

## **Important Advisory for Indian Students Regarding Medical Education in the Philippines**

The Embassy has been receiving representations from Indian medical students in the Philippines and their families, as well as elected representatives (MPs/MLAs), conveying various **issues/concerns faced by the students**.

2. To address the issues in a systematic manner, the Embassy had sought detailed feedback from the students currently pursuing education in the Philippines as well as from ex-students. The main issues highlighted were then formally shared with the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) of the Philippines and 21 medical colleges in the Philippines where the bulk of Indian students are studying, seeking inputs on measures taken by them to address these specific issues/concerns of the students.

3. Based on the feedback received, the Embassy wishes to advise all Indian students intending to take up medical courses in the Philippines as follows :

a) Recognised Colleges : A list of medical colleges recognised by CHED is available on the CHED website. However, no formal assessment/details/information regarding their academic infrastructure has been shared with the Embassy despite a written request and three reminders. The following three colleges have sent their responses : (i) Davao Medical School Foundation (ii) Emilio Aguinaldo College – School of Medicine (iii) Our Lady of Fatima University

b) Role of agents : A large number of complaints from Indian students relate to the role played by agents/consultants. Further some agents also engage subagents in recruiting students. Most complaints relate to the mismatch between what is promised to the students in India and what is made available to them in the Philippines, such as (i) an **inaccurate picture of the medical education system of the Philippines** and (ii) **over charging of fees/withholding information on fee structure**. It is strongly advised that students engage the colleges directly while confirming their admission and NOT through agents/consultants. If the student, nevertheless, chooses to engage an educational agent, he/she should ensure that the role of the agent is only to facilitate initial admission formalities. Even in such cases, students must insist that all correspondence should be between the applicant and the college/university concerned, and not with/through the agent.

c) Payment of Fees : Prospective students should ensure that fees are directly remitted to the concerned medical college. In no case should fees be handed over to the agent. There have been complaints from Indian students that they have **handed over the fees and other expenses for the entire duration of the course to the agent who did not deposit the same with the college, leading to the students having to make these payments again**.

d) Visa : Prospective Indian students should proceed to the Philippines ONLY on a Student visa granted by the Philippines Embassy in India. Currently, **most students enter on a tourist visa** and then seek to convert it into student visa in the Philippines. **The procedure for converting visa is time consuming** and takes several months. We have also received complaints from students that **educational agents sometimes retain their passport and charge exorbitant fees for immigration procedures** from students. These can be avoided if student visas are obtained at the outset. The Embassy does NOT recommend the practice of entering the Philippines on a tourist visa.

e) BS course and NMAT : All students who complete 10+2 from India **have to mandatorily enrol for BS course (degree course) which runs for about three semesters ( about 18 months to two years-depending on how the credits are obtained)**. Thereafter, the students **have to take the National Medical Admission Test (NMAT) test to enrol for MD course**. Kindly note that undergoing BS course and getting a competitive score in NMAT exam is a pre-condition for joining the medical course.



f) Limits on Foreign Students in MD course (broadly equivalent to MBBS degree in India) : **As per the Philippines rules, there is a quota fixed for foreign students in each college.** Feedback has been received from students that the colleges/**educational agents enrol more students in the BS course.** At times in excess of **three to four times over the capacity** in the medical school is admitted. Students are advised to confirm in writing whether the school has the required capacity in terms of infrastructure/faculty and that their admission to BS course will ultimately lead to an assured admission in the MD medical course in the respective college.

g) Issues during course of study : Subsequent to the admission process, complaints regarding the following aspects/issues have been received : **(i) Absence of faculty or infrastructure (ii) Lack of clarity in curriculum and schedule (iii) Arbitrary suspension of classes (iv) Delay in release of grade-sheets (v) Students being asked to take extra classes on additional payment of fees.** Students have also pointed to the lack of responsiveness on the part of the college administration to their concerns, and not permitting students to raise any issues other than through agents. It is therefore essential that Indian students insist on the colleges responding to them in writing right from the time of seeking admissions itself, and also inquire about the provision on international student advisor in the respective college, failing which admission may not be availed in that college.

4. Overall, while the Philippines provides a safe and rewarding environment to Indian medical students, adherence to the points in the advisory listed above is necessary to ensure that medical education in the Philippines is hassle-free for Indian nationals.

5. Action taken disregarding the points in this advisory would be the sole responsibility of the individual students concerned.

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