## For an MBBS seat, you need just 5% in physics, 20% in biology

Rema Nagarajan | TNN | Apr 15, 2018, 02:11 IST







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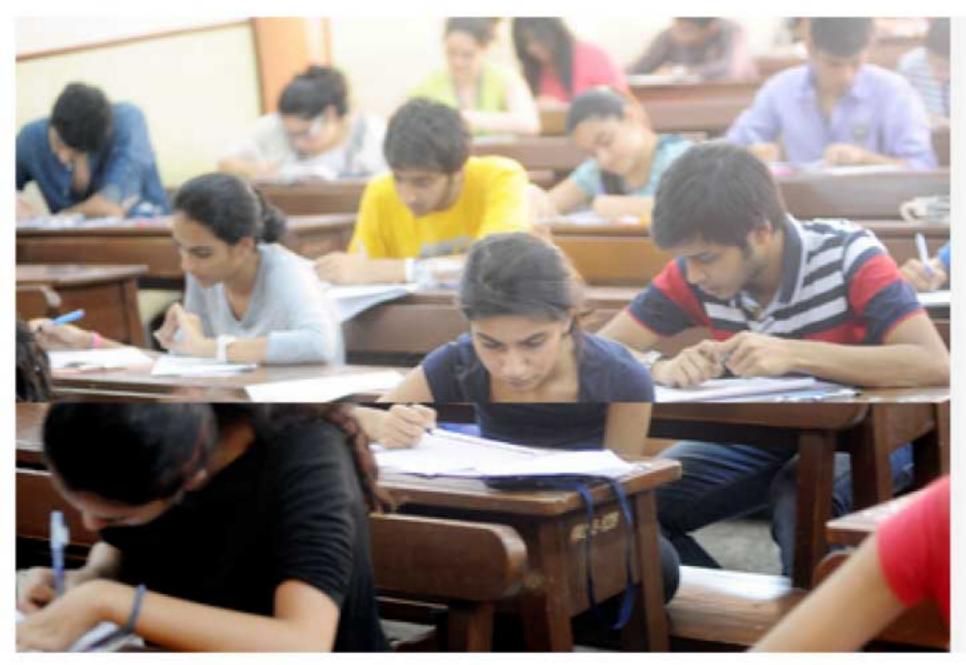
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### HIGHLIGHTS

- · Before NEET was mandatory, the cut-offs were 50% marks for the general category, and 40% for the reserved
- From 2016, these were changed to 50th and 40th percentile,
- This opened the doors to candidates with just 18-20% marks in the NEET aggregate



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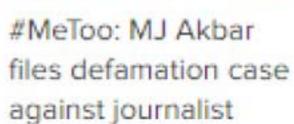
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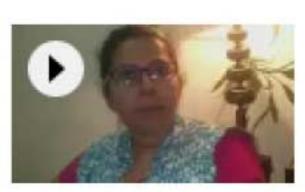
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With just 5% marks in physics, less than 10% in chemistry, and 20-odd per cent in the biology section of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), candidates have got admission to medical colleges in the past two years. This was made possible by the "percentile" system under NEET that was supposed to keep non-meritorious students out.

Before NEET was made mandatory in 2016, the cut-offs for admission were 50% marks for the general category, and 40% for the reserved categories. From the 2016 admission year, these were changed to 50th and 40th percentile, respectively, opening the doors to candidates with just 18-20% marks in the NEET aggregate.

Here's how it happened. In 2015, you needed 50% marks for admission in the general category, so you would have had to score at least 360 out of 720 marks. But in 2016 you only needed to be in the 50th percentile, which meant scoring 145 out of 720, or barely 20%.

