

CONFIDENTIAL

**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
BAHADURSHAH ZAFAR MARG
NEW DELHI-110 002**

**MINUTES OF THE 546TH MEETING OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
HELD ON 14TH MAY, 2020.**

The 546th Meeting of the Commission was held on 14th May, 2020 through video conferencing, in which the following were present:

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|----------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Prof. Dharendra Pal Singh | Chairman |
| 2. Dr. Bhushan Keshav Patwardhan | Vice Chairman |
| 3. Shri Amit Khare | Member |
| 4. Prof. Raghavendra P. Tiwari | Member |
| 5. Dr. Uma Chandrashekhar Vaidya | Member |
| 6. Dr. Kiran Hazarika | Member |
| 7. Prof. (Dr.) Nagesh Thakur | Member |

Shri Rajeev Ranjan, Additional Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance could not attend the meeting.

The following officer of the UGC also attended the meeting:

Secretary

Prof. Rajnish Jain

SECTION-1

1.01(a) To confirm the minutes of the 545th meeting of the University Grants Commission held on 19th December, 2019.

The minutes were confirmed.

[Action: JS(Admn.)]

1.01(b) To receive the action taken on the minutes of the 545th meeting of the University Grants Commission held on 19th December, 2019.

Noted.

[Action: JS(Admn.)]

1.02 (a) To ratify the action taken on certain matter.

- (i) To ratify the decisions of UGC Basic Scientific Research Empowered Committee taken in its 88th and 91st meeting held on 26.10.2018 and 10.04.2019 respectively regarding revised eligibility criteria of Mid-Career Award and BSR Faculty Fellowship.

Ratified.

[Action: JS(BSR)]

- (ii) To report actions taken by UGC on recognition of ODL and Online programmes of the HEIs, as per ODL and Online Regulations.

1. The Commission noted the actions taken in respect of updated recognition status of the HEIs for offering ODL programmes for the academic session January, 2020 and uploading of the updated status on the UGC website.

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2. **The Commission noted the closing of all pending cases of HEIs at various stages of recognition process as per UGC (ODL) Third Amendment Regulations, 2018.**
3. **The Commission noted the reasons for keeping the proposal of NIMS University, Jaipur pending in view of a complaint received against the HEI. It observed that the Govt. of Rajasthan has constituted an Enquiry Committee to look into the matter. It also observed that the complainant has withdrawn the complaint.**

Based on the deliberations and considering the facts that January 2020 academic session has already begun and there are different eligibility requirements for the HEIs as per the Regulations for the session beginning July, 2020, the Commission decided that the proposal of NIMS University, Jaipur shall be closed.

4. **The Commission noted the updated recognition status of the HEIs to offer Online programmes and uploading of the updated status on the UGC website.**
5. **The Commission noted that total 113 applications have been received for recognition to offer ODL from the academic session 2020-21.**

[Action: JS(DEB)]

- (iii) To report the inclusion of 128 Colleges (as approved by the Chairman, UGC) under Section 2(f) and 12(B) of the UGC Act, 1956 between 01.12.2019 to 29.02.2020 as per authorization given by the Commission at its meeting held on 24.08.2011.

Ratified.

[Action: JS(CPP-I/Colleges)]

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1.02 (b) To receive the items for information. **(No item)**

1.03 To receive the position of funds of UGC and related issues. **(No item)**

SECTION-2 (MATTERS RELATING TO STANDARDS)

2.01 To consider the Report of the UGC Expert Committee constituted to assess the proposal submitted by ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education (Deemed to be University), Hyderabad (Telangana) for starting off-campus centres at Bengaluru (Karnataka)

Deferred.

[Action: JS(CPP-I/DU)]

2.02 To consider the policy document on “Student Career Progression and Alumni Network”.

The Commission considered the policy document on “Student Career Progression and Alumni Network” and resolved that Expert Committee may be requested to provide policy framework for student career progression. Best practices or successful models of some HEIs may also be included.

