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### **The MDCAT is mandatory for admission in medical and dental colleges as per the criteria set by Pakistan Medical Commission**

The passing of the MDCAT in accordance with the criteria set by the Pakistan Medical Commission is mandatory for admission in public or private medical and dental colleges of Pakistan. This was reiterated by the regulatory body as the MDCAT passing percentage for the admission year of 2021-22 was set at 65% or 137 marks by the Medical & Dental Council while approving the structure and criteria of the MDCAT formulated by the National Medical and Dental Academic Board.

The Supreme Court of Pakistan in its Judgment in CP No.4944 of 2021 while upholding the Judgment of the Division Bench of the Lahore High Court and the Single Bench of the Lahore High Court categorically held that Section 18(1) of the PMC Act 2020 is mandatory and binding for all admissions to public or private medical and dental colleges. Hence ONLY Students who have passed the MDCAT as per the result announced by PMC shall be eligible for admission to a medical or dental college. This applies to ALL public and private medical or dental colleges in Pakistan without exception including all medical and dental colleges in Sindh.

Under Section 13(c) read with Section 18(1) of the PMC Act 2020, the National Medical and Dental Academic Board and the Medical and Dental Council have the exclusive authority to determine and set the standard and passing marks for MDCAT. No other entity or authority can vary or alter the standard or passing marks for MDCAT in Pakistan.

Any student admitted without meeting the eligibility criteria will not be registered with PMC and will result in not being issued a license to practice in the country. Under Section 18(2) of the PMC Act 2020, a student who has not qualified for their MDCAT shall not be granted an MBBS or BDS degree in Pakistan. An ostensible medical or dental degree issued by a college where a student has not qualified the PMC MDCAT therefore, will not be recognized in Pakistan and consequently shall also not be recognized internationally.





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Any public or private medical or dental college admitting students who have not passed the MDCAT will be in violation of the law and the judgments of the Honourable Superior Courts and liable for penal action under the court of law. This includes the cancellation of their accreditation and registration as a medical or dental college. Strict legal action will be taken against any college that undertakes any such admissions and fails to follow the published admission criteria as per the regulations.

The Notification dated 7th December 2021 issued by the Health Department of the Sindh Government is contrary to not only Section 18 of the PMC Act 2020 but also violates the determination of the superior courts and the August Supreme Court of Pakistan.

No Provincial Government or any university or college has the authority to alter the passing marks of MDCAT as set by PMC. Allowing the Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University (Larkana) to process admissions allowing students having less than 65% marks is directly contrary to the law and without authority. It amounts to an attempt to establish a criteria contrary to the mandatory criteria and process laid down under the PMC Act 2020.

The Notification further seeks to direct the public University to conduct admissions of private medical and dental colleges in Sindh which is in direct conflict with the right granted to private colleges under Section 18(3) of the PMC Act 2020 to conduct their admissions strictly in accordance with the admissions criteria and requirements stipulated by each college in advance. The Sindh Government cannot alter the admission criteria of any private college. It can conduct the admissions only to public medical and dental colleges in Sindh and determine a policy subject to such policy being in addition to the mandatory conditions for admissions set out in Section 18(1) of the PMC Act 2020 being the mandatory qualification of the MDCAT exam and using the MDCAT result as a 50% weightage in calculation of any merit formula determined by the provincial government or its authorized university. The attempt to lower the pass percentage of the MDCAT by the Government of Sindh is detrimental to promoting excellence in the healthcare education standards in the country. Allowing a lower merit in MDCAT for entry into a medical & dental college deprives a large number of students who have acquired the requisite merit by qualifying the MDCAT only on the basis that they are presumably unable to pay the fee of private education.





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These high merit students have been in the past deprived of higher education especially in the field of medicine where Pakistan requires quality doctors only because they are unable to pay the fee of private education. It is for this reason that the PMC this year initiated the National Medical Scholarship program to assist such students of merit and ensure that the best students enter the medical education programs. PMC had also requested the Sindh Government to participate in this endeavour to support the high merit students of Sindh who require financial support to undertake medical and dental education by developing scholarship and student loan programs.

Every citizen of Pakistan has the right to quality healthcare, this is only possible if skilled and competent doctors enter the healthcare delivery system. It is the moral and ethical responsibility of governments to improve standards of health. Lowering the pass percentage of the MDCAT is not only contrary to merit, which is a Constitutional mandate for higher education, but it will result in the promotion of deficiency & inadequacy in the education sector which is why the PMC did not regrettably accede to the previous request by the Sindh Government to lower the MDCAT merit.

The demand for lowering MDCAT merit represents the desire of a handful of private colleges who are interested solely in filling their seats with students who are able to pay the high fees of private education with ease irrespective of merit. Furthermore, allowing below students to become eligible not only violates the right on merit acquired by over 68,000 students in Pakistan to obtain admission in Medical and Dental Colleges but also will open the door to the past practice of allowing some colleges to seek added financial benefits for granting of admissions to students below the requisite merit yet having the financial means to oust students of high merit with lower financial means. The PMC is working to eradicate the menace of meritless processes in higher education.

