

## EQUIVALENCE STANDARD

### **HEC urged to revise degree policy**

ISLAMABAD. The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued a policy note to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to revise its Equivalence Standard (ES) for Master's degree programmes to create an exception for those who attained their master's degrees in a period prior to the introduction of equivalence standard, to create a level playing field among all the Master's degree holders. CCP took notice of concerns raised with regard to ES introduced by the HEC in Qualification Framework and Revised Roadmap for Business Education - 2012. The Commission acknowledges that the initiative taken by HEC to introduce the four-year bachelor programme was in order to make the Pakistani degrees compatible with the foreign ones. However, the new standard should not affect the degree holders who earned their degrees in accordance with the standard prevalent at the time of their schooling. OUR CORRESPONDENT

---

## CCP issues new policy for Master's degrees

**Our correspondent**

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued a policy note to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to revise its Equivalence Standard for Master's degree programmes.

This policy note aims to create an exception for those who attained their Master's degrees in a period prior to the introduction of Equivalence Standard and to create a level playing field among all the Master's degree holders.

According to CCP's statement issued here on Thursday, the Commission took notice of concerns raised with regard to Equivalence Standard (ES) introduced by the HEC in Qualification Framework and Revised Roadmap for Business Education - 2012.

The Equivalence Standard applies retrospectively and renders the Master's degrees earned prior to introduction of the Equivalence Standard inferior to those earned after the introduction of ES.

The Business Education Roadmap clearly shows that an MBA attained after 16 years of education is equivalent to a BBA or B.Com culminating in 16 years of education. Though the Qualification Framework and Roadmap for Business Education has set a standard for future students, they, perhaps, inadvertently, have not created any exception for Master's degrees (MA, MSc, MBAs, etc.) attained prior to introduction of Equivalence Standard, thereby rendering the degrees earned prior to ES sub-standard.

The Equivalence Standard raises a serious competition concern by discriminating against those who earned their Master's degrees (MA, MSc, MBA, etc.) prior to ES and essentially putting them at a competitive disadvantage in terms of employment and higher education vis-à-vis those who earned their degrees after the introduction of ES.

The Commission noted that by failing to create exception for degrees conferred prior to the introduction of Equivalence Standard the HEC has applied the same retroactively against the principles of natural justice. Consider, for example, the case of Legal education in Pakistan, where the requirement of a 2 years LLB changed to a 3 years LLB; thus, making the completion of LLB degree requiring 17 years of schooling instead of 16 years. Despite addition of a year in the terminal degree, the old LLB is considered equivalent to the one that is earned in line with the current standard.

## HEC asked to revise Equivalence Standard for master degree



**OUR STAFF REPORTER  
ISLAMABAD**

The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has issued a Policy Note to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to revise its Equivalence Standard for Master's degree programmes to create an exception for those who attained their Master's degrees in a period prior to the introduction of Equivalence Standard, to create a level playing field among all the Master's degree holders.

CCP took notice of concerns raised with regard to Equivalence Standard (ES) introduced by the HEC in Qualification Framework and Revised Roadmap for Business Education - 2012. The Equivalence Standard applies retrospectively and renders the Master's degrees earned prior to introduction of the Equivalence Standard inferior to those earned after the introduction of ES. The Business Education Roadmap clearly shows that an MBA attained after 16 years of education is equivalent to a BBA or B.Com culminating in 16 years of education. Though the Qualification Framework and Roadmap for Business Education have set a standard for future students, they, perhaps, inadvertently, have not created any exception for Master's degrees (MA, MSc, MBAs etc.) attained prior to introduction of Equivalence Standard, thereby rendering the degrees earned prior to ES sub-standard.

# CCP tells HEC to revise equivalence standard for master's

Staff Report

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on Thursday issued a policy note to the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to revise its equivalence standard for master's degree programmes to create an exception for those who attained their master's degrees in a period prior to the introduction of equivalence standard (ES), to create a level playing field among all the master's degree holders.

The CCP took notice of the concerns raised with regard to the ES introduced by the HEC in qualification framework and revised roadmap for business education 2012. The ES applies retroactively and renders the master's degrees earned prior to introduction of the ES inferior to those earned after the

introduction of ES.

