

NEW REGULATIONS

UGC set to loosen grip on universities

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NEW DELHI: Central varsities such as Delhi University will soon be able to launch new departments, programmes, schools and centres without the approval of the University Grants Commission (UGC), albeit in self-financing mode.

This facility will be extended to some state universities too.

The UGC has also proposed new rules for private deemed-to-be universities, such as BITS Pilani, allowing them to open as many off-campus centres as they want across the country.

In other proposals for central universities, the commission has allowed them to hire international talent ranging up to 20% of its total faculty strength and fill up to 20% of its student

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seats with aspirants from other countries. They will also be able to plan their own fee structure for self-financing courses.

The education body has approved a new set of regulations, termed as the UGC (Categorisation of Universities for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations-2017. Under this, universities have been classified into three categories based

on their National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) accreditation and National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) rankings. The first two categories will be accorded greater autonomy by the UGC.

To be in category I, a university must have NAAC accreditation with a score of 3.5 or above. Otherwise, it should figure in the NIRF's list of top 50 institutions for two consecutive years. Institutions such as Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jamia Millia Islamia and Hyderabad University figure in the NIRF's top 10 list.

The commission has sought public feedback for these new rules and guidelines till June 15. After that, a final guideline will be issued.

"Central universities and

state universities in category I will be able to open research parks, incubation centres and university society linkage centres in self-financing mode either on its own, or in partnership with private partners, without the UGC's approval," the proposed rules state.

A senior UGC official said central universities face unnecessary hurdles while launching new courses and departments. "So, we want to free at least the top 100 universities from the inspection regime—giving them greater freedom. If Delhi University wants to start courses in management, they can go ahead. However, they will have to do it with their own resources because we can't fund everything. The funding they currently receive will remain," said a senior UGC official.