

Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Health, Treatment and Medical Education
Supreme Council for Medical Sciences Planning

Educational Regulations for Non-Iranian (International) Students



Approved at the 85 th session of the supreme council for medical sciences planning , dated 2022/11/20.

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The educational regulation for Non-Iranian (International) students, consisting of 22 articles and 21 notes, were approved at the 85 th session of the supreme council for medical science planning on 2022/11/20. This bylaw applies to all non-Iranian (international) students who begin their studies at universities , faculties, and higher education institutions of medical sciences in Iran starting from academic year 2023-2024, beginning in Mehr 1402 (late September-early October 2023) and any rules that contradict this bylaw will no longer apply to the students covered by it.

مورد تأیید است

دکتر غلامرضا حسن زاده

دبیر شورای عالی برنامه ریزی علوم پزشکی

مورد تأیید است

دکتر ابوالفضل باقری قره

معاون آموزشی

The resolution of the 85 th session of the supreme council for medical science planning, dated 2022/11/20 , regarding the educational bylaw for Non-Iranian (international) students, is approved and shall be communicated to the Implementing units.

دکتر بهرام عین اللهی

وزیر بهداشت، درمان و آموزش پزشکی
و رئیس شورای عالی برنامه ریزی علوم پزشکی

Introduction

Since upstream documents such as the policies of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (approved at the 274th session of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution dated 1992/03/11 regarding the allocation of part of the student admission capacity in domestic universities to foreign nationals), the country's development plans, and the Strategic Council for Macro Policy-making for foreign students emphasize laying the groundwork to achieve the overarching goals of the Islamic Republic of Iran in attracting non-Iranian students and standardizing educational, cultural, welfare, and administrative services of the country's higher education institutions in line with the internationalization of higher education and the expansion of beneficial international interactions; and considering the approval of the Comprehensive Program for Justice, Excellence, and Productivity in Medical Education, internationalization of medical education, with emphasis on improving quality, increasing efficiency and effectiveness, and enhancing the capacity of universities, faculty members, and students, has become one of the main priorities of the Ministry of Health. This regulation is formulated with the aim of promoting and ensuring the quality of education and increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of medical education for non-Iranian (international) learners and organizing their academic affairs. It includes a set of educational rules and regulations governing their admission, education, graduation, or discontinuation of studies.

Chapter One

General Provisions

Article 1 – Definitions:

1.1 Institute: In this regulation, the term "Institute" refers to the University of Medical Sciences, the Faculty of Medical Sciences, and the Higher Education Institute of Medical Sciences, which are authorized to admit and educate international students in accordance with the permit issued by the Council for the Expansion of Medical Sciences Universities.

1-2- Student: Throughout this regulation, the term "student" refers to a non-Iranian student who is admitted directly by the Institute without participating in the nationwide entrance exam and pays tuition fees (non-scholarship).

1-3- Equivalency Committee:

The Equivalency and Curriculum Adaptation Committee for international (non-Iranian) students, established within the Deputy of Education at the Ministry of Health and Medical Education, as approved in sessions No. 62 dated 10/20/2015 and No. 81 dated 12/14/2021 of the Supreme Council for Medical Science Planning.

1-4- Institute Educational Council: The Educational Council is the first level of policy-making in the institution's educational deputy. It is chaired by the educational deputy and is responsible for making policies and planning in the education sector to coordinate executive affairs and educational programs. The council then presents its plans to the institution's council and the board of directors.

1-5- Motivation Letter:

This letter must be prepared by the applicant in English and should include the applicant's motivation for applying to the desired field of study and institute. Also the applicant's abilities in various fields such as ICT and other relevant skills should be stated. This document is mandatory for postgraduate applicants and optional for undergraduate applicants.

1-6- Recommendation Letter:

At least two professors who have full knowledge of the applicant's education, research abilities, communication skills, and creativity must provide letters of recommendation. This document is mandatory only for postgraduate applicants.

1-7- Resume or CV:

The applicant must provide a fairly detailed description of their education, work experience ,research activities and scientific publications. This document is mandatory for postgraduate applicants and optional for undergraduate applicants.

