

Get ready for QR coded degrees

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The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued an advisory to all the Indian universities to introduce security features such as photographs of the student, hologram of the institute and QR code in certificates and degrees. Similar circulars were also issued in October 2017 and March 2019, however several universities ignored it because it was not

the mandate and not many universities have incorporated the features till now.

"The number of unrecognised institutes and degrees in the last few years has increased. The move will help in curbing malpractices such as degree duplication or mark sheet forgery while creating a database for a student's personal identity," says Rajnish Jain, secretary, UGC.

"The features will be helpful for verification while providing institutes and individuals one-stop access to a student's academic documents through QR codes," adds Jain.

As QR codes are not too difficult to read and can be scanned using any smartphone, it may help many universities that are still not equipped with new-age technologies, says the UGC official. The universities have also been asked to inscribe the

name and place of the institution in which a student has studied as well as the mode of programme delivery such as regular, part-time or distance. Jain says there is a focus on digitalising all the higher education certificates and degrees in the long run, and incorporating these features is only a step in that direction.

"While the move will bring uniformity across the higher education system, it will not replace the already existing National Academic Depository (NAD), which is a 24X7 online storehouse of all academic diplomas, degrees that are digitised and lodged by academic institutions or boards," he adds. The move may also help the students who apply for higher education abroad as the foreign universities have to get the documents verified by the respective Indian institutions and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

