the school's Quality Assurance / Compliance history since the previous full survey visit. If members of the Survey Team identify gaps in the pre-survey materials or request additional information, the Survey Team Coordinator works with the FL and IQAC to obtain the requested information.

The Survey Visit Schedule

The Survey Team Coordinator works with the IQAC and FL to develop a draft schedule soon after receiving the survey package. Early study of the survey package by the team members will assist the team Coordinator in developing the visit schedule. The Survey Team Coordinator reviews the draft survey visit schedule with the Survey Team Chair. Once the final schedule has been established, the Survey Team Coordinator asks the IQAC and FL to distribute copies of the survey visit schedule to all Survey Team members.

Survey Report Writing Assignments and Survey Team Initial Findings

The Survey Team Chair divides the items to be reviewed among the team members, asking each to review the information for each of their assigned Elements and to identify any Elements that are satisfactory with a need for monitoring or unsatisfactory, or where there is insufficient information. Survey Team members write a narrative on each assigned area under the relevant question in the *CHE School Survey Report Template*.

Survey Team Meetings

The Survey Team meets prior to the formal start of the visit to make any adjustments in the schedule, confirm responsibilities and review ground rules and timelines, and prioritize areas needing particular attention over the course of the visit (e.g., areas of concern or areas needing additional information or analysis). At this initial meeting, the Survey Team Coordinator should review the preliminary findings developed by Survey Team members based on their review of materials in the survey package.

Contacting the CHE

The Survey Team Coordinator should feel free to contact the CHE before and during the survey visit with questions on the status of the ISA/, the visit arrangements, or the role of an observer (if applicable). Any problems arising during the survey visit that cannot be resolved by the Survey Team Chair and Survey Team Coordinator should be communicated immediately to the CHE by phone or email, or other means.

Finalizing Survey Team Findings

The goals of the survey visit are to:

- Determine the status of each Element, including identifying those Elements where performance is satisfactory with a need for monitoring or unsatisfactory.
- Prepare a Recommendations Report for the improvement of medical education at the Institution.

Together, these findings will form the content of the QA Report and the set of team findings.

The preferred practice is for the Survey Team to progressively develop and refine its summary findings prior to the visit and at work sessions each evening during the visit. The Survey Team Coordinator is responsible for ensuring that the Survey Team makes a judgment about each Element and for drafting the team's findings (or for assigning team members to develop drafts) to be included in the exit report.

The QA Report

The Survey Team Coordinator informs team members of the timetable for preparing their sections of the QA Report. Members write the narratives for their assigned areas while on site or submit them within approximately two weeks of the survey visit, using the *QA Report Template* and following instructions in the *Survey Report and Team Findings Guide*.

The Survey Team Coordinator submits the QA Report draft narrative and accompanying team findings document to the CHE Review Coordinator. After receiving comments from the QAD and making needed changes, the Survey Team Coordinator sends the draft survey report and the findings document to team members and allows them five business days for a review. After incorporating any team comments, the team Coordinator sends the draft survey report to the medical school Dean. The Dean is asked to send written comments to the Survey Team Coordinator, even if there are no suggested changes to the draft survey report. The Dean returns comments on and suggested corrections to the draft survey report to the Survey Team Coordinator within three months of receipt. If the Dean finds errors of fact in the draft survey report, the Survey Team Coordinator reviews the issues with the Survey Team Chair and communicates the outcome to the Dean, specifically referring to each of the Dean's comments. The Dean is informed electronically of the factual corrections that were made and any comments that were not incorporated in the survey report.

The Survey Team Coordinator submits the final QA Report narrative, appendix, Survey Team findings, and associated communications to the QAD. The associated communications include all correspondence to and from the Dean related to the review of the QA Report.

Opportunity for a Conference Call with CHE Personnel Reviewing the QA Report

Should the CHE personnel reviewing a QA Report require clarification of a specific aspect of the report content while preparing their review for the CHE, a conference call between the reviewers and the Survey Team Coordinator will be arranged.

Duties of Survey Team Members

Review of Survey Package

All Survey Team members review the school's survey package in their areas of responsibility as soon as possible. If there are any notable omissions or inconsistencies in the ISA, the Survey Team member informs the Survey Team Coordinator about them so that the Survey Team Coordinator can request additional information or clarification from the school. According to the process and timeline set by the Survey Team Coordinator, each team member notifies the team Coordinator where performance in Elements appears to be satisfactory with a need for monitoring and unsatisfactory and where there is insufficient information to make a performance judgment. This information is compiled by the Survey Team Coordinator and discussed at the initial team meeting. Team members should not communicate directly with the school for any reason.

