

Course to help realise realities of rural India

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Coimbatore

THE University Grants Commission (UGC) plans to introduce a compulsory course on community engagement for all UG and PG students. With the aim to get students to appreciate realities of the rural field, the UGC has prepared a draft national curriculum framework and guidelines for 'Fostering social responsibility and community engagement in higher education institutions in India'.

New generation of students are increasingly unaware of local rural realities surrounding their HEIs, as rapid urbanisation has been occurring in India. A large percentage of Indian population continues to live and work in rural and peri-urban areas of the country, the draft curriculum framework said. It also points to the need for a well-designed compulsory community engagement course that provides opportunity for immersion in rural realities.

This course has been planned as a two-credit 30-hour programme that will constitute 50 per cent of on-field exposure. This compulsory course is divided into four modules -- appreciation of rural society, understanding rural economy and livelihood, rural institutions, and rural development programmes.

Madras varsity forms panel to monitor college websites

Asked to upload all information on their website for the benefit of students

What needs to be put on display on websites?

Information regarding admission procedure, availability of seats in various courses

Profile of teachers faculty-wise

Calendar of activities

Academic calendar

All students-centric facilities available, especially hostels and transport

Research output of the institution

Placement profile of pass-outs

All relevant approval from statutory bodies

Structure of fees for every courses along with other funds like institutions development

Details of students grievance redress mechanism

Name of the nodal officer for students facilitation services

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UNIVERSITY of Madras (UNOM) on Tuesday asked its affiliated colleges to upload all relevant information (see box) on their website for the benefit of students seeking admission. It also formed a committee to monitor the websites of the colleges and suggest corrective measures, if required.

In a circular to principals of the colleges, UNOM Registrar R Srinivasan asked all the colleges under it to mention all the regulations on their websites, and enroll students following them. The colleges were also asked to send a compliance report within a week.

Explaining the reason behind this move, Association of University Teachers former general secretary C Pichandy said that many students were denied admission to a few colleges as they reportedly failed to fulfil their criteria, even though they had the required marks. For example, some colleges would insist that a student should have studied Maths to take admission to BCom or social sci-

ence for admission to Psychology courses. Since, the students faced trouble adhering to the different regulations of the colleges, they made representation to the university and government, he said, pointing out that this move would help students take conscious decisions.

As autonomous colleges did not have powers to regulate admission, they needed to follow regulations of Government of Tamil Nadu, issued through Directorate of Collegiate Education, he added.

Pichandy also urged other State universities, including Bharathiar University, to follow UNOM's footsteps and form a committee to check websites of its affiliated colleges. This would ensure that the colleges have uploaded the necessary information.

UGC notification

According to the UGC notification dated July 2, 2015, cited by the UNOM Registrar all relevant information of the institutions should be mentioned on the website, for the benefit of admission-seeking students.