

Univs, colleges asked to set up help desks to address grievances

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Chennai: The higher education department has asked all state universities and colleges to establish help desks to address the grievances of students, parents and the public in a time-bound manner. It has asked the institutions to create online grievance forums on their official websites. It requested the deployment of AI chatbots and virtual assistants to provide quick responses to questions.

"From admission to academic matters to harassment, students or parents can approach the help desk regarding any issue. Their grievances will be addressed in a time-bound manner," higher education secretary K Gopal said. "All institutions, including private in-

stitutions, should have an online and offline grievance redressal mechanism to address issues related to academic matters and other issues," he added.

With projects such as the Naan Mudhalvan scheme, 7.5% reservation for govt school students and monthly financial aid for govt school students pursuing higher education being implemented, many students face various issues.

"There is a need for a transparent, responsive and user-friendly environment in the universities and colleges to prevent challenges faced by students," said a letter from the higher education secretary to all registrars of state universities, commissioners of collegiate education and technical edu-

cation.

"To address the issue, all higher educational institutions are hereby directed to implement a public interactive mechanism by establishing a help desk at a prominent location on campus," it added.

"The help desk is responsible for receiving and tracking the grievances and providing updates," the letter said.

It asked the help desk staff to provide a clear escalation procedure, including contact details of the next level authority responsible for reviewing the case. The institutions have been asked to report on the functioning and effectiveness of the help desk on a quarterly basis to the Tamil Nadu State Council for Higher Education.