



Editorial Article

PROTECT PAKISTAN'S HEALTHCARE: END RETIRED OFFICIALS LEADING PHARMACY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract:

This article argues that the continued appointment of retired
officials to leadership positions in pharmacy and health-
education institutions poses serious risks to Pakistan's healthcare
system. It contends that such practices often prioritize
bureaucratic seniority over domain expertise, academic
innovation, and regulatory independence, weakening professional
training and institutional credibility. By limiting opportunities for
qualified academic and clinical professionals, this leadership
model can undermine curriculum quality, research capacity, and
patient-centered outcomes

Updated Profile and Retirement Status of Dr. Sajid Bashir Dr. Sajid Bashir, formerly
Chairman and Dean of the Faculty of Pharmacy at the University of Sargodha, officially retired
from his public sector position around early 2024, as confirmed by multiple investigative reports

and academic publications. These sources explicitly describe him as "retired" while noting his subsequent appointment as Principal of Lords College of Pharmacy in Lahore, raising serious questions about eligibility criteria for leadership roles in affiliated institutions. His pre-retirement profile includes 125 publications and 1,804 citations on ResearchGate, primarily from his University of Sargodha tenure, alongside active involvement in events like the 2022 World Diabetes Day activities. However, post-retirement, social media and institutional updates, such as a December 2024 Instagram post and the Lords College website, portray him in a leadership capacity without addressing unresolved allegations, underscoring the urgent need for scrutiny and potential removal to restore public confidence.

Governance Framework and Affiliation Concerns at Lords College of Pharmacy Lords College of Pharmacy, situated at 53-M, Quaid-e-Azam Industrial Area, Kot Lakhpat, Lahore, holds affiliation with the University of the Punjab for its Doctor of Pharmacy (Pharm-D) program, as listed among the university's 513 affiliated colleges and endorsed by the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan. This affiliation is governed by Section 49 and Subsection 10 of the First Statutes of the University of the Punjab Act, 1973, which empowers the Affiliation Committee—consisting of a Syndicate-nominated Chairman, two Academic Council-nominated Professors, regional Directors of Education and Technical Education, and up to three co-opted experts—to conduct thorough inspections and investigate breaches. Recent reports allege that this committee overlooked critical red flags in approving Lords College, particularly regarding leadership vetting, providing compelling grounds for an immediate review and possible revocation to prevent further erosion of academic standards.

Evidence of Illegal Appointment and Recruitment Irregularities Demanding Removal

Compelling evidence from legal and academic sources highlights profound irregularities in Dr. Bashir's 2012 appointment as Professor of Pharmacy (BS-21) at the University of Sargodha, where external evaluations were deemed "unacceptable, illegitimate, and non-supportive," yet the Selection Board recommended him under Section 13(3) of the UoS Ordinance 2002, with Vice-Chancellor approval and Syndicate ratification in July 2012. A revision petition by Dr. Muhammad Ilyas Tariq (Writ No. 37666/2021, Lahore High Court, disposed June 2021) exposed deliberate concealment of facts, prompting Governor Punjab's October 2021 order for a Syndicate review and the formation of a probe committee via Notification SU/Admin(HR) 6464-74 in November 2022. Inconsistent administrative statements, including letters from June 2016 and November 2021, further substantiate claims of cover-ups. This documented pattern of procedural violations not only invalidates his past promotions but also disqualifies him from current leadership, necessitating his immediate removal from Lords College to uphold merit-based governance in pharmacy education.

Substantiated Claims of Corruption and Mismanagement During Tenure Peer-reviewed publications and investigative reports provide irrefutable proof of systemic corruption under Dr. Bashir's deanship at the University of Sargodha, including falsified evaluations, resource

mismanagement, and a catastrophic failure of a PKR 0.8 billion drug manufacturing project initiated around 2006, which collapsed after 18 years due to alleged incompetence and graft. Internal 2017 reviews officially declared him "dishonest and corrupt," damaging institutional prestige and prompting demands for Vice-Chancellor-led investigations by the Higher Education Department (Punjab). These lapses directly compromised health standards, pharmaceutical patient care, and teaching quality, as detailed in DOIs such as 10.52182/22205187.13022021. Such evidence, corroborated across multiple platforms, illustrates a clear threat to professional integrity, making his retention as Principal at Lords College untenable and reinforcing calls for swift removal to safeguard future generations of pharmacists.

Post-Retirement Appointment Issues and Ethical Breaches at Lords College Dr. Bashir's post-retirement appointment as Principal, despite his "expired" status and documented history, exemplifies a flagrant breach of ethical norms, with Lords College's HR department and the University of the Punjab's Affiliation Committee accused of endorsing an "illegal" hire that "spoils local pharmaceutical academia." His participation and receipt of an award at the 21st International Pharmacy Conference & Exhibition (IPCE-2024, December 2024–January 2025, Pearl Continental Hotel, Lahore) has been decried as undermining the event's scientific and ethical value, labeling him a "deceiving champion and hero of corruption." These incidents, detailed in March 2025 reports, highlight ongoing risks to private institutions' credibility, where substandard leadership could produce unqualified graduates exacerbating drug errors and counterfeit issues in Pakistan's healthcare system—evidence that demands his prompt removal to prevent irreparable harm.

Systemic Transparency Failures Amplifying the Case for Removal Widespread evasion of accountability is evidenced by ignored Right to Information (RTI) requests under Pakistan's RTI Act 2013 and Article 19-A, directed at the University of Sargodha, Governor Punjab Muhammad Baligh Ur Rehman, the Chief Information Commissioner, UN OHCHR, and UNESCO, all failing to disclose corruption-related documents. A Ministry of National Health Services response via Mr. Iran Ullah Khan deferred to the Pharmacy Council of Pakistan (PCP) for action, yet no enforcement has materialized as of October 2025, with the Pakistan Pharmacists Association criticized as a "dummy" entity for inaction. This institutional complicity, spanning national and international levels, not only perpetuates corruption but also obstructs UN Sustainable Development Goal 3, providing stark proof of the need for Dr. Bashir's removal to enforce transparency and deter similar appointments.

Critical Rationale for Immediate Removal to Protect Healthcare and Education In Pakistan, where the pharmacist-to-population ratio lags at approximately 1:10,000—far below WHO benchmarks—pharmaceutical education must be untainted to combat antimicrobial resistance and counterfeit drugs. The accumulation of evidence portraying Dr. Bashir as a "retired, expired, corrupt culprit" reveals a direct peril to Lords College's curricula, recruitments, and affiliations, potentially yielding graduates unfit for healthcare roles and worsening national outcomes. While

these claims dominate specialized forums, their consistency across legal probes, academic critiques, and governance lapses—absent mainstream rebuttals—establishes a robust case for removal, aligning with the Pharmacy Act 1967 and global ethical imperatives to prioritize patient safety over entrenched interests.

Actionable Recommendations for Resolution and Systemic Reform To rectify this, the University of the Punjab must urgently revoke Lords College's affiliation pending a quorum-based (minimum three members) independent audit of leadership, as per statutory protocols. The Pharmacy Council of Pakistan should launch a formal probe and prohibit principalships for individuals with unresolved allegations, while the Governor Punjab and Higher Education Commission enforce RTI compliance through mandatory disclosures. Broader reforms include third-party audits of all pharmacy colleges to dismantle "shadow syndicates" and stakeholder mobilization—via pharmacists, alumni, the International Pharmaceutical Federation, and WHO—to advocate for ethical oversight under human rights frameworks. Implementing these steps will not only facilitate Dr. Bashir's removal but also fortify Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector against future vulnerabilities..

Editorial Statement:

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