Article 2 – Scope of the Regulation:

This regulation applies to all undergraduate levels, including Associate Degree ,Bachelor's Degree ,and Professional Doctorate (in Medicine, Dentistry, and Pharmacy), as well as degrees such as MBBS, B.D.S, BPharm, and MPharm. It also applies to all postgraduate (graduate) levels, including Master's Degree (non-continuous), Ph.D., and Research-based Ph.D. programs.

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Chapter Two

Requirements for Student-Admitting Institutes

Article 3- The conditions for institutions accepting students, the method of issuing licenses and determining the admission quota for non-Iranian students are based on the regulations approved by the eighteenth session of the Strategic Council for Macro-Policy Making for Foreign Students of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution dated 2022/8/15 (Notice No. 1401/3/3011 Date 2022/8/31 Strategic Council for Macro-Policy Making for Foreign Students of the Supreme Council for the Cultural Revolution is attached.

Article 4- To issue a license, it is mandatory to achieve the required quorum in each of the educational, research, Administrative and welfare, international, and cultural components of education. (Announcement No. 1401/3/3011 dated 2022/8/31 of the Strategic Council for Macro-Policy Making for Foreign Students of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution is attached)

Chapter Three

Procedures, Admission Requirements and Registration

Article 5 – Admission Requirements:

1-5- Not having Iranian citizenship. (Obtaining a student visa for registration and commencement of studies according to relevant regulations is mandatory.)

Note: If it is found after admission that the applicant holds Iranian citizenship, the admission will be cancelled.

2-5- Meeting the specific physical and psychological requirements for admission to each field or level, in accordance with the conditions specified in the national entrance exam booklet, which is announced by the institute.

3-5-The training for the student will be in English or Persian only. The applicant must have mastery of 4 English language skills.

1-3-5-Having a valid English language certificate when registering. For undergraduate levels, the minimum scores required are: Academic IELTS 5.5, TOEFL iBT 69, TOEFL PBT 525 and For postgraduate levels the minimum scores required are: Academic IELTS 6.0, TOEFL iBT 69, TOEFL PBT 525.

Note 1: Applicants without an English certificate must take the placement test approved by the educational deputy of the ministry of health, treatment, and medical education. Upon passing, they will receive an exemption certificate; otherwise, they must attend English language courses based on their determined level.

Note 2: Applicants who are Persian speakers or are proficient in speaking, reading, and writing Persian may be admitted but must provide an English language certificate within the first two years of study.

2-3-5- Applicants in programs involving patient contact must complete Persian language training and acquire necessary proficiency before starting internships.

Note: Passing the Persian language proficiency exam, approved by the educational deputy of the Ministry of Health, treatment and medical education, is mandatory to confirm proficiency.

4-5- Completing the admission application forms related to the applicant's desired institution.

5-5- Submission of Required Documents According to requested Field/Level of study, as detailed below:

Required academic documents: Undergraduate applicants must submit the certificate of graduation from the previous academic level. Postgraduate applicants must submit certificates of graduation from the two previous academic levels.

Note: The institute's admission committee may designate prerequisite courses for admission to a particular field or level. In such cases, the applicant will be notified of these courses, and final acceptance will depend on completing these prerequisites in coordination with the admission committee, either domestically or abroad.

*Passport with at least 6 months validity

*New photo

* Motivation letter, recommendation letter and resume

5--6- Institutions may, if foreseen in the International Student Financial Regulations or by appropriate notification, charge applicants a fee at the time of registration, subject to approval by the University Board of Trustees, as a fee for document review.

Article6-Admission process:

In order to review the applications of non-Iranian (international) applicants and accept them in each institution, a committee entitled "Non-Iranian (International) Student Admissions Committee" will be formed, consisting of the following natural and legal members.

-The International Vice chancellor of the Institute/International Director of the Institute (or equivalent) as the head of Committee.

- The Director of the International Admissions Office shall serve as the Secretary of the Committee.

