

PAKISTAN MEDICAL COMMISSION

Minutes

**First National Medical and Dental Academic Board Meeting
Held on Saturday, November, 21st 2020
PMC Secretariat, Islamabad**



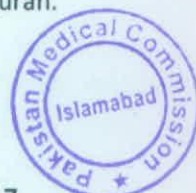
Present:

**Dr. Adil Haider, Chairman
Dr. Nadia Tahir, Nominee of Chairman HEC
Prof. Zafarullah Chaudhry, President CPSP (Online)
Prof. Aamer Zaman Khan
Prof. Ghulam Rasool (Online)
Dr. Mahmud Aurangzeb
Prof. Abdul Majeed Chaudry
Prof. Muhammad Tariq Khan
Prof. Tanvir Khaliq (Online)
Brig. Dr. Tahir Aziz Ahmed
Prof. Dr. Amer Bilal
Prof. Dr. Arif Tajammul
Prof. Raafea Tafweez Kuraishi
Major General Dr. Sayed Nusrat Raza
Prof. Naveen Mubarak Faridi (Online)
Prof. Ambreen Afzal Ehsan
Dr. Saqib Riaz Qazi**

**Dr. Ambreen Nadeem Khan, Member Examination
Dr. Shaista Zeeshan, Secretary**

Meeting was initially chaired by the President Pakistan Medical Commission and later by the Chairman Academic Board.

The meeting started with recitation of the Holy Quran.



Welcome Note and Brief by the President and the Vice President:

The President welcomed all members to the first meeting of the National Medical & Dental Academic Board.

The Vice President briefed the Academic Board on salient features of PMC Act 2020 and the Roles and responsibilities of the National Academic Board. He explained that the 'Accreditation Standards' and 'Curriculum' for the medical and dental colleges will be formulated by the Academic Board pursuant to Section 13 (a) and (b) of the PMC Act 2020 and subsequently these standards will be approved by the Medical and Dental Council pursuant to Section 8(2)(d) and (e) of the PMC Act, 2020. Higher Education Commission being the academic educational regulator will implement the standards as set by the Academic Board through the universities. He further explained that the Academic Board will also develop the accreditation standards for the teaching hospitals keeping in view that a teaching hospital imparts following trainings: undergraduate training, house job training and post graduate program training.

Moreover, the Academic Board is entrusted with setting the structure of following examination:

1. MDCAT – Medical & Dental College Admission Test
2. NLE – National Licensing Examination-Standards will set by Academic Board and the Authority will implement
3. NEB – National Equivalence Examination- For foreign students who intend to migrate to Pakistani institute during the coursework

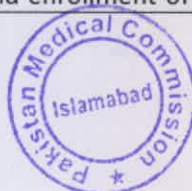
He also requested that the Academic Board work on devising a matrix for the credentialing process which will be implemented in future.

Council for the purpose of obtaining expert opinion and advice will refer matters to the Academic Board wherever needed and similarly the Academic Board may refer any matter to the Council for implementation at any level.

Numerous other issues are also likely to be referred to the Academic Board and the President and Vice President thanked the board for coming together and working towards improving health and education in Pakistan.

The new Chair of the Academic Board, Prof. Dr. Adil Haider was then introduced and requested to take charge. The Chair, introduced himself and then asked each member to introduce themselves and three specific experience they had from their extensive careers which were specifically relevant to the work of the committee. This exercise demonstrated that the board, which comprises of luminaries in Medical and Dental Education from across Pakistan is a unique collection of experts who are exceptionally qualified to carry out the work of the board.

Agenda No.1	Item	Consideration and formulation of examination structure and standards for MDCAT examination for the admission to the 2021 Session and recommend the same for approval of the Council.
	Discussion	The Board considered the structure and standards of MDCAT Examination to be held for admissions and enrollment of students to the 2021 Session



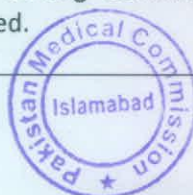
of medical and dental colleges in Pakistan. It was noted that the matter is one of urgency in view of the Judgment dated 11.11.2020 of the Honourable Sindh High Court directing the Board to complete the MDCAT structure within 10 days of its constitution as well as the fact that the MDCAT exam is already delayed considerably and any further delay will cause immense loss to students on account of further delay in admissions resulting in restricting their ability to complete the curriculum of studies defined for the 1st year of the program.

In the past years MDCAT exam was held by provincial admitting universities separately. Under the PMC Act 2020 it is mandated that a single national level MDCAT be held to provide uniformity and level playing field for all students aspiring to obtain admission in medical colleges to ensure a balanced merit structure. In the past the MDCAT exam has been prepared by each provincial admitting university using the provincial F.Sc. syllabus of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and English, and from such syllabus selecting topics to form a topic syllabus from which question banks were prepared for setting the MCQ based examination paper. From amongst all the admitting universities only NUMS had prepared a topic syllabus using F.Sc. syllabi of all provinces as students attempting NUMS entrance exam came from all over Pakistan and not limited to any province. The question data bank was also prepared from this topic syllabus. The topic syllabus prepared by NUMS for their entry test (held in October 2020) was earlier reviewed by IBCC and approved as representing inclusion of all provincial syllabi.

