



Research Article

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Pass Rates of University Residents at Rawalpindi Medical University, Pakistan

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To Cite This Article: Rizwana Shahid*, Pass Rates of University Residents at Rawalpindi Medical University, Pakistan. *Am J Biomed Sci & Res.* 2025 29(1) *AJBSR.MS.ID.003762*, DOI: [10.34297/AJBSR.2025.29.003762](https://doi.org/10.34297/AJBSR.2025.29.003762)

Received: 📅 November 03, 2025; **Published:** 📅 November 10, 2025

Abstract

Objectives: To determine and compare the program-wise pass rates of university residents during 2025 at Rawalpindi Medical University.

Subjects & Methods: A cross-sectional analytical study was done during 2025 to analyze the pass rates of university residents at Rawalpindi Medical University. The Results of Final Training Assessments (FTA) 1st and 2nd Annual 2025 were meticulously studied. Data was analyzed by Microsoft Excel 2019 software. Descriptive statistics were applied.

Results: Total 73 and 76 university residents appeared in FTA 1st and 2nd Annual 2025 at Rawalpindi Medical University, Rawalpindi. Pass rate of residents was 32% and 34% during FTA 1st and 2nd Annual 2025 respectively. Pass rate in MS Ophthalmology and MD Gastroenterology was 100%. This was followed by the pass rate of MD Psychiatry (50%), MD Cardiology (50%) and MS General Surgery (46%). The overall pass rate of Medicine & Allied trainees reduced from 56.25% to 36% during 2025 while that of Surgery & Allied trainees was boosted from 19.4% to 40.8%.

Conclusion: Overall low pass rate among university residents indicates potential gaps in teaching quality, examination preparation or trainee selection method. This also seems to be illustrative of stringent assessment standards designed to uphold high levels of clinical competence and patient safety.

Keywords: Final Training Assessment, pass rate, Medicine & Allied, Surgery & Allied

Introduction

Exit exams of postgraduate training are considered to be the proficiency gatekeepers [1]. Pass percentage of these exams are of paramount significance for evaluating a postgraduate training and to anticipate the readiness of a doctor for independent consultation and treatment of the patients [2]. Although pass score varies across assessments Pass percentages are substantive markers of attaining

the standard training outcomes in postgraduate assessments [3]. The formulation of fundamental policies and robust analytical framework are of great significance for smooth execution of any postgraduate training program [4]. Although a prospective study carried out to evaluate postgraduate training of Pakistan was illustrative of adequacy of guidance from respective supervisors, yet some shortcomings have also been highlighted specifically

pertaining to assessments [5]. Summative pass metrics have frequently been employed by training and regulatory bodies to monitor the educational quality, training programs and resultant resource allocation. Medical education department of various countries have emphasized the need to improve the validity of summative assessment to improve the healthcare of the community at large [6].

As summative assessments have been revealed as sole indicators for clinical performance of our specialists [7], so their pass percentages should comprehensively be discussed in comparison with summative assessments carried out both nationally and internationally. Rawalpindi Medical University (RMU) is the only public sector medical institute where residents undergoing training at respective teaching hospitals experience robust assessments throughout their training in the forms of In-Training Assessments [8], 360-degree evaluations [9] and Workplace Based Assessments [10]. As per University Policy, pass percentage of trainees in summative assessments was declared to be 60% [11]. Although numerous researches have been done pertaining to formative assessments of postgraduate trainees, their pass percentage in exit exams need comprehensive quantitative analysis as part of Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI). The

present study is therefore intended to determine the pass rate of trainees during 2025 and to do their program-wise comparison also to measure the academic performance of trainees across specialties. Moreover, analyzing trends over time will also ensure accountability and quality improvement in postgraduate medical education.