Main Responsibilities During and After the Survey Visit

Survey Team members are expected to evaluate the educational program and the resources supporting it, leading to an assessment of the school's performance in the Elements contained in the *Standards for Medical Education*. Survey Team members:

- Collect and record additional data and impressions during the visit based on meetings with school personnel and review of additional documentation
- Contribute to development of the consensus list of Elements where performance is satisfactory with a need for monitoring and unsatisfactory
- Provide the Survey Team Coordinator with the assigned written sections of the QA Report, either at the conclusion of the survey visit or approximately two weeks from the conclusion of the survey visit.
- Participate, along with other Survey Team Members, in formulating recommendations for improvement of medical education at the School.
- Review and correct the draft QA Report prepared by the team Coordinator by the deadline set so that the team's final survey report and accompanying Survey Team findings can be formatted and forwarded to the CHE.

Travel

The CHE covers the cost of the entire Quality Assessment Review, including, among other things, flights to and from Israel, ground transportation, and accommodation. Before the visit, Survey Team members receive a copy of the CHE reimbursement policy with instructions on submitting requests for reimbursement.

Appendix A: Draft - Typical Survey Timeline

≈ Months +/- Survey Visit	Responsible Individuals/Groups	Activities
-24/18	Dean	Notify the CHE QA Division of the FL and IQAC
-18	CHE QA and Dean FL and IQAC	Establish and confirm survey dates Attend the CHE Survey Prep Workshop
-15	FL	Access the ISA/ DCI Appoint members to the institutional self-study task force Assign sections of the ISA/DCI for completion by appropriate people/groups Designate team of students to conduct the student survey and write the ISA
-16	Task Force	Review the questions in <i>The Role of Students in QA Medical Education Program</i> Add questions relevant to the school
-15	Task Force	Distribute survey to student body
-13	Task Force	Compile student survey data and send to FL for incorporation into ISA/DCI Begin analysis of data
-13	FL	Distribute completed ISA/DCI sections to the self-study task force
-12/8	Task Force	Review and analyze relevant sections of completed ISA/DCI
-9	Task Force	Provide final ISA report to FL for distribution to self-study task force members
-8/-5	Task Force	Review and analyze ISA/DCI report Prepare the self-study Develop plans and implement changes to correct issues identified in self-study process
-4	FL and Dean	Review Survey Team member roster from CHE QAD and inform of potential conflict of interest.
-3	FL and Dean	Submit survey package to QAD
-2.5/-2	Survey Team Coordinator (for on-site visits)	Upon receipt of the survey package, contact FL/IQAC to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request supplemental information (if needed) - Discuss travel and hotel - Coordinate visit logistics, including round-trip daily travel between hotel and school and travel between campus and other sites, as necessary Contact the FL/IQAC to discuss first draft of visit schedule

≈ Months +/- Survey Visit	Responsible Individuals/Groups	Activities
		<p>Email Survey Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confirm that team members received the survey package - Provide travel advice - Offer advice on strategy for reading the survey package and identifying areas to include in the visit <p>Review draft schedule and list of session participants and contact team Chair to discuss preferences</p> <p>Review suggested list of participants at survey visit sessions</p> <p>Email Survey Team to inform members of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hotel information - Individual writing assignments
-1.5/-1	Survey Team Coordinator	<p>Email Survey Team to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Request travel itineraries - Secure information about any dietary preferences or requirements - Identify any supplemental information team would like from the school - Request summary of preliminary impressions from the team <p>Contact faculty fellow and/or other inexperienced team member(s) to provide overview of school visit mechanics and to answer questions</p>
-1	Survey Team Coordinator	Request supplementary information from the IQAC and the FL, as needed
-.5	Survey Team Coordinator and Survey Team	<p>Email Survey Team the consolidated summary of preliminary findings; discuss with team, as needed</p> <p>Finalize visit schedule with school</p>
Survey Visit	Survey Team Chair/Coordinator	Develop team findings and prepare the survey exit report.
	Survey Team Members	Submit draft survey report writing assignments to the Survey Team Coordinator within two weeks following survey visit
+1.5/+2	Survey Team Coordinator	Send draft survey report and Survey Team findings document to the CHE.
+2/+2.5	Survey Team Coordinator	Send draft survey report and Survey Team findings document to the team and then to the Dean for review

≈ Months +/- Survey Visit	Responsible Individuals/Groups	Activities
		Notify Dean of process for requesting significant revisions Incorporate Dean's requested changes, as needed Notify Dean of the suggested revisions that were and were not incorporated into the survey report Submit final survey report and associated communications to CHE QAD <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final report narrative and Appendix - Survey Team Findings - All communications TO the Dean regarding changes to the survey report - All communications FROM the Dean regarding changes to the survey report
+1.5 months following CHE meeting	CHE QAD	CHE QAD provides feedback to team members on the CHE's action on Survey Team findings