

Indian Express 17/11/2022

Academicians divided over revised UGC guidelines for awarding PhDs

BINITA JAISWAL @ Chennai

THE University Grants Commission (UGC) has asked vice chancellors of higher education institutes to implement the revised guidelines for governing the award of PhDs. However, the changes brought out by the commission have left academicians in the State divided.

Some feel the changes will be beneficial for students, while others are of the opinion that they will diminish the academic rigour and quality of research work in the country.

The UGC replaced its rules notified in 2016 and brought the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of PhD Degree) Regulations, 2022. The revised guidelines have changed the eligibility, admission and evaluation process. Important

Changes part of NEP?

Vice chancellors of the State universities have their own dilemma. "We don't know if these changes are part of National Education Policy (NEP). We have been strictly directed not to implement anything related to NEP as state government is opposing it. Just don't know how to deal with it," said a V-C.

changes such as relaxing course work for obtaining PhDs and allowing candidates to register for a PhD after finishing four years of a graduation programme are in the new regulation.

One of the major changes made by UGC in the assessment criteria for the award of degree is that it has waived the need to mandatorily publish a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal.

"In the absence of publication of the research work in a peer-reviewed journal, it will be very difficult to curb plagiarism," said former Vice Chancellor of Anna University MK Surappa.

As per the new regulations, students who have completed a four-year undergraduate course will also be eligible for direct admission to doctorate programme, which has also evoked mixed reactions. P Duraisamy, former vice-chancellor of University of Madras, said the new rule clearly mentions that a candidate with four-year undergraduate degree should have a minimum of 75% marks in aggregate to pursue PhD. The new regulations are aimed to improve quality of PhD," said Duraisamy, who was also part of the UGC committee that has chalked out the new regulations.