



PRESS RELEASE

**Clarification Regarding M.Phil Pathology
Privileges and Credentialing**

[Islamabad, 2nd February 2021]: In response to numerous queries received and after discussions with different associations of pathologists regarding the decision of the Medical and Dental Council to treat the qualification of M.Phil Pathology as an academic qualification, it is clarified that the decision does not in any manner represent the imposition of any restriction on the privileges and credentialing granted to M.Phil Pathologists by healthcare institutions and laboratories.

Any privileges or credentialing granted to a person holding the qualification of M.Phil Pathology in the past may continue to be availed by them, subject to terms of their employment with the respective healthcare institutions. The grant of privilege or credentialing to a practitioner or any other person is the domain of the healthcare institution and is regulated by the relevant Healthcare Commissions or provincial regulatory authority not the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC). Furthermore, the qualification of M.Phil Pathology can continue to be valid for grant of status to holders as medical faculty in medical colleges at the discretion of the educational institutions.

In terms of the earlier decision of the Medical and Dental Council, it is also clarified that the different curricula of M.Phil Pathology being offered by universities were reviewed. It was found that these curricula are primarily research-based programs and that none of them contained sufficient clinical training to qualify the programs as specialized clinical qualification. It is for this reason that the qualification was termed as an academic research-based qualification as opposed to being a purely specialist clinical qualification for purposes of entry into the Specialist Register for practice of clinical specialties by licensed medical practitioners.



Pakistan Medical Commission **Clarification Regarding M.Phil Pathology**

Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021

M.Phil Pathology is a two year course whereas the clinical qualification of Pathology is a four-year clinical training program and these cannot be equated under any circumstances.

Recently, a detailed story appeared in the Dawn on 31st January 2021 relating to this subject and further, a letter written on this subject by Vice Chancellor UHS to the Dawn on 31st January 2021 has also been circulated. The facts narrated in the story appearing in the print media and also the letter of the Vice Chancellor UHS have unfortunately represented incorrect and misleading facts relating to this issue. It is highly unfortunate that such esteemed organizations like the Dawn and UHS elected to comment incorrectly on the subject and misrepresented facts to portray a wholly incorrect version of the actual facts.

The Commission has at no time revised its decision to treat M.Phil Pathology as an academic qualification, which it is, nor has the Commission at the insistence of UHS revisited its decision. It is an admitted fact that M.Phil Pathology is an academic research-based program and not a clinical training program or qualification which is further evidenced by the fact that the clinical program is a four-year program as against the two-year M.Phil program.

The 'stir' as is referred to was due to the fact that, in the past, persons holding an M.Phil Pathology were granted privileges by healthcare institutions to work in the pathology labs as well as work as educators/faculty in medical colleges. It was wrongly presumed as a result of the Commission's decision that it in some way restricted the healthcare institutions ability to continue granting similar privileges. This fact has been clarified by the Commission at the request of different group of pathologists who contacted the Commission on this issue.



Pakistan Medical Commission
Clarification Regarding M.Phil Pathology

Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021

No. UHS/VC-28/21

Date: January 31, 2021

Professor Javed Akram

MRCP (UK), FRCP (London), FRCP (Glasgow),
FRCP (Edin), FACC (USA), FACP (USA), FASIM (USA)
Vice Chancellor



University of Health Sciences
Lahore - Pakistan

The Editor,
The Dawn newspaper,
20 -N, Gulberg II,
Lahore 54660

Subject: REJOINDER TO THE NEWS ITEM PUBLISHED IN THE DAWN NEWSPAPER ON 31ST JANUARY, 2021, UNDER THE HEADLINE "M.PHIL PATHOLOGY NO LONGER CLINICAL QUALIFICATION".

Dear Sir,

This is apropos of a news item published in your esteemed newspaper on Sunday, 31st January, 2021, under the caption "M.Phil Pathology no longer clinical qualification". The situation in this regard is not as grim as depicted in the said news item and had the concerned reporter contacted me before submitting the news for publication, some very important developments might have been incorporated thus changing the very crux of the story. But as it never happened, a correction/explanation to the news item may please be published in the interest of your esteemed readers who appreciate only facts and complete truths; and if possible, by giving equal coverage to undo the ill effect of misleading occurred due to said news item.

M.Phil Pathology is one of the higher qualifications being offered by the medical universities, including University of Health Sciences (UHS), in basic medical sciences for last many years. The Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) decision to categorize these MPhil qualifications as academic qualifications caused a stir among working pathologists. As this decision of the Commission could have substantial effect on the careers of thousands of pathologists working in hospitals and labs, I as the vice chancellor of the largest public sector medical university of the country, wrote to the Honorable President PMC to kindly reconsider this policy decision. The letter was written about one month ago.