It was agreed that the syllabus of the MDCAT is to be based on the fundamental principle that common topics of all provincial and federal F.Sc. syllabi thereby removing any topic in a syllabus which does not appear in another syllabus. This is necessary to ensure that in the current situation and with shortage of time no student is put to the task of having to prepare anything beyond what they have already studied in their respective F.Sc. syllabi and been preparing for sitting the MDCAT exam this year.

The Board reviewed minutes of the meeting of the Paper Setting Committee consisting of members from the previous admitting universities of each province, the Federal admitting university and NUMS as well as representative of IBCC to create a common topic syllabus using all the provincial and federal syllabi of F.Sc. In essence any topic which was not present in any syllabi was removed leaving a topic syllabus which only contained topic common to all syllabi.

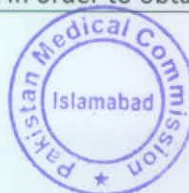
The Board reviewed the F.Sc. syllabi of each province and federal board and compared the topics and resulting list of common topics from such syllabi for inclusion in the MDCAT syllabus. The resulting topics were finalized as the common topics. The Board compared and reviewed the final syllabus which had been prepared previously as a consequence of the work done by the Paper Setting Committee and the Council to the common topics list assembled.



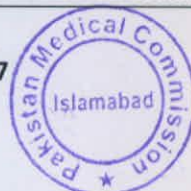
	<p>The Board invited the Pro Vice Chancellor of NUMS and his team to apprise the Board of the question bank prepared by NUMS for their entry test based on their common syllabus as approved by IBCC. A detailed review of the question bank was carried out and it was determined that questions contained therein which did not form part of the common syllabus reviewed and determined by the Board be removed providing a final question bank representing the MDCAT common syllabus finalized by the Board.</p>
<p>Decision</p>	<p>The Board reviewed the weightage given to different subjects in the past entry test examinations and agreed that the same weightage should be followed to ensure again that students are not put to any additional difficulty level.</p> <p>It was therefore determined that the entire MDCAT examination would consist of 200 multiple choice questions of which 80 questions will be from Biology, 60 questions from Chemistry, 40 questions from Physics and 20 questions from English.</p> <p>The difficulty Index was also fixed as per previous years. In Biology, Chemistry and Physics sections 70% questions will be recall (C 1) and 30% at understanding level (C 2). Further 30% of the questions would be from the Easy category, 50% from the Moderate category and 20% from the Hard category.</p> <p>The Board deliberated on the pass marks for qualifying the MDCAT exam. Based on the difficulty levels ascribed and mix of subject questions, it was determined that 60% should be the minimum passing marks for the MDCAT this year, whereas in the future this level should be increased to ensure that the best students are selected for medical and dental education which is probably the most difficult higher education program in the country.</p> <p>The Board pursuant to its deliberations and discussed recommended to the Council for approval the following standard and structure for the 2020 MDCAT exam;</p> <p>A) The MDCAT Syllabus (revised version) as previously prepared by the Paper Setting Committee and communicated to students be approved without any alterations as the final MDCAT Syllabus representing a common syllabus from amongst all the applicable F.Sc. syllabi of the provincial and federal boards.</p> <p>B) The MDCAT examination paper would consist of 200 multiple choice questions of which 80 questions will be from Biology, 60 questions from Chemistry, 40 questions from Physics and 20 questions from English.</p> <p>C) The difficulty Index for selection of questions shall be fixed as;</p> <p>i) Biology, Chemistry and Physics sections: 70% questions will be recall (C 1) and 30% at understanding level (C 2).</p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ii) 30% of the questions would be from the Easy category iii) 50% from the Moderate category iv) 20% from the Hard category <p>D) The approved question bank developed based on the approved common topic syllabus shall be used for setting the paper.</p> <p>E) The answered papers shall be corrected using OCR technology and any student seeking to have their paper verified for scoring be allowed however, no need exists for providing carbon copy of the answers as it is not an advisable practice as per best practices of MCQ based exams.</p> <p>F) The board unanimously agreed that the PMC syllabus meets the bare minimum standards for the upcoming MDCAT exam and fulfills the three main requisites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) It is a common syllabus for students appearing from all the provinces b) Based on assessment of the core knowledge c) Measures have been taken to ensure integrity and secrecy
Agenda Item No.2	Timeline, strategy and plan for formulation of accreditation standards for under-graduate medical and dental programs of study based in Pakistan due to the urgency of initiating inspections of colleges awaiting inspections and enhancement of seats.
Discussion	<p>The Board was informed that formulation of the accreditation standards may be considered as a priority keeping in view the urgency of initiating inspections of the colleges which have applied for recognition or enhancement of seats. The members were further apprised that the last standards were approved in 2019 by PM&DC. The National Accreditation Standards 2019 for the undergraduate institutions were developed after detailed deliberation by the Evaluation Committee of PM&DC. These standards are focused on quality of medical institutes and outcomes required for a medical student; which are in line with International guidelines of Joint Commission for Inspection and Accreditation (JCIA) and World Federation of Medical Education (WFME). Nationwide inspections of all recognized medical and dental colleges and their affiliated teaching hospitals were conducted on the accreditation criterion 2019. Moreover, inspections of 14 colleges were conducted on court orders in December 2019 on the same standards. Pursuant to the promulgation of PMC Ordinance 2019 in October 2019, these inspections were conducted by HEC however technical support was provided by PMC.</p> <p>Similar accreditation standards have been currently adopted by the Council to enable HEC and the Universities to undertake any necessary urgent inspections, which have been pending.</p> <p>It was further discussed that in order to obtain affiliation with a university,</p>