[Action: JS(HEQIP)]

2.03 To accord further accreditation to SLET Commission, Assam (NE Region), Guwahati for conducting State Level Eligibility Test for Assistant Professor for the North Eastern Region.

Considered and approved.

[Action: JS(NET/SET)]

2.04 To consider the report of the UGC Expert Committee on ‘Work Integrated Learning Programme (WILP)’.

The Commission considered the report of the UGC Expert Committee on ‘Work Integrated Learning Programme (WILP)’ and resolved that This issue may be taken up after implementation of ‘National Education Policy’ after wider consultations with the stakeholders.

[Action: JS(CPP-II)]

2.05 To consider the Report on ‘Enabling and Enhancing University and Industry Linkages’.

The Commission considered the Report on ‘Enabling and Enhancing University and Industry Linkages’ and resolved that this issue may be taken up after implementation of ‘National Education Policy’. Also, the financial aspects should be relooked keeping in view the symbiotic relation of university-industry linkages.

[Action: JS(HEQIP)]

2.06 To consider the revision of rates of Post Doctoral Fellowship Schemes of UGC..

Considered and approved.

[Action: JS(BSR)]

2.07 To consider the recommendations made by the DEB Working Group in its fifth meeting held on 27th December, 2019.

A The Commission ratified the decision taken on following items (Agenda Item 1.1 (1, 2, 3, 4) 1.2 (5) and 1.3 (1, 2, 3) :-

- 1. Recommendations of the Expert Committee to redraft Online Regulations.**
- 2. AICTE communication that the duration of Post Graduate Diploma programme should be two years.**

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3. Decision of the SWAYAM Board to ask each recognised HEI for offering programmes on SWAYAM portal, to pay 15 percent of the fees collected from the students to the SWAYAM scheme and decision of DEB Working Group to request SWAYAM Board to make it cost effective platform for HEIs.
4. PMO reference - India's preparedness for Olympics, Tokyo 2020: Syllabus for Sports specialists.
5. CIQA assessment criteria.
6. Decision of the BCI that LLM programme not to be permitted in ODL mode.
7. Organization of awareness programme across the Country.
8. Actions to be taken based on the approval of the Competent Authority and then to be placed in the Commission for ratification.

B. The Commission approved the following recommendations of the DEB Working Group (Agenda Item No. 1.2 (1, 2, 3, 4, 6):-

1. As per the letter from the BCI, no LLM in ODL mode is to be recognised by UGC.
2. Issuance of Public Notice and advisory to all the HEIs by the UGC making it explicit that only UGC recognised HEIs for offering ODL education can offer Certificate, Diploma and PG Diploma programmes in ODL mode.

The Commission directed that this decision shall be communicated to the Expert Committee constituted for integrating ODL and Online Regulations for appropriate necessary action at its end.

3. Recommendations in respect of Science based programmes.
 - (i) As the Third Amendment is only till June, 2020, there is no point for conducting the visit. The proposals awaiting visits may be closed accordingly.
 - (ii) HEIs recognised for five years from 2018-19, Expert Committee visit may be conducted till December, 2020.
 - (iii) To set new qualifying parameters for HEIs to offer Science based programmes (which require hands-on experience, experimental set-up) as under :-
 - (a) Category-I HEIs
 - (b) HEIs having NAAC score of 3.26 and above
 - (c) Open Universities

- (d) Science based programmes to be allowed from the Headquarters only.
- (e) Only such LSCs to be allowed which are NAAC accredited.

These recommendations may be implemented from July 2020 academic session.

However, the Commission while approving recommendations (ii) and (iii) above also resolved the following :-

For (ii) – Cut off date of December, 2020 may be extended accordingly based on status of COVID-19.

For (iii) – The decision shall be communicated to the Expert Committee constituted for integrating ODL and Online Regulations for appropriate necessary action at its end.

