



Meeting of the Board held on 21st November 2020 at PMC, 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. Amer Bilal
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

Decision of the National Medical and Dental Academic Board

Agenda Item 1: Consideration and formulation of examination structure and standards for the MDCAT examination for the admissions to the 2021 Session and recommend the same for approval of the Council.

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.S.c 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.S.c 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.S.c 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.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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.

The Board pursuant to its deliberations and discussed recommended to the Council for approval the following standard and structure for the 2020 MDCAT exam;

- 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.S.c syllabi of the provincial and federal boards.
- 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.
- C) The difficulty Index for selection of questions shall be fixed as;
 - i) Biology, Chemistry and Physics sections: 70% questions will be recall (C 1) and 30% at understanding level (C 2).
 - ii) 30% of the questions would be from the Easy category
 - iii) 50% from the Moderate category
 - iv) 20% from the Hard category
- D) The approved question bank developed based on the approved common topic syllabus shall be used for setting the paper.
- 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.

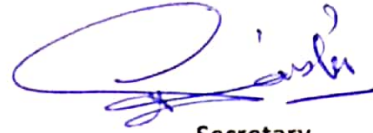


F) The board agreed that the PMC syllabus meets the bare minimum standards for the upcoming MDCAT exam and fulfills the three main requisites :

- 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.



**Chairman
National Academic Board**



Secretary

Pakistan Medical Commission

