

Engineering graduates may face new GATE-way to jobs

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NEW DELHI: Engineering students of both government and private institutions might soon have to write a mandatory exit examination in their final year. Their performance in this examination is likely to determine their employability as the government plans to share their scores with prospective employers.

Concerned about the quality of engineering students graduating every year, the government is proposing to test their "attain-

ment levels" through this examination. The issue will come up for discussion at a meeting of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) next week.

The proposed test is the result of the feedback the government has received about skewed standards of engineering education in the country, which produces seven lakh students annually from 3,000-odd registered technical institutes. Data show that only 20 % to 30% of them get a decent job. The low employability is attributed as much

to the lack of requisite skill as to the falling demand from the industry.

"We want to check their aptitude, skills and critical thinking and not just theory. The exit examination will be focused entirely on that. This will give us a feedback on the teaching standards at these institutes, too. We will be able to suggest remedial measures as it will help in identifying the colleges which require teacher training etc," said a human resource development (HRD) ministry source.

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There are thousands of engineering institutes across the country and they use different tools and techniques to teach and test the skill of students. To test their attainment levels, said sources, a committee has suggested making graduate aptitude test in engineering (GATE) examination mandatory for all students passing out of various engineering colleges. "It will help assess standards of education in each institution and we will be able to make changes accordingly," said the source.

GATE is an all-India examination that primarily tests the comprehensive understanding of various undergraduate subjects in engineering and science. It is conducted jointly by the Indian Institute of Science and seven Indian Institutes of Technology. The GATE scores are usually used by IITs for