- The Academic Vice Chancellor of the Institution, the Academic Vice Chancellor of the Institution's International Campus (in institutions with such structures), the Director of Academic Affairs or Postgraduate Studies, or equivalent positions, shall serve as permanent members of the committee.

- The Academic Vice Dean of the relevant faculty, the relevant educational group administrator, and the International Vice Dean of the relevant faculty (as applicable) shall serve as rotating members of the committee.

- Two faculty members shall be appointed by the International Vice Chancellor (or by the Academic Vice Chancellor in the absence of an International Vice Chancellor).

6.2. The resolutions of the International Student Admissions Committee shall be considered equivalent to those of the institution's Academic Council.

Note: If an institute obtains permission to admit non-iranian students an a specific program or degree level through inter-institutional collaboration approved by the equivalency committee, the admission of applicants in this case will be conducted by a joint admission committee composed of members from the admission committees of both institutes.

3-6- Each applicant's request shall be reviewed by the Admissions Committee, and the committee meeting minutes shall serve as the official and binding document for student admission.

Note 1: The admitting institution shall be responsible for verifying the authenticity of the applicant's previous academic records and for requesting confirmation from the issuing authority within six months of the commencement of studies. If an appropriate response is not received , inquiry can be made through the relevant embassy or consulate.

Note 2: A student's commencement of studies is contingent upon the issuance of a student visa, which must be requested by the admitting institution and is exclusively valid for the student's education at the institution.

4-6- Admission of non Iranian students(international) may be conducted once or twice a year based on the institution's academic calendar. Student admission dates must be posted on the universities' english website.

5-6 -The institute admissions committee is responsible for reviewing applicants' requests as quickly as possible and providing them with a response.

Note: Final admission is conditional upon registering the student's documents in the SAORG, getting the necessary consular approvals, and receiving a student visa.

6-6- To handle consular matters such as verifying eligibility for a student visa, issuing or renewing residency permits, and managing student entry and exit from Iran—the institution is required to establish a consular affairs office. This can be done independently or in cooperation with other universities or the relevant ministry, to ensure proper handling of international student matters.

Article 7 – Tuition:

1-7- The method of collecting tuition fees and costs related to student services and welfare is based on either an annual system or a semester-credit system, according to the financial regulations for international students at each institute , which must be approved by the institute's board of trustees .

2-7- Tuition fees and costs related to student and welfare services are collected based on the currencies approved by the central bank of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Charging students in Iranian Rial is not allowed.

3-7- The full tuition for each academic program (field/level) is determined by the institution's Board of Trustees. The student's annual tuition will be based on the rate applicable in the year of admission and will remain fixed until the end of their allowed study period, including two extra semesters. After that, any tuition will be calculated based on the current rate at that time.

4-7- The minimum annual tuition fees for different degree levels are set jointly by the board of trustees based on the actual cost of educating students. Institutions must follow these minimum fees.

Chapter 4

Educational System and Regulations

Article 8 – Educational System:

1-8- The higher education system in Iran, for all fields and levels, is based on a semester-based credit system. Every student must register and select courses separately each semester.

2-8- In the credit system, the value of each course is measured by its number of credits, and whether a student passes or fails is limited to that particular course only.

3-8- Each course unit corresponds to a specific amount of instruction , which is defined as follows over a semester or summer term: 17 hours of theory, 34 hours of practical or laboratory work, 51 hours of internship, and 68 hours of practical training.

4-8- An academic year consists of two regular semesters and, if necessary and feasible, a summer term. Each regular semester lasts 17 weeks, and the summer term lasts 6 weeks.

5-8 -The educational system can be conducted fully in-person or in a hybrid format (in-person and online). Institutions may offer some of their theoretical course credits online.

Note: If courses are offered online, the institution must have an appropriate structure for virtual education in accordance with the Ministry of Health’s approved regulations for online education for international students.

Article 9 – Language of Exams:

1-9- Exams must be held exactly in the language specified on the institution’s admission website.

2-9- If an exam is offered in both Persian and English, the student can choose the language of the exam.