4. Regret to the proposal of Tamil Nadu Open University, Chennai to shift B.Ed. students to Tamil University, Thanjavur.
5. No exemption is to be given in respect of implementation of semester system by the HEIs.

[Action: JS(DEB)]

2.08

To consider the recommendations made by the DEB Working Group in its sixth meeting held on 13th February, 2020.

1. Implementation of UGC (ODL) Regulations, 2017 and its Amendments.

1. Revisiting eligibility criteria for HEIs to offer ODL programmes as per the decision of the Commission in its 545th meeting held on 19th December, 2019.

The Commission in its meeting held on 19th December, 2019 had asked the DEB Working Group to deliberate and make recommendations thereof. The Commission appreciated the Report prepared by the DEB Working Group and the data analytics presented in the Report. One of the recommendations of the Working Group was ‘lowering grade of NAAC score to 3.01 from the present 3.26 is not advisable’ along with other recommendations.

The Commission observed that these recommendations of the DEB Working Group are prior to the COVID-19 and these need to be looked into from the perspective of current prevailing circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its likely impact in near future.

The Commission also observed NAAC status as on February, 2020, there are 108 HEIs within the NAAC score of 3.01 to 3.25 with details as 31 Deemed to be Universities, 15 Central Universities, 09 Private Universities, 51 State Universities and 02 Institutions of National Importance.

In view of the details mentioned above and the exhaustive deliberations held, the Commission resolved the following:-

- (a) HEIs having NAAC score 3.01 and above on a four-point scale or having rank in Top-100 in overall category of NIRF, at least once in two preceding cycles (at the time of application), shall only be permitted to offer ODL programmes, with prior approval of the UGC as per the provisions of ODL Regulations.

The change in NAAC requirement/above provisions shall be valid for one academic session only (2020-21) and will be reviewed subsequently to take a final decision in the matter.

- (b) All the Open Universities can also start ODL programmes with the prior approval of the UGC as per the provisions of ODL Regulations.

The Commission resolved that above decisions shall be communicated to the Expert Committee constituted for integrating ODL and Online Regulations for preparing appropriate draft regulations, which shall be placed before the commission in the next meeting.

The Commission also resolved the following: -

- (i) All the applications already received for July, 2020 academic session shall be treated as null and void in view of the proposed new Integrated ODL and Online Regulations.
- (ii) The Expert Committee constituted to integrate ODL and Online Regulations to be requested to submit its report on urgent basis so that the integrated Regulations can be notified in a time bound manner and fresh applications can be invited in July-August this year for academic session 2020-21.
- (iii) The academic session for ODL programmes this year shall be kept as a period of 12 months starting from September-October, 2020 and February-March, 2021 considering the impact of COVID-19 and the decision of UGC to start academic session for conventional students in September this year.

2. AICTE communication on Deemed to be Universities for offering MBA/MCA/ Travel and Tourism programmes through ODL mode from academic session 2020-21.

The Commission approved the recommendations that the matter may be referred to MHRD for comments/advice and appropriate action(s) to be taken thereafter.

3. RCI guidelines regarding duration of B.Ed. Special Education and M.Ed. Special Education as per the communication received from the RCI.

The Commission approved the recommendations that RCI letter may be forwarded to all the recognised HEIs and to be uploaded on UGC website.

4. Provision for offering external courses by the HEIs.

The Commission approved the recommendations that an Expert Committee may be constituted with Secretaries of two State Governments as its Members. Accordingly, UGC may take a policy decision in the matter.

5. Submission of affidavit by Amity University, Noida and pending Court case against UGC challenging the conditions of affidavit.

The Commission approved the recommendations that 'the UGC Standing Counsel may be requested to get this case closed and take legal opinion whether Amity University, Noida was permitted by Hon'ble High Court to run ODL and Online programmes by not submitting affidavit in 2015-16. Since, Amity University has challenged the quality provisions mentioned in the affidavit and for actually running the un-recognised programmes, the Online recognition given to Amity University, Noida may be reviewed from July, 2020 academic session based on legal opinion received.

