

IIM degree should be in accordance to UGC Act: HRD Ministry

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THE INDIAN Institutes of Management (IIMs) may have more autonomy under the new IIM Act but that doesn't exempt them from following the law on awarding academic degrees, the union government is learnt to have told the 20 business schools last week.

The HRD Ministry's order, received by all institute directors on March 8, comes at a time when the IIMs find themselves split over the nomenclature of the degree meant for their graduate students.

As first reported by *The Indian Express* on March 6, the IIMs in Ahmedabad and Lucknow are in favour of calling the academic degrees Master in Management (MIM), while others prefer the more common nomenclature Master of Business Administration (MBA). MIM doesn't figure on the list of approved degrees under Section 22 of University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956.

Preempting a conflict with the UGC Act, the HRD Ministry's order serves as a reminder to the premier B-schools that even though the IIM Act gives them more autonomy, they were "still bound by the laws of the land" and that the institutes would have seek to the government's permis-

sion if they wish to award a degree that is "not in accordance with the UGC notification".

According to the UGC list, MBA and Masters in Management Studies (MMS) are the only two names approved for the two-year management programmes being offered by higher education institutions in the country. So if the IIMs wish to award an MIM, they would have to first approach the ministry for permission and also have the UGC to notify the new nomenclature in the official gazette.

MIM is popular in Europe with well-known schools such as the London Business School, HEC Paris, ESCP Europe, Duke Fuqua and Bocconi offering the nomenclature as their flagship degrees.

The IIM Act was passed by Parliament on December 20, 2017. The law makes each of the 20 IIMs an 'Institution of National Importance', like the IITs, NITs and AIIMS. In other words, it empowers them to grant degrees to students.

Earlier, all IIMs were separate bodies registered under the Societies Act. Since societies are not authorised to award degrees, students admitted to their Master's programme are given a PGDM.

Similarly, those pursuing doctoral studies are awarded the title of a 'Fellow' at the end of their research.