
Letter to the Editor

Eligibility for appointment as 'Dean' of a medical school. Are the criteria being met?

Madam, Of late, appointment of 'Dean' in private medical institutions has been under debate. The general procedure adopted by public sector universities is nominations of a number of senior professors and out of these one most eligible or favourite is selected by the vice chancellor of the university and ratified by the chancellor or Board of Governors. In many cases, no consideration is given to the academic standing or number of publications. This appointment is a very prestigious one and should not be taken lightly. The international standards are more rigid for this appointment and therefore the reflection is seen in the outcome in terms of academic excellence and reputation of the institutions concerned. The guidelines indicate that the person for this post should have atleast national and preferably, international recognition of excellence in the field of medicine.^{1,2} There should be an evidence of academic, administrative and clinical standing which should reflect in promotion of medical sciences, effective policy making, publications and research. The aptitude for innovative approaches in medical education is highly essential and desirable. The dean is responsible for establishment of departments, appointing chairs of each discipline and promotion of medical faculty with particular emphasis upon high quality education, development of clinical excellence

and motivating the staff for publishing in high impact medical journals. In the capacity, the 'person' should be a medical expert, communicator, manager, health advocate, scholar and a thorough professional.³ The appointment of 'Principal' of a medical school should no longer be in practice as such appointment does not exist or understood in international arena of medical sciences. These posts are more administrative and politically-based than of any appropriate function. Technically, a 'dean' should be an overall head of a medical institution which can lead the future generation of medicos in the right academic direction. Orthodox method of selection should replace the international criteria if we have to achieve distinction in the field of medicine.

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References

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- 3- www.rcpsc.medical.org/canmeds "CANMEDS ROLES" College of Physicians and Surgeons, Canada. Date accessed: 24/5/2007.