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INSTITUTIONS OF EMINENCE New framework to catapult Indian institutions to global recognition by freeing the best of them from UGC's restrictive regulatory regime & ushering in unprecedented level of autonomy

HRD Ministry Seeks Cabinet Nod to 20 World-class Institutions

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New Delhi: India has taken a firm step towards building 20 world-class educational institutions, which will be termed Institutions of Eminence, with the human resource development ministry moving the proposal to the Union Cabinet for approval.

Firmly bearing the stamp of the Prime Minister's Office, this is a new framework to catapult Indian institutions to global recognition by freeing the best of them from the University Grants Commission's restrictive regulatory regime and ushering in an unprecedented level of institutional autonomy. Here are some of the finer details:

WHAT WILL MAKE THEM 'EMINENT'

The UGC (Institutions of Eminence Deemed to be Universities) regulations, 2017 will govern all such institutions that are conferred with this status, ensuring their complete academic, administrative and financial autonomy. These regulations will override all other UGC regulations and free the institutions of UGC's restrictive inspection regime, the regulatory control over fee and curriculum.

- The institutions will have to achieve a place in the top 500 of any of the global rankings within 10 years of being declared an institution of eminence and eventually reach the top 100 slot.

- They will have a teacher:student ratio of 1:20 to begin with and 1:10 in five years, with a student enrolment of 15,000 in 15 years. There will be a good mix of Indian and international faculty, and only those who come with a degree from top 500 institutions in global rankings will be considered eligible foreign faculty.

- The institutions will be free to select students through a merit-based transparent admission process to ensure no meritorious student is turned away for



lack of funds. Up to 30% foreign students vis-a-vis the strength of domestic students can be admitted. The institution will be free to decide its fee structure but will have to declare it in a transparent manner. Any reports of capitation fee will be treated as serious violation. An Ombudsman will be set up to cater to student grievances.

- One paper will have to be published per faculty member per year on average in a reputed peer reviewed international journal, with publications included in SCOPUS, Web Science, etc to be counted as a research publication. A world-class library with subscriptions to reputed journals related to courses offered will have to be maintained along with cutting-edge research in frontier areas.

- A long-term lead campus (30 years minimum) with adequate space for expansion.

- While private institutions will not get any government funding they will be able to access government funds for specific studies and projects they may execute.

- Full freedom to the institution to decide course structure, the credit hours needed for a degree, fixing of curriculum and syllabus and up to 20% online courses as part of its programmes and fully online certificate courses. Full freedom to hire faculty, even industry personnel as faculty and choose any career progression scheme, salary structure for its faculty. None of its academic collaborations will need government approval unless they are with countries on the foreign ministry's or home ministry's 'negative list'.

- Reservation policies will apply only to the government institutions conferred the status.

- The institutions will be multi-disciplinary but unitary, meaning they will not affiliate with colleges or use the word 'university' for description.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

- Ten government run and ten private institutions will be conferred this status, with ₹10,000 crore funding earmarked for the former.

- While a government-owned institu-

tion will apply to HRD ministry for the special status, a private deemed to be university or private state university will have to be backed by a sponsoring organisation with a total net worth of ₹5,000 crore and credible members, an identified first chancellor and vice chancellor, and a detailed 15-year vision plan besides a five-year rolling implementation plan.

- The governance structure of the institution and its sponsoring organisation will be different.

- For existing private institutions, an initial corpus fund of ₹60 crore to be increased to ₹150 crore in ten years, along with a guaranteed pipeline of ₹500 crore and credible plan for ₹500 crore.

- For greenfield institutions, an initial corpus of ₹60 crore to be increased to ₹150 crore in a decade, guaranteed pipeline of ₹500 crore and a credible plan for an additional ₹1,000 crore. Fund sources for both categories will have to be declared and available for scrutiny by competent authorities.

- Institution to be accredited by government-run National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or its international equivalent. Pitching for greater flexibility, a provision has been added, allowing an institution to appeal on a NAAC accreditation grading to the empowered expert group.

WHO WILL SELECT?

- An empowered expert committee (EEC) with three to five eminent persons appointed for three years with the final approval of the appointments committee of the Cabinet headed by the PM will select the 20 institutes. The EEC will recommend the names to the UGC, which will forward its decision to the HRD ministry that will issue a letter of intent to such institutions and decide on the final conferment of the status after a memorandum of understanding.