It is pertinent to mention that Government of Punjab approached the PMC officials in the first instance and I also wrote a letter to this effect. It is heartening that the PMC authorities have magnanimously agreed to revisit this policy decision to the extent of pathologists who have already acquired the MPhil degrees and it has been agreed that it will not be applicable retrospectively for which we are grateful to them. This is an important development which should be a part of the said story.

I want to assure you that things are going in right direction and efforts are being made to make the pathologists' point of view clear to PMC authorities but such news items containing half-truths could sabotage these efforts. Moreover, the impression given in the said story that I am behind this move should be dispelled.

With best regards,

Professor Javed Akram
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Health Sciences
Lahore



Pakistan Medical Commission Clarification Regarding M.Phil Pathology Tuesday, 2nd February, 2021

Daily Dawn

31-01-2021

MPhil Pathology no longer clinical qualification

Pathologists resent PMC decision as they can't issue lab reports with their signatures

By Asif Chaudhry

LAHORE: Declaring the MPhil pathology an academic qualification, the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) has 'deregistered' this major degree programme "as clinical qualification", creating a controversy and concern among hundreds of qualified pathologists in public and private sectors all over the country.

In its recent meeting, the PMC reviewed the curriculum being followed by the MPhil pathology in various universities and decided that the qualification may be categorised as academic.

"It was, therefore, decided that MPhil pathology will not be entered in the licence keeping in view that only clinical qualifications will be registered as postgraduate, additional and alterna-

tive qualifications", read the minutes of the PMC meeting.

Following this decision, hundreds of MPhil pathologists/specialists/consultants working in private and public sector labs will not be entitled to issue lab reports with their signatures.

This (policy) decision of deregistering MPhil pathology in various disciplines (histopathology, hematology, chemical pathology & microbiology) has caused serious concerns amongst young, mid-career and veteran MPhil pathologists who comprised more than 70 per cent of pathologists working in government and private sector hospitals and labs.

The University of Health Sciences (UHS) was the first institution [in Punjab] which strongly objected to the 'controversial decision' of the PMC.

In an official letter, UHS Vice Chancellor Prof Javed Akram has asked the PMC president to review its decision in the best interest of the qualified pathologists saying that the degree holders of this programme were directly related to patients.

Similarly, the PMC also faced a

strong reaction from the MPhil pathology degree holders from all over the country.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the in-question degree holders also met the PMC authorities to show their reservations on the council's decision.

In the official correspondence of the UHS and the MPhil pathologists with the PMC, they lamented that the decision was implemented retrospectively, which caused concern among [practicing] MPhil pathologists.

They said no policy internationally or nationally is ever implemented retrospectively without taking into account its consequences.

"All MPhil pathology qualifications previously registered with PMDC, approved by the federal ministry of health, are not pure academic qualifications like those offered by non-medical universities," said an official while quoting a written complaint to the PMC president.

A copy of UHS letter and the complaint [of pathologists] was also available with Dawn.

He said MPhil in different sub-

specialties of pathology was the oldest postgraduate medical qualification and was being offered by prestigious medical institutes.

The MPhil trained pathologists/specialists from [recognised] training institutes were considered all over the country the backbone of diagnostic pathological services.

"These MPhil pathologists were eligible to be recruited as consultant pathologists (BS-18) and assistant professors of pathology (BS-18) by the public service commissions, the provincial and federal governments where this postgraduate medical qualification was referred to as MPhil (Pak)", he said.

In case MPhil pathology [medical qualification] was not added to the PMC licence there will be predicament in ongoing jobs and fresh recruitments.

He said most posts of consultant pathologist (BS-18) were still vacant in all 36 districts of Punjab due to an acute shortage of pathologists where hospital lab services were already badly affected.

He said the Punjab Healthcare Commission also required a registered medical practitioner with a

recognised MPhil pathology (in any branch) to run a category C & B lab.

"As PMC is eliminating these qualifications from their database by not re-registering the licences, this may result in confusion in the registration process of pathology laboratories," the official said.

As a consequence, the pathology lab services would suffer a blow, he said adding that the decision reflects obvious discrimination against MPhil pathology as the PMC was registering the diplomas like DCP and FCPS in pathology (histopathology, hematology, chemical pathology and microbiology).

"The MPhil pathology qualification is a superior one than (diploma in clinical pathology) DCP," he said adding that the MPhil pathology holders are supervisors, trainers and examiners of the DCP.

The UHS and the pathology degree holders in their respective letters have asked the PMC president to review the council's decision and recognise the postgraduate qualifications in pathology in the PMC licence without any delay and discrimination.