

NEET for Allied Health Care Education: Gateway to Excellence or Roadblock to Dreams?

Annie Caroline P¹, Thirumurugan E^{1*}, Harishkumar M², Karthick R³

¹Assistant Professor,
Department Of Allied Health Science, Dr MGR Educational and Research Institute, Chennai.

²Assistant Professor,
Department Of Anaesthesia Technology, SRM Medical College Hospital & Research Centre,
Kattankulathur.

³Lecturer,
Department Of Cardiovascular Technology, School of Allied and Healthcare Sciences, Malla
Reddy University, Hyderabad.

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To the Editor,

The **National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions (NCAHP)** has mandated the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) as a prerequisite for admission to the majority of undergraduate Allied and Healthcare Professional (AHP) courses, effective from the 2026-2027 academic year [1]. Consequently, students are required to obtain NEET scores, in addition to meeting other admission criteria, for programs including but not limited to Physiotherapy, Optometry, and Nutrition. This decision aims to standardize the admissions process by eliminating direct admissions and applies to a range of undergraduate and postgraduate courses for which the NCAHP has established new curricula [2]. Aspiring AHP professionals will thus need to prepare for NEET-UG after completing their secondary education.

The introduction of NEET as an entrance requirement for Allied Health Care education represents a significant advancement toward enhancing the quality and credibility of the paramedical and allied health workforce in India. In a dynamic healthcare landscape, uniform admission standards are imperative to guarantee that students enrolling in these programs possess the requisite academic preparedness and foundational knowledge. NEET fosters equity by offering a single, standardized examination for all candidates, thereby diminishing the influence of disparate institutional criteria and mitigating potential admissions disparities. By promoting merit-based entry, NEET elevates educational standards and ultimately supports the development of well-trained Allied Health professionals, who are integral to diagnostics, emergency care, rehabilitation, and clinical support services. Although concerns regarding accessibility and examination pressure exist, these challenges may be effectively addressed through enhanced governmental support, affordable preparatory resources, and comprehensive awareness programs.

Rather than viewing NEET as an impediment, it should be seen as an investment in strengthening the healthcare system, promoting accountability, and ensuring high-quality patient care. With appropriate implementation and supportive mechanisms, NEET has the potential to serve not as an obstacle but as a gateway to excellence for future Allied Health professionals.

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