

# Electives in CBME Pattern: Bane or Boon? Time to Tell

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Indian medical colleges are begin to implement elective teaching sessions for the current Competency-based Medical Education undergraduate medical students.<sup>[1]</sup> Electives are the curricular contents during any training program where a student has the freedom to choose a part of the course element.<sup>[2]</sup>

This session, all medical colleges are going to start electives as a mandatory thing in their schedule for the first time. Being a pretty new concept for medical colleges, it is going to be challenging for all people concern. It is a mandatory exercise, and without adequate attendance, a pupil will not be allowed to appear in final examinations.<sup>[3]</sup>

Elective will have two phases. Phase 1, will have pre and paraclinical subjects, whereas Phase 2 will have clinical subjects. The duration for each will be 10–15 days. The departments will have to be ready with modules, so as to attract students to get to them. Hence here students are the real kings.<sup>[4]</sup> In a college of say 250, each department will cater say, 20–25 students at a time. The modules should be prepared keeping in mind, the utility of the subject material in the future. What are the students going to achieve with the electives then? They can rekindle their interests with these and work closely with the subject they love, as routine classes does not allow to do that. Furthermore, this may help

them immensely in choosing a subject while doing post-graduation. Important skills may also be learnt during the process.

With so much emphasis on research and publications, a student can be sensitized toward quality research and to pick up projects and publications. The departments also will get to achieve a few things. They get a manpower for a few days, so that they can get a real-time feedback on their activities, can improve publications, and pick up community-based short studies and projects.<sup>[2]</sup> With the 1<sup>st</sup> year, there is bound to be teething problems. With effective feedbacks, many of the things can be ironed out gradually. Student real-time formative assessment, portfolio building, and log book maintenance are going to be challenging. Some challenges will remain though.<sup>[5]</sup> From a busy schedule, a department will need to have enthusiastic preceptors. They should be willing enough to generate interest. Meaningful specific learning objectives need to be made to make the sessions helpful. Modules have to tailor made keeping in mind the short duration of course.

The disadvantage right now we can think of are as follows:

1. No provision for people who will be absent (in case of any untoward and genuine reason).
2. Lack of interest in a module, as a student had limited choice because he or she was down the ladder of merit list.
3. No quality checks in case of external preceptors.

This is an experimental training program which can make more interesting and helpful to find the skill in the students. As of now we are expecting the better results though before completion of 1–2 batch successfully cannot say about their future continuation. We are really hopping that concept fulfills the outcomes which expected from the program.

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