6. Communication received from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi regarding appointment of two Directors; Academics and Administration in the Centre for Distance and Open Learning, JMI viz-a-viz provisions of the UGC (ODL) Regulations, 2017.

The Commission approved the recommendations that 'JMI may be informed to have one Director at the Centre level'.

7. To consider the recommendations of the Expert Committee on the new nomenclature proposed by the HEIs under any other category

while submitting fresh applications for the academic session beginning July, 2020 and onwards.

The Commission approved the new 170 programmes nomenclature received from 28 HEIs under 'Any other category'. The Commission also approved the recommendations that programmes with specialisation e.g. Information Technology, Biotechnology, Microbiology, Zoology etc. in B.Sc. programmes may also be permitted.

2. Implementation of UGC (Online Courses or Programmes) Regulations, 2018 and its Amendment.

The Commission approved the recommendations :-

- (a) LOIs issued to two HEIs (Anna University and University of Delhi) may be processed further.
- (b) Already received applications may be closed and HEIs may be asked to apply afresh against the new advertisement. However, pending visit, already approved by the Competent Authority, if any, may be completed by May, 2020.
- (c) Afresh applications from the eligible HEIs (eligibility as per notified Regulations) for the academic session beginning July, 2020 may be invited.

However, the Commission while approving recommendations (b) and (c) above also resolved the following :-

For (b) – Cut off date of May, 2020 may be extended accordingly based on status of COVID-19.

For (c) – The decision shall be communicated to the Expert Committee constituted for integrating ODL and Online Regulations for appropriate necessary action at its end. Cut off date of May, 2020 may be extended accordingly based on status of COVID-19.

3. Uploading of proposals received from the HEIs for recognition on UGC – DEB website to enhance transparency.

The Commission approved the recommendations that the proposals of HEIs recognised for academic session 2020-21 and onwards may be uploaded on UGC website.

4. Strengthening of DEB Manpower for completion of task in a desired and time-bound manner.

The Commission resolved that the DEB may strengthened appropriately.

5. Any other items –

- (i) **Complaints/representations being received from the students of SMU.**

The Commission approved the recommendations that ‘all such complaints/representations to be forwarded to the HEI with a copy to the State Government’.

- (ii) **Letter received from UGC SERO that some LSCs or Learning Centres of multiple Universities including Universities from outside the states.**

The Commission approved the recommendations that the UGC may issue an advisory to all the recognised HEIs to ensure ‘adequacy and appropriateness’ of infrastructure including human resources in each of their LSCs and also ensure compliance to other relevant provisions of the Regulations. In addition HEIs may be asked to strictly adhere to the territorial jurisdiction and instruct all its LSCs that they should not be LSCs of a University which is outside the state.

The advisory/communication to be issued shall also be uploaded on UGC website.

The decision shall be communicated to the Expert Committee constituted for integrating ODL and Online Regulations for appropriate necessary action at its end.

- (iii) **Recent judgement of Hon’ble Delhi High Court that qualification obtained through ODL institution is at par with that which is obtained through traditional universities.**

The Commission noted the information.

[Action: JS(DEB)]

2.09

To consider the recommendations of the UGC Compliance Verification Committee constituted to verify the compliance submitted by Jain (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru (Karnataka) in respect of the observations/suggestions given by the UGC Expert Visiting Committee which considered the proposal for starting off-campus centres at Kochi (Kerala).

Deferred.

[Action: JS(CPP-I/DU)]

- 2.10** To consider the Report of the UGC Expert Committee which constituted to assess the proposal for Deemed to University status under de-novo category (i) Aurora's Technological and Research Institute, Uppal (Hyderabad) and (ii) Aurora's Engineering College, Bhongir, Dt. Yadadri (off-campus) in the name of Aurora Higher Education and Research Academy under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956.

Deferred.