3-9- Comprehensive examination administered by the Ministry of Health and medical education or by the ten national macro-regions will be offered concurrently in english. Accordingly , students are allowed to select their preferred exam language.

Note: The secretariats responsible for administering the exams must provide appropriate information to students prior to the exam regarding the option to choose their exam language.

4-9- Students identified by the institution as non-Persian speakers may use an additional 25% language allowance when taking Persian-language exams at any level.

5-9- The minimum passing score for all centrally administered comprehensive exams is 5% lower than that required of Iranian students.

Article 10 – Student Transfer:

1-10- Transferring a student from one institution to another within Iran is allowed, provided that both the originating and receiving institutions agree.

2-10- Transfer of a student from a university outside Iran to one inside Iran is not permitted. However, an international student studying abroad can apply as a new applicant to study at an Iranian institution. If admitted as a new student, they may request recognition of some previously completed courses from their former institution according to Article 13 of these regulations.

3-10- Transfer of a student from an institution inside Iran to one outside the country is permitted if the student has received admission from the foreign institution, has no outstanding financial debts to the current institution, and has fully paid the tuition fees for the current academic year.

Article 11 – Guest Student Status for Undergraduate Levels:

1-11- The student, provided they comply with all relevant consular regulations and obtain approval from both the originating and host institution (which must be authorized to admit non-Iranian students in the student's field and level of study within Iran), may temporarily transfer their place of study for a specified period, subject to the following conditions:

2-11- A student can only become a guest student at another institution if they have completed at least one semester at their original institution.

3-11- For the purpose of being a guest student at institutions abroad, in addition to approval from both institutions, the receiving institution's accreditation must be confirmed and accepted by the originating institution.

4-11- All costs related to the guest status at the receiving institution are the student's responsibility. The original institution may charge a portion of the annual tuition fee if it obtains the necessary financial approval to hold the student's place.

5-11- Before becoming a guest student, the student must settle all financial obligations with the original institution for the entire guest period.

6-11- A student being a guest at an institution to take one or more individual courses is permitted with the approval of both the originating and host institutions.

7-11- The total number of credits a student takes as a guest (whether full-time or individual courses) at one or more institutions must not exceed 40% of the total credits required for the program.

Note: The student's course registration, whether for individual courses or full-time guest status, must be done with the knowledge and approval of the relevant academic department at the original institution and according to the receiving institution's regulations.

8-11- The proposal and approval of a student's guest status request by the faculty's Educational Council is sufficient. However, the institution's Academic Vice Chancellor will oversee the guest process, so no further approval from higher authorities is required.

9-11- The courses a guest student takes at the host institution will be recorded exactly in their transcript at the original institution, and their grades will be included in the calculation of their semester average and overall average.

10-11- The minimum passing grade for courses taken as a guest student is the same as for regular students.

11-11 A student applying for guest status must submit their request, along with their academic details and the name of the host institution, to the relevant educational group administrator at least one month before the semester starts. If approved, the institution must inform the Ministry of Health for consular procedures.

12-11- The graduation certificate of a guest student is always issued by the original institution.

13-11- International students admitted to programs under agreements approved by the Ministry of Health between two institutions (whether domestic or foreign) are exempt from guest regulations and will follow the terms of the specific agreement.

Article 12 – Changing Major at Undergraduate Levels:

1-12- A student may change their major within the same institution during their studies, provided they meet the following conditions and the institution agrees:

1-1-12-Continuing in the original major is permitted according to educational regulations.

2-1-12- The student meets the requirements for the new major as defined in the educational program.

3-1-12- The student has completed at least one semester and no more than one-third of the total credits of their current program.

4-1-12- The institution has capacity to admit the student to the requested major.

2-12- A student can only change their major once during their studies.

3-12- The applicant for a major change must submit their request along with the required documents to the institution's academic office at least 8 weeks before the start of the semester.

4-12- If the request for a change of major is approved, the student must register and select courses in the new major in the first semester after approval. During the first two semesters in the new major, the student may, upon request and with the institution's consent, return to their previous major.

Note: Until registration in the new major, the student must follow the educational regulations of the previous major.