The business education roadmap clearly shows that an MBA attained after 16 years of education is equivalent to a BBA or B Com culminating in 16 years of education. Though the qualification framework and roadmap for business education has set a standard for future students, they, perhaps, inadvertently, have not created any exception for the master's degrees (MA, MSc, MBA) attained prior to the introduction of ES, thereby rendering the degrees earned prior to ES substandard.

The ES raises a serious competition concern by discriminating against those who earned their master's degrees prior to ES, and essentially putting those at a competitive disadvantage in terms of employment and higher education vis-à-vis those who

earned their degrees after the introduction of ES.

The commission noted that by failing to create exception for degrees conferred prior to the introduction of ES, the HEC has applied the same retroactively against the principles of natural justice. Consider, for example, the case of legal education in Pakistan, where the requirement of a 2 years LLB changed to a 3 years LLB; thus, making the completion of the LLB degree requiring 17 years of schooling instead of 16 years.

Despite addition of a year in the terminal degree, the old LLB is considered equivalent to the one that is earned in line with the current standard. While the current standard has been mandatory since its introduction, it has had no retrospective effect thereby ruling out any possi-

bility of discrimination.

The commission believes that the ES discriminates the old master's degree as it effectively renders an old MA, MSc, MBA degree inferior, despite the fact that the additional years of schooling are not enhanced in these programmes unlike the LLB programme, but still, nonetheless, renders previous master's degree substandard. For example, if a business school rated by the HEC as the 'premier business school' in the country, it can be safely presumed about it that the quality and standard of the education imparted in the MBA programme before and after the introduction of ES remained the same, since the time required to complete a MBA degree remained two years. However, effectively, its old MBA degree is rendered inferior by virtue of being

declared equivalent to a BBA or B Com degree under the HEC roadmap for business education. Furthermore, in order to compete, it is essential that one is able to enter a market. An old MBA being inferior to new MBA cannot apply for a job where the eligibility criteria are set as per HEC standard i.e. 18 years MBA. Thus, the ES makes it difficult for old MBAs to enter the employment market of management sciences and has the effect of reducing or restricting competition in the said market. Similarly, to seek higher education, an old MBA has to repeat the same terminal degree in order to meet the HEC's equivalence criteria.

Moreover, it needs to be noted that a profound goal of a four year bachelor programme offered worldwide is to provide an opportunity to students to broaden their

horizon by learning a variety of subjects in various disciplines. A specialist programme such as MBA prepares people to serve as business specialists in various sectors of the economy. Therefore, the objectives associated with respect to a four-year bachelor programme and a specialist programme is disparate and cannot substitute each other in any way. After attaining a master's degree, whether we talk about the old MBAs or the new ones, their ability to perform in a higher education programme or the job field remains undistinguished, as far as their preparation or training is concerned. The ES of the HEC does not differentiate old and new MBA based on the curriculum or teaching methodology but instead on the number of years. The commission acknowledges that the initial

steps taken by the HEC to introduce the four-year bachelor programme was in order to make the Pakistani degrees compatible with the foreign ones. However, the new standard should not negatively affect the degree holders who earned their degrees in accordance with the standard prevalent at the time of their schooling.

The commission's mandate includes ensuring free competition in all spheres of commercial and economic activity, and to enhance economic efficiency. Section 29 of the Act stipulates that the commission shall promote competition by, inter alia, reviewing policy frameworks for fostering competition, and making suitable recommendations to the federal government or provincial governments to amend any law that affects competition in Pakistan.