[Action: JS(CPP-I/DU)]

- 2.11** To consider the Report of the UGC Expert Committee constituted to assess the proposal for Deemed to be University status under general category to Sri Manakula Vinayagar Engineering College, Madagadipet, Puducherry in the name of Sri Manakula Vinayagar Academy of Higher Education, Research and Technology (SMART) under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956

Deferred.

[Action: JS(CPP-I/DU)]

- 2.12** Substitution of Orientation Programmes by Faculty Induction Programme (Guru Dakshata) in UGC-HRDCs and equivalence of Faculty Induction Programmes to Orientation Programmes for promotion under Career Advancement Scheme (CAS).

Considered and approved.

[Action: JS(HRDC)]

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2.13 To consider the issue of pursuing two degrees /program simultaneously.

Considered and approved.

[Action: JS(CPP-II)]

2.14 To consider the recommendations of the Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) on the spot visits undertaken by the Expert Committee duly constituted by the EEC to assess the readiness of private institutions recommended for Institutions of Eminence.

Considered and approved the recommendations of the Empowered Expert Committee of Institutions of Eminence subject to the compliance of the Regulations.

[Action: JS(IE)]

2.15 To consider the revised report of the Expert Committee constituted by UGC to frame Regulations on minimum qualifications for appointment of Registrar and equivalent posts.

Considered and approved.

[Action: JS(JCRC)]

2.16 To consider the recommendations of the UGC Expert Standing Committee constituted to evaluate the performance and academic outcomes of the Deemed to be Universities to consider extension of the status.

Considered and approved.

[Action: JS(CPP-I/DU)]

2.17

To consider the Report of Expert Committee on Promoting Online Education in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commission at the outset, appreciated the efforts made by the Chairman and members of the Expert Committee for preparing the report in such a short time and for appropriately capturing the issues within the defined terms of reference.

The Commission considered the report of the Expert Committee and continued its deliberations, starting from the last meeting held on 27.04.2020, on the recommendations made under each of the three terms of references (ToR), suggestive implementation plan and the suggestions sent by the Commission Members. The suggestions communicated were presented under the broad headings :-

- **Blended mode – increasing Online content upto 40 percent in conventional courses.**
- **Capacity Building – Teacher training**
- **Quality of Online contents**
- **Development of indigenous technology**
- **Alternate modes of teaching learning**
- **Details of courses on the portal/websites**
- **Developing/supporting IT infrastructure**
- **Regulatory changes**

The Commission accepted the report of the Expert Committee and approved its recommendations & the suggestive implementation plan, as per the following:

ToR 1 : Methodology to integrate and enhance various efforts for on-line education particularly when all educational institutions are closed as a precautionary measure due to COVID-19.

The Commission considered and approved the recommendations of the Expert Committee with change in title of the proposed integrated e-content portal from ‘One India One Content’ to ‘One Nation One Digital Platform’, and approved the suggestive implementation plan.

ToR 2: Methodology to conduct on-line examinations ensuring credibility and transparency.

The Commission considered and approved the recommendations of the Expert Committee and the suggestive implementation plan. However, UGC may appropriately draft the advisory so that the statements are explicit and not left to the interpretations. UGC may also consider the representations received related to Online education/examination for appropriate action.

ToR 3: Explore any other measure to promote Online education.

The Commission considered and approved the recommendations of the Expert Committee and the suggestive implementation plan as per the following:

- (i) In order to further promote the Online education, the current provision of 20 percent Online courses in a programme, as per provisions of UGC SWAYAM and ODL Regulations, may be enhanced upto maximum 40 percent for implementation considering ‘National interest during COVID-19’ and also to ensure effective utilisation of e-resources. The 40 percent (maximum) Online courses may be offered in permitted disciplines as per the extant Regulations and also other provisions of the Regulations be complied.**

The UGC shall amend SWAYAM Regulations and forward the above decision to the Expert Committee constituted to integrate ODL and Online Regulations for necessary actions at its end.