### NEET 2017: WHY 50th PERCENTILE IS 18%

HELL EVEN TOTAL OF THE PARTY OF				
Category	Marks range*	Qualifying percentile	Effective cut-off in % marks	No. of qualified candidates
General	697-131	50th	18.2	5,43,473
OBC/SC/ST	130-107	40th	14.9	67,999
Handicapped general	130-118	45th	16.4	67
Handicapped OBC/SC/ST	130-107	40th	14.9	200
Total	697-107	NA	14.9	6,11,739

\*Out of a total of 720

The reserved categories needed to be in the 40th percentile, which translated to 118 out of 720, or 16.3% marks. In 2017, this fell further to 131 marks (18.3%) for the general category, and 107 marks (14.8%) for the reserved seats.

This year's NEET exams, to be held next month, continue with the same percentile cut-offs, so students with less than 20% marks in the entrance exam may be admitted to MBBS courses again.

Percentile measures the proportion of candidates, not scores. Thus, 50th percentile means students with more marks than the bottom half, 90th percentile comprises students with more marks than the bottom 90%, and so on. It does not mean they have 90% marks.

The percentile system not only made low-scoring students eligible to study medicine, it actually got them seats in colleges. TOI found that in 2016, general category students with just 148 marks, or 20.6%, in NEET were admitted to a private college in Uttar Pradesh which is a deemed university. As many as 30 of the 100 students this institution admitted had less than 25% marks in NEET. A Puducherry college admitted 14 students with less than 21% marks, the lowest being 20.1%. Some students admitted in the reserved categories had even lower marks.

# MERIT TAKES A HIT

- Percentile cut-offs introduced for NEET lowered the marks bar; became counter-productive
- Several non-meritorious students found themselves eligible for admissions
- Deep pockets with poor scores eventually paid their way into private medical colleges



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Some of the best-known private colleges in the country have admitted students with less than 40% marks in the general category and under 30% in the reserved categories.

The percentile system has played havoc with merit, making it easy for wealthy low-performers to buy seats. Thanks to the low cut-offs last year, 6.1 lakh of the 10.9 lakh NEET candidates qualified for admission, 5.4 lakh of them from the general category. With about 60,000 MBBS seats available across India, there were about 10 eligible students for every seat. A large number of affluent students with poor scores got in as many high-scoring middle class or poor students had to opt out because of the high fees.

### TOP COMMENT

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"Whether it's an entrance examination or the Class XII exams, students are expected to get a minimum of 50% or 40%, depending on their category, to get into medicine. But with this flawed eligibility criteria of NEET, we saw students with low scores getting into medical colleges," said Dr Raj Bahadur, VC of Baba Farid University of Health Sciences in Punjab.

In his dissenting note on the parliamentary standing committee's report regarding the National Medical Commission Bill, Tamil Nadu MP K Kamaraj said NEET had allowed the admission of candidates with such low scores who would probably never have been admitted in pre-NEET days.



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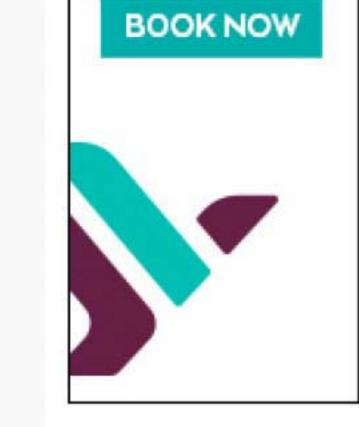
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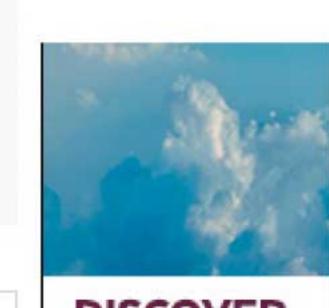
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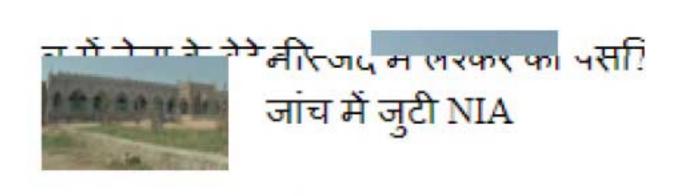
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