

Sindh govt reduces MDCAT passing marks

[Faiza Ilyas](#) Published October 19, 2021 -

KARACHI: The Sindh government has decided to reduce MDCAT passing marks from 65 per cent set by the Pakistan Medical Commission (PMC) to 50pc for students seeking admission to MBBS and 40pc for BDS (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) students.

The government would also make a law for setting up the Sindh Medical and Dental Council next year if matters could not be sorted out with the PMC.

These decisions were taken at a meeting presided over by Sindh Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho on Monday. The vice chancellors of public and private medical universities joined the meeting through a video link.

The meeting, called to discuss the situation that has emerged following the MDCAT tests, began with the minister voicing her reservations over the entire process adopted for the examinations.

The PMC, she said, had created lots of serious issues for medical students as well as health professionals and now it had become necessary for the Sindh government to have its own examination for admission to the medical colleges from next year.

“If the PMC doesn’t address our concerns, we will legislate for a medical and dental council at the provincial level,” she said.

The minister instructed the vice chancellor of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Medical University, Larkana, to set up a web portal and collect data of MDCAT students with minimum 50pc for MBBS admission and 40pc marks for BDS admission.

Once the data was collected, an admission policy would be formulated according to the college seats available and in a particular district, students’ domicile and its performance in MDCAT, she said, emphasising that the students of rural areas should be given a chance to study in medical colleges.

The total number of seats in medical and dental colleges of Sindh is 5,490. Of the 68,680 students who appeared in MDCAT from Sindh, a total of 7,797 passed the test.

The pass percentage set by the PMC is 65pc.

The tests were marred by allegations of mismanagement and malpractices from day one and led to country-wide protests.

Professional bodies representing doctors have also supported the protesting students, alleging that the contract for conducting the MDCAT was awarded to a private firm in violation to the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority.

They said the online exams that were held without proper homework had wasted students' hard work. They demanded that exams should be held again in a transparent manner, taking the stakeholders on board.

Meanwhile, the representatives of Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) held an emergency meeting to discuss the problems being faced by students who appeared in MDCAT and now want to move an application for review of their results.

“They are being charged a hefty amount of Rs5,030 against each application. This is unjust to students and their parents already suffering due to these controversial exams. The students had earlier paid Rs6,000 as an examination fee,” the association stated in a press release.

The PMA demanded that results be reviewed free of cost as in this particular case many poor students would not be able to apply for the review.

The meeting also criticised the decision of calling all applicants to Islamabad from far-flung areas of Pakistan. “It will be very difficult and costly especially for female students because they could not travel alone to Islamabad.”

The association unanimously rejected exams' results and demanded that the test be rescheduled and held on a single day all over Pakistan.

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