

## Students may take shot at PhD directly after UG

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**Chennai:** The University Grants Commission has released a draft of the changes it proposes in PhD programmes, including a recommendation to let students with four-year UG degrees enrol for a doctorate, so far permitted only in the IITs.

The draft, released on Wednesday seeking responses by August 16, moots entrance test and interview for admitting candidates in PhD programmes. It also proposes an easing of norm that only professors can guide up to eight research scholars at a time. The draft suggests that assistant and

associate professors too be allowed to guide eight scholars as against three and six at present. "There is huge shortage of qualified faculty members. The relaxation of ceiling for assistant and associate professors will help universities improve research output," said P. Duraisamy, VC, University of Madras. However, Anna University vice-chancellor MK Surappa said eight research scholars for assistant professors appeared to be on higher side. "The junior faculty members can guide four or five research scholars at a time," he said.

►12-16 credits, P 6



## UGC draft proposes 12 to 16 credits for PhD courses

►From P1

**D**oubts have also been raised about the draft's suggestion that candidates who have completed undergraduate courses of minimum four-year duration in engineering, science, law, architecture, social sciences, humanities and others be considered eligible to enrol for PhDs like in the US.

"In the US, research scholars have to undergo rigorous course work. They will be allowed to do research only after qualifying the courses. The same system may not be applicable to our education system. We need at least PG and one-year research preparatory courses before enrolling students into PhD," said professor K. Jothi Sivagnanam, head, department of economics, University of Madras.

The draft has proposed a minimum credit requirement in PhD courses — 12 to 16 credits. It further also wants departments to formulate good pre-PhD course programmes to help students from diverse backgrounds to acquire good understanding of the fundamen-

tals of the disciplines they propose to do research in.

Professor Sivagnanam said the purpose of MPhil programmes were to prepare candidates for PhD courses. "But, due to frequent changes in the regulations, MPhil programme has been rendered useless. UGC should convert the MPhil into one-year research preparatory course," he added.

The proposed entrance test for research scholars will test research aptitude, analytical skills, writing skills. Qualifying marks are to be 50%. The syllabus for the entrance test shall consist of 50% of questions that test research aptitude while 50% shall be subject specific. Further the university should conduct interviews. The weightage for entrance test and interview is to be the same.

To encourage quality of research publications, UGC is planning to remove the mandatory publication requirement prior to award of the PhD degree. "Quality assessment of MPhil/PhD degrees should be the responsibility of the institutions," it said.