Methods

A cross-sectional analytical study was carried out during 2025 to analyze the pass rates of university residents at Rawalpindi Medical University. The Results of Final Training Assessments (FTA) 1st and 2nd Annual 2025 were systematically included in the current study. University residents in our study refers to those postgraduate trainees who are enrolled in MS & MD training programs [12] at RMU affiliated teaching hospitals through Central Induction Process (CIP) [13]. The disciplines included in the categories of Medicine & Allied and Surgery & Allied are given below in (Table 1). Data was analyzed by MS Excel 2019 software. Descriptive statistics were applied. Apart from presenting the trends of subject-wise pass rates of 2 FTAs held during 2025, the trend of cumulative pass rate 2025 were also shown.

Table 1: Disciplines of Medicine & Allied and Surgery & Allied Training programs.

Medicine & Allied Programs	Surgery & Allied Programs
General Medicine, Gastroenterology, Cardiology, Nephrology, Critical Care, Emergency Medicine, Infectious Diseases, Pulmonology, Dermatology, Psychiatry	General Surgery, Plastic Surgery, Pediatric Surgery, Anesthesia, Urology, Neurosurgery, Orthopedics

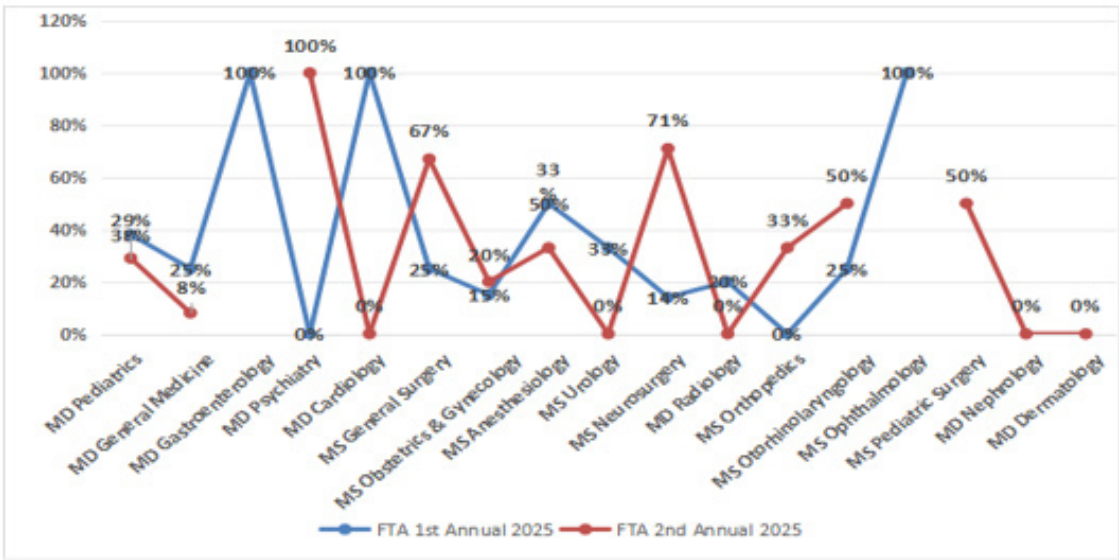


Figure 1:

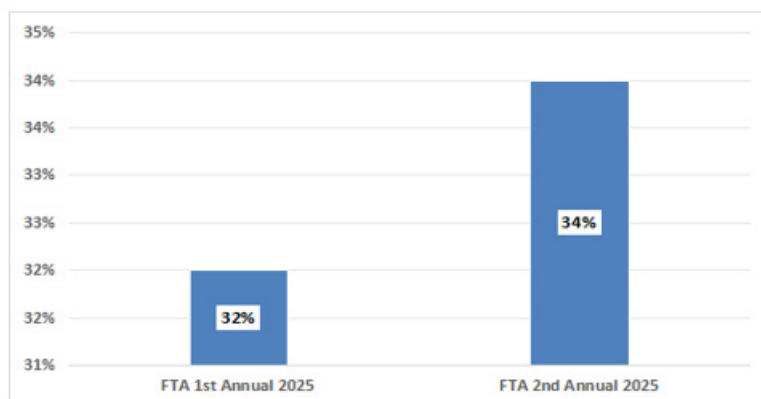


Figure 2: Pass rate of trainees during FTA 1st and 2nd Annual 2025.

