

Bill for overhaul of higher education regulatory framework likely soon

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In its new Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan Bill, 2025, set to be introduced in Parliament this Winter Session, the Union government has proposed an “overhaul of the regulatory framework” of higher education in India by establishing a 12-member Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan (VBSA) umbrella commission, under which separate regulatory (*viniyaman*), accreditation (*gunvatta*), and standards (*manak*) councils will operate.

This Bill, listed in the Lok Sabha bulletin for the Winter Session, seeks to subsume the functions of the University Grants Commission (UGC), the All India Council for Technical Education, and the National Council for Teachers’ Education.



The VBSA will subsume the powers of UGC and other regulatory bodies.

It further proposes that the UGC’s grants-disbursal function be performed “through mechanisms devised by the Ministry of Education”.

Citing its pursuit of the National Education Policy, 2020, the government, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons, said the Bill would “enable and empower universities and other higher educational

institutions to achieve excellence in teaching, learning, research and innovation, as an outcome of better co-ordination and determination of standards in institutions for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions”.

In this Bill, the government has provided for the creation of the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishtan (VBSA), which will consist of 12 members. The Viksit Bharat Vinियaman Parishad (regulatory), the Viksit Bharat Gunvatta Parishad (accreditation), and the Viksit Bharat Manak Parishad (standards) will operate under this, with up to 14 members each.

The law is proposed to be applicable to all Central and State universities, colleges, and higher education institutions, including those for technical educa-

tion, teacher education, architects’ education, institutions of national importance, and institutes of eminence. It has exempted professional programmes in disciplines such as medicine, dentistry, law, pharmacology, nursing, and veterinary sciences.

Foreign universities

While the Bill gives the Accreditation Council a mandate to develop an “outcome-based institutional accreditation framework”, it has mandated the Regulatory Council to set standards for Centre-approved foreign universities to operate in India, “facilitate high-performing universities” to set up campuses abroad, and develop a “coherent policy to prevent commercialisation of higher education”, among others.