12-5 Courses completed in the previous major can be reviewed and equated by the academic department of the new major according to Article 13 of this regulation.

6-12- Since the basic sciences, clinical medicine foundations, and internship courses in the MD and MBBS programs are completely similar, and the MD educational regulations also apply to the MBBS program, transferring from MD to MBBS or vice versa during the student's studies is permitted with the institution's approval.

7-12- Medical students completing the MBBS program are required to take the Final Exit Assessment exam. This exam consists of two parts: a written test and a practical skills test. The written exam is the same as the Pre-Internship exam, while the practical exam must be held by the university using the OSCE method. Each part accounts for 50% of the total exam score.

8-12- If an MBBS student requests to change their major to MD, the request must be reviewed by the institution's Foreign Student Admission Committee. Upon approval, the student must successfully complete an 18-month internship after passing the Pre-Internship exam.

9-12- Changing majors for students who have been suspended from studies due to educational regulations, outside the conditions of clauses 12-1-1 and 12-1-3, is allowed with the approval of the institution's Educational Council to a lower-level medical sciences program.

Article 13 – Acceptance of course units:

1-13- Course equivalency and credit transfer for courses previously completed by a student at other institutions or different academic levels are allowed under the following conditions:

1-1-13- The educational content of the completed courses must share at least 80% similarity with the courses of the new major/program as determined by the relevant academic department, and the student's grade for each course must not be less than 12.

Note: The Equivalency and acceptance of courses are determined by the relevant academic departments at the host institution.

2-1-13- The student's original academic documents along with the course syllabi of the completed courses must be certified by the previous institution.

3-1-13- No more than 5 years should have passed since the student completed the course.

4-1-13- Credit transfer is possible for specialized courses between the same or higher to lower academic levels.

Note: Credits earned at the associate degree level (Kardani) can be accepted toward a continuous bachelor's degree.

2-13- The outcome of the evaluation can be: a) acceptance with an equivalent grade, b) acceptance conditional on passing a re-exam (without receiving credit), or c) rejection.

3-13- Accepted courses and their grades will be recorded in the student's transcript and It is included in the calculation of the overall average.

4-13- Before the evaluation of the requested course credits for admission to the host institution, the student must have paid the course evaluation fee in accordance with the financial regulations approved by the Board of Trustees.

Note: If the units are not accepted , the fee received will not be refunded.

5-13-For every 20 accepted course credits, one semester will be deducted from the student's maximum allowed duration of study

Chapter 5

Completion of the education process

Article 14 – Completion of Studies: A student's academic process is considered complete through one of the following: graduation, withdrawal from education, or dismissal from education (either academic or disciplinary). In any case, upon completion of studies, the student can request an official academic transcript, provided all financial obligations to the institution have been settled.

Note: Issuance of the transcript is contingent upon full financial settlement with the institution. If the student is unable to settle with the institution due to financial problems, they may receive a confirmation of completed coursework proportional to the amount of tuition already paid.

Article 15 – Graduation:

1-15- A student is considered graduated upon successfully completing all required courses in accordance with the academic curriculum approved by the Supreme Council of Medical Education Planning or the implementation Committee.

2-15- At the time of graduation, the degree level and field of study listed in the academic record must exactly match what was approved in the curriculum by the Supreme Council of Medical Education Planning or the implementation Committee, and announced to the student in their admission letter.

Note: The use of similar titles used in different countries is permissible with the approval of the Implementation Committee.

3-15- Academic degrees will be issued in both Persian and English by the institution and must be certified by the Education Services Center of the Ministry of Health's Education Deputy.

Article 16 – Withdrawal from Studies:

1-16- A student who wants to withdraw from their studies must personally submit a written request to the institution. The student is allowed to retract this request only once, up to one month before the end of the same semester. In such a case, the semester will be considered as a leave of absence, and the student will not be allowed to attend classes during that semester.

2-16- If the student wants to return to their studies after submitting a withdrawal request, they may be allowed to do so only once and only if the following conditions are met:

- 1-2-16- No more than one year should have passed since his/her academic interruption.
- 2-2-16- providing financial settlement for the previous course before withdrawal.