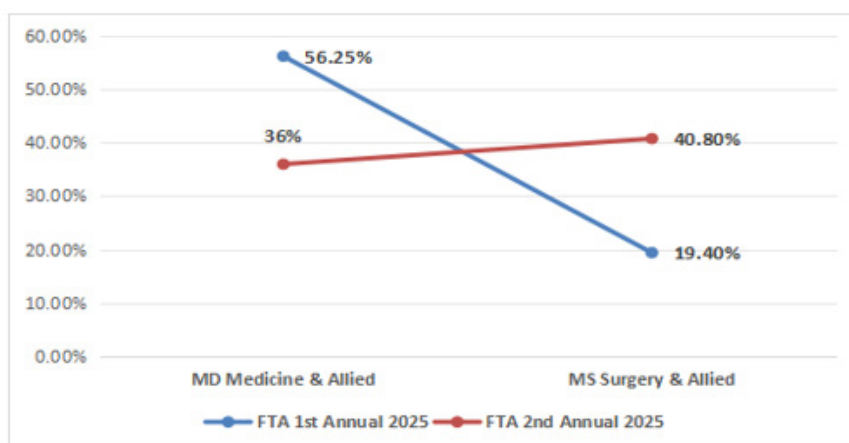


Figure 3: Comparison of Medicine & Allied & Surgery & Allied trainees' pass rates during FTA 1st & 2nd Annual 2025.

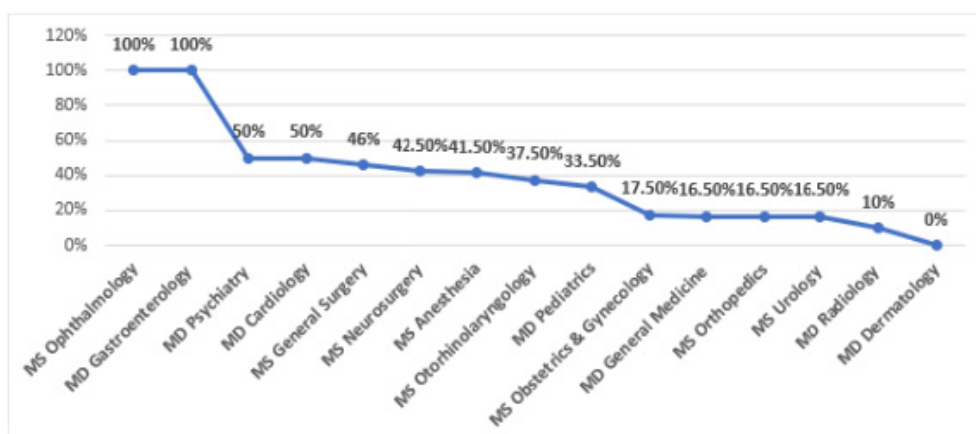


Figure 4: Program-wise pass rate of postgraduate trainees during 2025.

Results

Total 73 and 76 university residents appeared in 1st and 2nd Annual FTA 2025 at Rawalpindi Medical University, Rawalpindi. Trends of program-wise results separately pertaining to two FTAs 2025 are depicted below in (Figure 1). The pass rate of university residents during 1st and 2nd Annual of FTA 2025 is depicted below in (Figure 2). The shift in pass rates of Medicine & Allied and Surgery and Allied trainees from 1st to 2nd Annual of FTA is depicted below in (Figure 3). Program-wise overall pass rate revealed the highest (100%) pass rate during 2025 of the trainees enrolled in MS Ophthalmology and MD Gastroenterology as shown below in (Figure 4).

Discussion

One of the key performance indicators of postgraduate training programs is their pass rate. It is not only a marker of educational quality but also a practical measure of trainees' preparedness to serve as an independent consultant in the community. The pass rate of university residents in the present study on an average were computed to be 33%. A systematic review found national first-time pass rates for specialty board examinations to range from approximately 83 % to 99 % in well-established programs, underscoring that high pass-rates are achievable and expected in high-functioning systems [14]. In our examination set-up, trainees have to go through multiple assessment modalities after passing the theoretical assessment that include, long / short case, Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), viva and defense of thesis based on their original research work. It is mandatory to pass each component separately by getting 60% score. This seems to be a stringent filter through which our Pakistani doctors have to get through. Their pass rate of the trainees should also be compared with their formative assessments that are rigorously carried out at their workplace to perceive their competency level in true spirit.

