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Page No.01

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## Give nurses, dentists lateral entry into MBBS: Draft policy

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The draft National Education Policy 2019 has suggested sweeping changes in medical education. One of the more radical suggestions is the proposal to allow lateral entry of nursing and dental graduates into the MBBS course with a common foundational one to two-year course for doctors, dentists and nurses.

Other significant changes include curbing the role of the various councils for medicine, nursing and dentistry to only setting professional standards and outsourcing inspection and accreditation work to "empanelled agencies". The draft policy also reiterates the proposal to introduce the much-awaited common exit exam for all MBBS graduates.

The draft suggests doing away with fee regulation completely while mandating scholarships for 50% of students, with 20% getting full scholarship.

In a big shift from the current model, the draft policy recommends that the first year

### COMMON START

- > 2-year common course for all science grads before 3-yr specialisation
- > Common exit exam for MBBS to serve as PG entrance exam
- > Institutions can frame own curriculum based on a framework



or two of the MBBS course should be designed as a common period for all science graduates, after which they can take up medicine (MBBS), dentistry (BDS), nursing or other specialisations.

"Common foundational courses based on medical pluralism will be followed by core courses focused on specific systems, and electives that encourage bridging across systems. Graduates from other medical disciplines such as nursing, dental etc., will also be allowed lateral entry into the MBBS course," states the draft policy.

► Not a free pass, P 12



# 'Lateral entry will not be allowed to become a free pass for entry into MBBS'

► Continued from P 1

**D**r Devi Shetty, chairman of Naryana Health, who contributed to the draft proposals on medical education, clarified that lateral entry won't mean exemption from entrance exam. He told **TOI** that the details are yet to be worked out, but lateral entry would not be allowed to become a free pass for entry into MBBS. So, nursing and dentistry students, for example, would have to take NEET if they wanted lateral entry, but after that would only have to complete the remaining years of the course. If a nursing candidate were to seek lateral en-

try after two years, he or she would first have to clear NEET and then do the remaining three years (if the tenure of the MBBS course is five years).

On fee and scholarships the draft policy states that "in line with the spirit of providing autonomy to educational institutions..., fees for professional education courses will be left to the management of educational institutions, both public and private," adding that institutions would have to fulfil their social obligations and provide scholarships to students from the socially and economically weaker sections of society. Yet, it also sets the goal of improving "access to healthcare educa-

tion for rural students, and lowering the cost of education".

The proposed common exit exam for MBBS should also serve as the entrance exam for post-graduate programmes, the draft suggests. "This exit examination will be administered at the end of the fourth year of the MBBS so that students are relieved of the burden of studying for a separate, competitive entrance examinations at the end of their residency period. With the entrance examination out of the way, they can spend their residency period acquiring valuable skills and competence," states the draft adding that similar common exit examinations could be conducted for dental

education and other disciplines.

Citing tremendous shortage of professionals in the health sector, the draft policy suggests the setting up of a separate committee to work out a detailed transformation plan for the sector.

Stating that professional education must be separated from professional practice, the draft policy envisages converting the Medical Council of India (MCI) and councils for dentistry and nursing into professional standard setting bodies that could also provide a curriculum framework, against which educational institutions will prepare their own curricula.



# UGC gives 6 months to fill all faculty vacancies

Guideline violation could result in a loss of grants

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

All colleges, universities and deemed universities have been given a six-month deadline to fill up their faculty vacancies, via a process that will be monitored at every step by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and the University Grants Commission (UGC).

Institutions which fail to meet the deadline were warned that their UGC grants may be withheld.

Pushing recruitment into mission mode, the UGC issued revised guidelines on Tuesday, noting that "shortage of quality teaching faculty in HEIs [Higher Educational Institutions] is one amongst the many issues confronting the higher education system in the country".



There are at least 5,000 vacant positions in 48 central universities alone. UGC oversees over 900 universities and more than 40,000 colleges across the country.

"HEIs should...ensure that all the vacant posts, along with the reservations details, are uploaded on the online portal <https://nherc.in>. The monitoring of the filling up of the vacancies would be done by the MHRD and UGC through this portal," said the revised guidelines. The portal belongs to the National Higher Education Research Centre run by the MHRD.

The six-month timeline allows 15 days for the identification of vacant posts, the details of which must be uploaded on the NHERC portal by June 20, 2019. Within 30 days thereafter, the competent authority of each institution is required to give its approval to fill up the vacancies.

The posts must then be advertised in the next 15 days, and selection committees constituted simultaneously, with dates fixed for their meetings.

By the end of the fourth month, applications must be scrutinised and interview letters sent to shortlisted candidates and also uploaded on the institution's website. The fifth month is reserved for conducting interviews and selecting the final candidates.

By the end of six months, appointment letters should have been issued, and uploaded on the NHERC portal.



# SC extends PG medical admissions deadline

## Also bars petitions in other courts

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**

**NEW DELHI**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the Maharashtra government to hold the last round of counselling for postgraduate medical and dental seats by June 14.

It ordered the State to give wide publicity to the extension of the admissions deadline from June 4 to 14. It said no other court would entertain petitions filed on this matter.

The order by a Vacation Bench led by Justice Indu Malhotra follows an interim direction last month to the State to not implement the 10% economic quota for the admissions for the 2019-20

academic year.

The Maharashtra government issued notifications dated February 12 and March 7 last to implement the 10% reservation for the economically deprived classes. They were stayed by the apex court in a recent order.

### **Government criticised**

On Tuesday, the court slammed the government for “creating a mess” and troubling candidates who aspire to get their postgraduation.

It clarified that candidates would not be allowed to change their earlier preferences.