

Reorganisation Of Undergraduate Medical Education—III

A. S. M. T. Hossain

FOLLOWING the course of instruction given in the first year of study, the students are examined (First Professional Examination) through written, oral and practical work in (a) anatomy, (b) physiology, and (c) pharmacology, covering the curriculum thus taught during that period of study only.

Second Professional Examination is held after the conclusion of the second year of study, and the students are examined through written, oral and practical work in the remaining curriculum of (a) anatomy, (b) physiology, and (c) pharmacology.

Third Professional Examination is held following conclusion of the third year of study. The examination is taken through multiple-choice questions, short essays (if required), oral, and practical work (if applicable) on three subjects as (a) pathology and bacteriology, (b) forensic medicine, and (c) preventive and social medicine.

Fourth Professional Examination is held after the completion of the fourth year of study, and the examination is taken through multiple-choice questions, oral and clinical work in (a) medicine, (b) paediatrics and psychological medicine, (c) surgery, (d) ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology and orthopaedic surgery, and (e) gynaecology. The examination shall cover the entire curriculum of paediatrics, psychological medicine, ophthalmology, otorhinolaryngology and orthopaedic surgery. But in cases of medicine, surgery and gynaecology the examination will include only the curriculum covered in that year of study only.

The Fifth Professional Examination is held after the conclusion of the final year of study. The examination is taken through multiple-choice questions, oral and clinical work in the remaining curriculum of (a) medicine, (b) surgery, and (c) gynaecology and obstetrics.

Satisfactory conclusion of a university examination will include an independent pass in each written, oral, and practical or clinical examination of every subject. Candidates who fail to conclude an ex-

amination satisfactorily will be required to repeat the examination after six months' interval. If a student remains unsuccessful in one or more subjects of a particular university examination, he may be allowed to repeat the examination on that particular subject or subject on two consecutive occasions only and, if he yet remains unsuccessful, the student will then need to repeat the entire examination.

Students are usually required to complete a university examination before they can enter into the next year's course of study, but this may not form any obligatory part for continuation of the course of instruction. In pre-clinical course there will therefore be no bar for a student to continue his course of study during the second year even though he has not appeared or failed to complete his first professional examination satisfactorily. Similarly, there will be no bar for a student to undertake his study during the fourth or fifth year of study even though he may not have satisfactorily completed his third or fourth professional examination. No student will, however, be allowed to continue his study in the third year courses of study until he has satisfactorily completed his pre-clinical course and has passed the second professional examination.

After the conclusion of second year of study a student, if he wishes, can appear at both first and second professional examinations together, but before his result of the second professional examination is assessed, he must obtain a pass in the first professional examination. If he fails to satisfy in the first professional examination, his second professional examination will be treated as cancelled and he will require to repeat the examinations either singularly or at the same time. If he succeeds satisfying the examiners in first professional examination, his second professional examination will then be assessed and if he fails to satisfy in

that, he will require to repeat the second professional examination. Similarly, after the conclusion of fourth or fifth year of study a student may appear for both third and fourth, or fourth and fifth professional examinations, but their results for fourth or fifth professional examination will not be assessed until they have satisfactorily concluded their third or fourth professional examinations. If he is unsuccessful in his third or fourth professional examination, his fourth or fifth professional examination will be treated as cancelled, and he will require to repeat both the examinations either singularly or at a same time. On the other hand, if he is successful in his third or fourth professional examination, an assessment will then be made on his fourth or fifth professional examination. And if he is found unsuccessful, he will need to repeat the examination.

Grading System

The grading system in the examination has always been peculiar in this part of the world, causing a considerable failure rate, and examiners seem to gain reputation for their strictness. In fact, the more strict an examiner is, the more reputation he gains. And it has now become an established custom of the country to blame the students for the failure. Unfortunately, no assessment has ever been made whether a failure has occurred due to less proficiency of the student or due to inefficiency of the teacher concerned. Needless to mention that, every failure of the student is a hallmark of teachers' incapability. If a teacher can successfully train a student and can confer a knowledge adequately, failure in the student's performance must come to a negligible figure. A change of attitude is therefore essential so that the inefficiency of a teacher cannot be veiled under students' inadequate performance. To achieve this a high-powered

committee may be formed or the Medical Council or the University may be authorised to investigate the matter fully whenever a failure rate in a particular examination exceeds the expected minimum level, and to take appropriate action as necessary. In such a case, if the failure rate in an examination exceeds, say, 15%, the teaching staff may seriously be alerted to find out their own fault and to modify the teaching method so that the teaching may be given adequately to the understanding of all the students concerned. But in case the failure rate exceeds, say, 20% all the teaching staff may need to be debarred from giving any teaching or examining any students for any examination.

Whether or not Bangladeshi examiners are too slow to maintain the examination procedures, Bangladesh remains with a peculiarity that publication of results of any examination always takes far too long a time. This not only causes a great waste of time but constantly keeps the students under heavy psychological pressure, which can easily be prevented.

In medical examinations when oral and practical or clinical examinations are taken after the written examination is held, instead of wasting time and keeping the students hanging, the results of an examination can easily be published within maximum two hours since appearance of the last candidate for the last part of the examination. This may not however be feasible here now because the universities here have more than one medical institution in their jurisdiction, the remotest institute being at Barisal of Dacca University, Rangpur of Rajshahi University, and Sylhet of Chittagong University, and the results of those centres may take a few days to reach the respective university, for which 7 days may be quite adequate and sufficient. It is therefore necessary to make it obligatory so that no university takes more than 7 days to publish the result of an examination since the last date of oral and practical or clinical examination of that particular examination.

(To be continued)