- (ii) In order to strengthen human resources for Online education, the capacity building programmes to train the faculty members across the universities on Online Education and teaching-learning processes may be conducted on regular basis.**

The UGC HRDC Bureau shall be asked to take appropriate necessary action in the matter.

- (iii) In order to promote Online Education, the Commission further resolved the following :-**

- (a) Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) having NAAC score 3.26 and above or having rank in Top-100 in overall category of NIRF, at least once in two preceding cycles (at the time of application), shall be permitted to start full-fledged Online programmes without prior approval of the UGC. These HEIs can start maximum of Three (03) UG programmes and Ten (10) PG programmes. In case, the HEIs want to start more than the defined number of programmes, then they need to apply to the UGC. However, the HEIs shall be required to submit application and desired information, and comply to all the provisions of the Online Regulations as amended from time to time and will be required to submit an affidavit to the UGC.**
- (b) HEIs having NAAC score 3.01 to 3.25 on a four-point scale or having rank in Top-100 in overall category of NIRF at least once in two preceding cycles (at the time of application) shall only be permitted to offer full-fledged Online programmes with prior approval of the UGC, as per the provisions of Online Regulations.**

The change in NAAC requirement/above provisions shall be valid for one academic session only (2020-21) and will be reviewed subsequently to take a final decision in the matter.

- (c) Only HEIs having NAAC valid score 3.26 and above or having rank in Top-100 in overall category of NIRF at least once in two cycles of India Rankings shall be permitted to enrol international students also.
- (d) All the Open Universities can also start full-fledged Online programmes with the prior approval of the UGC as per the provisions of Online Regulations.
- (e) HEIs, based on its infrastructure and support, may conduct examinations for full-fledged Online programmes using technology driven proctored examinations, Computer based tests and pen-paper examinations. The pen-paper examinations are permitted initially for a period of one year and will be reviewed subsequently to take a final decision in the matter.
- (f) HEIs offering Online Programmes shall ensure that there shall not be any franchise arrangement with a private service provider and the ownership of offering Online programmes including all the required components of Online education and compliance to all the provisions of the Regulations should be that of HEIs only.

The Commission further resolved that above decisions shall be communicated to the Expert Committee constituted for integrating ODL and Online Regulations for preparing appropriate draft regulations, which shall be placed before the commission in the next meeting.

The Vice Chairman, UGC opined that the online education should be promoted preferably in blended mode by increasing the current provision of 20% online courses to 40%-50%. Regarding Online degree courses he was of the opinion that existing eligibility provisions should not be relaxed. However, after detailed discussions and deliberations on this issue, he agreed with the Commission decision that HEIs with NAAC Score 3.01 to 3.25 may be allowed to offer Online degree courses only for one year in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

Any other Items with the permission of the Chair :-

The Commission was informed that UGC has constituted the following three Committees with Terms of Reference as indicated in their titles :-

- (i) Expert Committee to relook and redraft the Online Regulations.
- (ii) Expert Committee to consider the issues relating to admission and assessment of international students for Online programmes.

- (iii) **Expert Committee to examine and minimize the variance in terms of number of credits for a course being offered in conventional, ODL and Online mode of education.**

The Commission observed that the terms of references of these three Expert Committees are also being dealt by the Expert Committee constituted to integrate ODL and Online Regulations and accordingly decided to dissolve the above mentioned Committees.

[Action: JS (DEB)]

SECTION-3

(REFERENCE FROM GOVERNMENT AND OTHER NATIONAL BODIES)

(There is no item in this section)

SECTION-4

(SPECIAL PROGRAMMES, QUALITY PROGRAMMES ETC)

(There is no item in this section)

SECTION-5

(GRANTS TO UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES)

(There is no item in this section)

SECTION-6

(MISCELLANEOUS)

6.01 To consider certain establishment matters of UGC

Recorded Separately.

**(Prof. Rajnish Jain)
Secretary**

**(Prof. Dharendra Pal Singh)
Chairman**