



Dated: 16th May, 2022

NOTIFICATION

DECISION OF THE NATIONAL MEDICAL & DENTAL ACADEMIC BOARD ON ISSUES OF FOREIGN MEDICAL GRADUATES

The National Medical and Dental Academic Board considered the following demands of the foreign medical graduates, submitted to the Authority, in its 43rd meeting held on 13th May 2022:

1. NLE-2 be withdrawn as a pre-condition to grant of a license to the foreign graduates, OR
2. Passing marks be lowered to 50%, and also to review mandatory station requirement.

The Board while deliberating on the issue highlighted that the whole purpose of the NLE is to test the competency, knowledge and skills of a graduate to ensure they are a 'safe doctor' as they would be granted a license to treat patients independently. The NLE skills exam represents the basic skills which are mandatory for patient handling and management in the absence of which patients would be at a severe risk. Accordingly, it is imperative that graduates are able to show at the least 70% of fundamental basic skills and competencies to ensure patient safety. Lowering the standard will be depriving patients of their fundamental right to be treated by a safe doctor. It was further discussed that the pass percentage was decided after deliberation and consensus of the Board and Medical Practitioners from across Pakistan and that giving license to a doctor who is not competent enough to pass basic skills requirement is a risk and is not feasible.

The Board examined the results of last few NLE exams and showed serious concerns about pass percentage of foreign graduates in NLE-1 exam as compared to local students and also the pass percentage of foreign graduates in NLE-2. The Board was of the view that majority of the foreign graduates are coming from countries where English is not the spoken language therefore, serious concerns exist as to the clinical training they have received in the absence of being able to communicate in the local language with doctors, medical staff at hospitals and patients or being aware of the medical terms ordinarily referred to in the local language. In addition, an absence of clinical training and mostly book education is a serious concern and therefore, the NLE exam specially the Skills exam (NLE-2) is essential to ensure and certify that a foreign graduate has the necessary competency and skills to be a safe doctor. The Board further highlighted that the NLE-2 results until now confirm this concern with the low passing ratio whereas the skills tested in the exam are the fundamental set of skills needed for a safe doctor.

The Board also deliberated on the argument that NLE-2 should not be applicable till it is applicable upon Pakistani graduates after 2022 is not tenable as Pakistani graduates are being trained at colleges/teaching hospitals in Pakistan which are directly regulated by the Commission and Universities and physically inspected with total visibility of training levels. The foreign graduates are coming from colleges to which there exists no visibility as to actual standards and recent information about some of these foreign colleges confirms that no clinical training is undertaken.

Moreover, the Board further deliberated on the pass percentages of different international licensing exams being undertaken in different countries like USMLE etc., which have passing percentage of above 70%.

Keeping in view the above facts, the Board could not find any justification to lower NLE-2 pass percentage from 70%. After detailed discussion, the Board disagreed to lowering the pass percentage and decided to keep the current pass percentage at 70%.



Secretary

Pakistan Medical Commission

