

# Comparative Analysis of NBE and NMC Postgraduate Medical Degrees in India: Alignment with Global Standards and Implications for Medical Education

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36347/sjams.2025.v13i12.008>

| Received: 16.10.2025 | Accepted: 11.12.2025 | Published: 15.12.2025

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## Abstract

## Review Article

The structure and quality of postgraduate medical education in India has been a subject of debate, particularly in the context of global alignment. This review article compares postgraduate pathways regulated by the National Medical Commission (NMC) and the National Board of Examinations (NBE), highlighting differences in examinations, thesis evaluation, admission processes, and global alignment. Findings suggest that NBE programs demonstrate greater structural rigor and better alignment with Western standards compared to NMC degrees.

**Keywords:** NBE, DNB, DrNB, MD, MS, medical education, global standards.

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## INTRODUCTION

Postgraduate and super-specialty medical education in India is primarily delivered through two parallel systems: university-affiliated degrees regulated by the National Medical Commission (NMC) and board-certified programs conducted by the National Board of Examinations (NBE). While both pathways produce qualified specialists, their structure, assessment, and regulatory mechanisms differ significantly. This review aims to provide a comparative analysis of these two systems and assess their alignment with global standards in medical education.

## METHODS

This review draws upon official policy documents, published literature, and regulatory frameworks governing postgraduate medical education in India. A comparative analysis was performed focusing on examination systems, thesis evaluation, admission processes, and international alignment.

### Comparative Analysis

#### Examination and Assessment

NBE programs (DNB/DrNB) follow centralized examinations<sup>1</sup> with stringent evaluation, whereas NMC examinations are institution-based<sup>2</sup> with variability across universities.

### Thesis and Research Work

NBE mandates centralized thesis submission<sup>1</sup> and evaluation by independent examiners, ensuring uniform standards. NMC thesis assessments remain institution-based<sup>2</sup> with variability.

### Seat Allocation and Meritocracy

NBE admissions are merit-based<sup>1</sup> through NEET-PG/NEET-SS, with minimal reservation or capitation-based practices<sup>3</sup>. NMC institutions include reservation quotas and capitation seats in private colleges.

### Global Alignment

NBE's structure resembles Western board certification<sup>4</sup> processes, while NMC programs demonstrate heterogeneity<sup>5</sup> that limits global comparability.

## DISCUSSION

The comparative analysis highlights the advantages of NBE programs in terms of rigor, fairness, and international comparability. Centralized examinations, standardized thesis evaluations<sup>1,5</sup>, and merit-based admissions reflect global best practices. In contrast, NMC programs face variability, quota systems<sup>2</sup>, and issues in international recognition. The findings emphasize the need for policy reforms to bring NMC programs closer to global standards.

## CONCLUSION

NBE postgraduate programs (DNB, DrNB, FNB) are structurally more aligned with Western medical education systems compared to NMC-regulated degrees (MD, MS, DM, MCh). Their centralized examinations, uniform thesis evaluations, and merit-based admissions make them a stronger benchmark for global comparability.

## Declarations

**Funding:** No funding received.

**Conflicts of Interest:** None declared.

**Ethical Approval:** Not applicable

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