

Controversy at DU over teacher recruitment

DU CORRESPONDENT

The recent appointment of three lecturers in the applied chemistry and chemical engineering department of Dhaka University has raised controversy as none of the three has the master's degree.

Moreover, nine teachers including the three were appointed while four posts were advertised.

The university syndicate finalised their appointment on October 31.

According to the job advertisement, the deadline for application was April 27, 2016, and aspiring candidates were required to have the first class or a minimum CGPA of 3.50 out of 4.00, both in honour's and master's levels. It also said if other qualifications remain equal, the candidates with higher degrees will get preference.

Some teachers expressed concern at the recruitment, and called this a rare case in DU's history.

The DU authority yesterday held an emergency press conference at the vice chancellor's office, claiming that the recruitment process was transparent.

VC Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique said the three appointees were currently studying for their master's degree at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Buet).

The three – Tanvir Ahmed, Nurul Sakib and Sajib Barua – graduated from Buet.

The VC said, "An honour's degree holder can be a teacher at the engineering universities in our country and also at the universities of South Asian countries. Besides, the new teachers were appointed on a temporary basis. Their recruitment will be made permanent on the condition that they complete their master's."

"The syndicate has appointed them because they have excellent academic results at the graduate levels."

Dr Md Nurul Amin, chairman of the department, alleged that the recruitment process violated the standard procedure.

"Without consulting the Coordination and Development (C&D) Committee of the department, the job advertisement was published. Normally, after receiving the applications, the C&D committee scrutinises

eligibilities of the candidates. But we did not get it; rather we got a final list of 26 candidates only three or four days before the selection and interview," Nurul Amin told The Daily Star.

According to a copy, provided at yesterday's press conference, an emergency C&D committee meeting was held on July 25, 2016.

The interview was held on July 26, 2016, said the department's chairperson.

The committee took two decisions. Firstly, engineering degree holders should be preferred in appointment because the department would give engineering degrees and that if the candidates with the master's degree in engineering were not found, teachers should be appointed adopting or relaxing conditions.

The DU VC said that as the copy was signed by the chairman, the recruitment was held according to the recommendation of the C&D committee.

The second decision said that as two minor courses – mathematics and physics – would be taught at the department, the syndicate should not appoint to all vacant posts considering the importance of appointing teachers of mathematics and physics.

Of the nine, six are postgraduates in applied chemistry from DU, and the remaining three have bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from Buet.

Nurul Amin said, "I did not see appointment of any teacher without having any master's degree in 23 years of my teaching career."

Prof Rafiqul Islam, dean of the engineering and technology faculty of DU, said, "All the appointed teachers are meritorious and have higher CGPAs."

In 2013, the selection committee of the department recommended two PhD holders in chemical engineering, but their applications were rejected after review because they did not have the master's degree. But, according to another copy provided at the press conference, dated April 20, 2015, the department recommended appointment of candidates with bachelor's degrees in chemical engineering if the master's degree holders are not found.

Asked why the department was not consulted regarding the recruitment, the VC said, "Sometimes some departments delay the recruitment process to appoint their

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students, considering political interests. Since the applied chemistry and chemical engineering department urgently needed teachers, we sped up the process."

Prof Farid Uddin Ahmed, a syndicate member and also dean of the social sciences faculty, told The Daily Star, "It is the best practice to appoint as many teachers as mentioned in the job advertisement. But the syndicate has the power to appoint more based on the need of the department."