The highest pass rate (100%) in the current study has been reported in MS Ophthalmology and MD Gastroenterology training programs. On comparing the pass rates of trainees in Medicine and Allied programs to those of Surgery and Allied, it was elucidated that pass rate in Medicine & Allied programs drastically reduced from 56.25% to 36% as shown in Table 1. Contrary to this, pass rate in Surgery & Allied programs substantially improved from 19.4% to 40.8%. The number of trainees' FTA attempts is another attribute that should methodically be studied as ignoring this aspect also seems to confound our findings. A descriptive study done on FCPS training system of Pakistan during 2006-2007 revealed around 20% pass rate that was associated with lack of stipend, inadequate supervision and poor conditions of teaching hospitals [15]. A qualitative study done primarily pertaining to poor FCPS-II results explicated the lack of hard work, insufficient knowledge and harsh attitude of the examiners as the leading factors [16]. On the other hand, an interventional study by Gondal KM et al conducted from 2007 to 2009 to analyze the pass percentage in midterm assessment

illustrated higher pass percentage in Theory (52.6% to 59.9%) and in clinical assessment (61.6% to 73.9%) that was greatly attributed to the competency-based training model [17]. Hence, multiple contributory factors should be brought to limelight before giving final verdict about pass rate of the trainees.

The overall pass rate of our university residents in MS Anesthesia program was 41.5% (Table 1). An analytical study done among anesthesia trainees from Agha Khan University Hospital Karachi presented weak correlation between trainees' selection scores and their first 3 years of training that was later reversed to moderately positive correlation during last year of training [18]. The significance of trainees' selection process is of utmost importance and cannot be neglected that's why Central Induction Policy (CIP) is purely merit-based that embraces academic scores as well as experiences at peripheral healthcare facilities¹³. A comparative study to visualize the differences between the quality of fellowship training programs of public and private sector exhibited statistically significant ($P < 0.001$) variation with confession of 66% private sector trainees about undergoing structured training than those of 46.5% public hospitals trainees. However, there was similarity in quality of supervision at both public and private teaching hospitals [19]. A failure rate of FCPS-II exam in our set up is also considered a symbol of high standard while exit examinations are meant to rank the students apart from motivating them to work hard [20]. in a nutshell, numerous facets pertaining to postgraduate training in Pakistan need to be underlined because each study has certain limitations.

It is significant to point out that a pass-percentage alone cannot provide a complete image of educational quality or trainees' proficiency. So, over-reliance on it can be deceptive and confusing. For example, studies of differential attainment in UK postgraduate exams found that while average first-attempt pass-rates were about 75.4 % for UK-trained doctors, they were only 45.2 % for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) first-attempts [21]. Similar to our exit exams at Pakistan, American Board of Internal Medicine (ABIM) is also a high-stake exam that illustrate mean pass rate of around 85% that vary across different regions and also dependent to some extent on the experience of program directors / supervisors [22]. These disparities are suggestive of considering other attributes like background of the trainees, their educational level and preparation. Moreover, comprehensive analysis of all the components of exam would enable us to analyze the areas that should meticulously be pondered by the stakeholders and policy makers.

Conclusion & Recommendations

Overall low pass rate of university residents is suggestive of gaps in teaching quality, supervision, exam preparation or trainee selection processes. It raises concerns about the adequacy of support systems and learning environments provided to residents. Conversely, it may also indicate that the assessment standards

are rigorous and maintain high competency thresholds to ensure patient safety and professional excellence. The recommendations are to evaluate other contributory parameters to identify the root cause of existing scenario.

Source of Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship and or publication of this article.

Acknowledgement

None.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declared no conflict of interest.

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