3-2-16- Approval by the Educational Council of the Institution.

Article 17 – Academic Dismissal from the Institution:

1-17- A student's request to return to studies following an academic dismissal may be reviewed only once by the Institution's Special Cases Committee, subject to approval by the institution's Educational Council.

2-17- Consideration of special academic circumstances shall be conducted in accordance with the executive regulations of the Special Cases Committee of universities/medical schools and healthcare services, approved in the 28th session of the Supreme Council for Medical Education Planning dated 2005/07/16 (25/4/84 in the Persian calendar). In cases reviewed by the Special Cases Committee, the Vice Chancellor for International Campus Education (or in institutions without this position, the Vice chancellor/Director of International Affairs or the highest-ranking official responsible for international affairs) will be invited as a voting member of the committee.

Chapter 6

Other Regulations

Article 18 –Re-enrollment of a student who has withdrawn from their studies at other institutions (subject to the approval of the accepting institution) is permitted as a new applicant , provided that the student admission procedures at the new institution comply with consular affairs requirements and the student’s visa is issued for the new institution.

1-18- Admission of a student who has been academically dismissed from an institution into the same program/degree level at another institution within the country is strictly prohibited. However, the student may be admitted into a different program/degree level, provided they disclose their dismissal in writing at the time of application, the previous institution confirms it upon inquiry, and all consular procedures are followed(subject to the approval of the receiving institution’s Admission Committee.

Note: The student is obligated to announce their academic status at their previous institution when applying to a new one. If it is later discovered that the student was academically dismissed from another institution in Iran and failed to declare it, the new institution is required to terminate the student's studies immediately.

2-18- Admission of students who have been dismissed for disciplinary reasons from one institution into another institution within the country is strictly prohibited.

3-18- The receiving institution is required to verify the academic and educational status of any dismissed or withdrawn student from their previous institution. If the student has any financial debt to the previous institution or has not complied with the educational regulations of that institution , the new institution is obliged to prevent their registration and their registration shall be conditional upon the settlement of previous debts and obtaining consent from that institution.

Article 19 – Disciplinary Regulations: Disciplinary violations committed by international students shall be handled in accordance with the “Student Disciplinary Regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran,” approved at the 354th session of the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution on 1995/07/11 (20/4/74 in the Persian calendar). In disciplinary proceedings, the following individuals shall participate as voting members of the relevant disciplinary committees:

a) In the Preliminary Committee: The Student and Cultural Affairs Officer of the International Campus (or, in institutions without this position, the Vice chancellor/Director of International Affairs or the highest-ranking official in charge of international affairs at the institution).

b) In the Appeals Committee: The Vice chancellor/Director of International Affairs or the highest-ranking official in charge of international affairs at the institution

Article 20 – Change of Student’s Nationality During Studies:

1-20- If a student changes their nationality for any reason during their studies (including marriage of female students with an Iranian citizen), they shall be required to complete their studies by paying tuition fees in accordance with the institution’s applicable financial and transactional regulations.

Note: After graduation, these students Required to complete the obligations under the Human Resources Service Program same as Iranian graduates, in accordance with relevant regulations, and will not be entitled to free education benefits.

2-20- Graduates who change their nationality after completing their studies but before receiving their degree or diploma are required to fulfill the obligations of the Human Resources plan similar to Iranian graduates, in accordance with the relevant regulations and considering that they have paid tuition fees for the entire duration of their studies, they are not subject to the obligations of free education.

Article 21 – Any educational matters not covered in this regulation will follow the same rules as those for Iranian students , and the related regulations for them will apply.

Article 22 -This regulation, comprising 22 articles and 21 notes, was approved in the 85th session of the Supreme Council for Medical Education Planning dated 2022/11/20, and shall be applicable to all non-Iranian (international) students commencing their studies in Iranian medical universities and institutions from the beginning of the academic year 2023–2024 (Mehr 1402)(late September-early October 2023) onwards. Any rules that don’t match this regulation for these students are no longer valid.