	<p>a medical or dental college must be inspected for purposes of verifying the compliance with the 'accreditation standards' and 'curriculum' requirements. Therefore, HEC shall for purposes affiliation and recognition of a medical or dental college inspect the college in terms of its educational arm including infrastructure requirements and faculty as per standards set by the Academic Board and approved by the Council. Moreover, a teaching hospital for purposes of providing a house job is to be inspected by the National Medical Authority. Standards for both the inspections will be developed by the Academic Board.</p> <p>It was further discussed that the word 'curriculum' needs to be defined by the Academic Board. As per the new law the Academic Board needs to set the standards/ guidelines and define final learning outcomes/ competencies, while the mode of teaching shall be determined by each institution. Similarly, the board should define what it means to be a medical doctor in Pakistan and use that as a guiding principle.</p> <p>The Board will provide the guidelines which will be based on the learning objectives and the required minimum competency level of the graduating doctors. Based on the guidelines laid down by the Board, universities will develop the curricula and define their mode of teaching.</p>
Decision	<p>The Board decided as under:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. The Board agreed that accreditation standards are required to be updated and new standards need to be framed by the Board keeping in mind the modern standards and ultimately recognition of Pakistan by international entities including WFME and ECFMG. For the purpose, a committee is to be constituted which will work on the revised accreditation standards and the curriculum. The members may volunteer for the task and submit their names along with other experts to the Chairman. II. In formulating the new standards a consideration will be provided to the earlier infrastructure standards on which colleges have built. This is to provide flexibility where new standards do not result in college falling foul of the new standards requiring extensive modification in constructed premises. III. Until such time as the Academic Board finalizes the new standards the "Initial Recognition Framework and National Accreditation Criteria 2019" as approved by the PM&DC Council in 2019 may be followed and implemented by the HEC. IV. The standards applicable to the academic college will be enforced by HEC while the standards applicable to the teaching hospitals will be enforced by the National Medical Authority/ Commission.
Agenda Item No.3	Timeline, strategy and plan for formulation of the examination structure and standards for the NLE for grant of licenses and authorize a committee of not less than three persons to formulate the examination papers of NLE for approval of the Council.
Discussion	The Board was briefed that the National Licensing Exam has been



	<p>introduced under the PMC Act 2020 as a mandatory pre condition to grant of a Full License to practice medicine and dentistry in Pakistan. The NLE can be taken by a graduate at any time during or after completing of their house job and attempted unlimited times. NLE is also the pre-condition for foreign graduates having qualified from recognized foreign universities to obtain a license to practice in Pakistan.</p> <p>It was discussed that in addition to objective computer based MCQ exam, a practical component may need to be added to examine the clinical skills of the graduates. This was particularly important for Dental graduates. The Board was apprised that the Council has already determined that foreign graduates should be required to take a practical component as part of the NLE as a Step II.</p> <p>It was further discussed that ideally the structure of NLE should be at par with similar examinations conducted internationally where our graduates proceed for training and post graduate qualifications such as United Kingdom and the USA. The Board was informed that the Council has already initiated contacting GMC and ECFMG regarding their structures for PLAB and USMLE and the Academic Board may consider such standards while developing the structure of NLE which will eventually facilitate our graduates if they wish to apply for any international exam.</p> <p>The first set of Pakistani graduates who will be required to take the NLE exam would be those graduating after September 2020. All the students who have graduated before the promulgation of PMC Act 2020 are exempted from NLE. Moreover, there are hundreds of foreign graduates who are awaiting their chance to take the NLE to obtain a full license having completed their house jobs.</p>
<p>Decision</p>	<p>The Board unanimously decided to constitute an NLE Committee. The scope of the Committee will be to formulate the standards and structure of National Licensing Examination for the local as well as the foreign graduates. Moreover, the Committee will also set the timelines and strategy to accomplish this task within stipulated time.</p> <p>It was further decided that the Dental NLE sub Committee may be constituted with subject experts to ensure proper structured exam for dental graduates.</p> <p>The Board unanimously decided that the members may volunteer for the said task and submit their names to the Chairman. Moreover, co-opted members with relevant expertise may also be nominated for the said purpose.</p>

Secretary
Pakistan Medical Commission