ایچ ای سی ماسٹر ڈگری کے مساوی معیار کی پالیسی میں ترمیم کرے، مسابقتی کمیشن

وہ افراد جنہوں نے مساوی معیار کی پالیسی سے پہلے ماسٹر ڈگری حاصل کی انہیں اسٹیٹ حاصل ہو سکے  
اسلام آباد (خبرنگار خصوصی) مسابقتی کمیشن آف پاکستان (سی سی پی) نے ہائر ایجوکیشن (ایچ ای سی) کو  
پالیسی نوٹ جاری کیا ہے کہ وہ اپنی ماسٹر ڈگری پروگرام  
باقی صفحہ 6 نمبر 39

39

مسابقتی کمیشن

کے مساوی معیار کی پالیسی میں ترمیم کرے تاکہ ماسٹر ڈگری کے حامل وہ افراد جنہوں نے ایچ ای سی کی مساوی معیار کی پالیسی سے پہلے اپنی ماسٹر ڈگری حاصل کی انہیں اس پالیسی سے اسٹیٹ حاصل ہو سکے تاکہ تمام ماسٹر ڈگری کے حامل افراد کو ملازمت یا مزید تعلیم کیلئے برابری سطح پر موقع حاصل ہو سکے۔ سی سی پی کی جانب سے جمعرات کو یہاں جاری کردہ اعلامیہ کے مطابق مسابقتی کمیشن آف پاکستان نے ہائر ایجوکیشن سسٹم کے کوالیفیکیشن فریم ورک پر ترمیم شدہ روڈ میپ برائے بزنس ایجوکیشن 2012ء پر اٹھائے گئے خدشات پر نوٹس لیا کیونکہ مساوی معیار کا اطلاق ماضی میں حاصل کی گئی ماسٹر ڈگریز پر اثر انداز ہوتے ہوئے ان کی افادیت کو مساوی معیار کے بعد حاصل کی گئی ماسٹر ڈگریز سے کم تر ثابت کر رہا ہے یہ بزنس ایجوکیشن روڈ میپ واضح طور پر ظاہر کر رہا ہے کہ 16 سال کی تعلیم کے بعد حاصل کردہ ایم بی اے کی ڈگری بی بی اے یا بی کام کی ڈگری کے مساوی کر دی گئی ہے۔

# جہانِ پاکِستان

30 May 2014

Page # 11

## ایچ ای سی ماسٹر ڈگری پروگرام کی مساوی معیار کی پالیسی میں ترمیم کے لئے مسابقتی کمیشن

خداشات پر نوٹس لیا کیوں کہ ES کا اطلاق ماضی میں حاصل کی گئی ماسٹر ڈگری پر اثر انداز ہوتے ہوئے ان کی افادیت کو ES کے بعد حاصل کی گئی ماسٹر ڈگری سے کم تر ثابت کر رہا ہے۔ یہ بزنس ایجوکیشن روڈ میپ واضح طور پر ظاہر کر رہا ہے کہ 16 سال کی تعلیم کے بعد حاصل کردہ MBA کی ڈگری BBA یا B Com کی ڈگری کے مساوی کر دی گئی ہے اگرچہ کوالیفیکیشن فریم ورک اور بزنس ایجوکیشن کے روڈ میپ کے یہ معیاری مستقبل کے طالب علموں پر نافذ کیا ہے لیکن شاید غیر ارادی طور پر وہ اس ES سے پہلے حاصل کردہ ماسٹر ڈگری ہولڈر افراد کو اسٹیڈی نڈے سے جیسا کہ ماضی میں دو سالہ LLB ڈگری کے حامل افراد کو 3 سالہ LLB کی ڈگری کے حامل افراد کو دیا گیا۔

مسابقتی کمیشن پاکستان اسلام آباد (نیوز رپورٹر) نے (CCP) کو پالیسی نوٹ جاری کیا ہے کہ وہ اپنی ماسٹر ڈگری پروگرام کی مساوی معیار Equivalent Standard کی پالیسی میں ترمیم کرے تاکہ ماسٹر ڈگری کے حامل وہ افراد جنہوں نے HEC کی (ES) مساوی معیاری پالیسی سے پہلے اپنی ماسٹر ڈگری حاصل کی انہیں اس پالیسی سے استثنیٰ حاصل ہو سکے تاکہ تمام ماسٹر ڈگری کے حامل افراد کو ملازمت یا مزید تعلیم کے لئے برابر کی سطح موقع حاصل ہو سکے۔ مسابقتی کمیشن پاکستان نے ہائیر ایجوکیشن سسٹم کے کوالیفیکیشن فریم ورک پر ترمیم شدہ روڈ میپ برائے بزنس ایجوکیشن 2012 پر اٹھائے گئے