

# UG Honours with research is possible if varsities have research supervisors and infrastructure

UGC's new rule aims to create a pool of quality students with research rigour

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**T**he UGC has announced the curriculum structure for the four-year undergraduate programme (FYUP). The four-year UG Honours degree in major disciplines will be awarded to those who complete the course with 160 credits. They will have to complete an assigned research project or a dissertation under the guidance of a faculty in the eighth semester. The rule will boost research specialisation competencies in students.

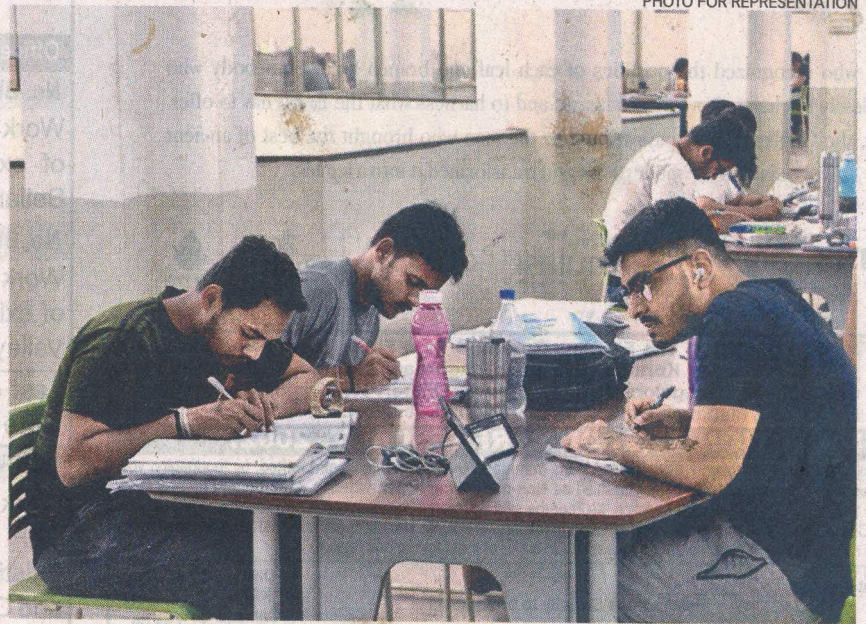
## Building scientific temperament

The new structure aims at introducing basic research ethics and skills among UG students, which will hopefully popularise research and innovation.

Taruna Gautam, vice-chancellor, IILM University, Greater Noida, says, "The FYUP will be effective in building scientific research temperament. Students with a high-level of curiosity can carry out meaningful research in the areas of their interest. This will give them a dedicated purpose to popularise the academic benefit of pursuing research. In the long run, a pool of quality students with research rigour will improve the research output at PhD level."

## Collaborating to fix gaps

The universities or departments offering Honours (with research) must have at least two permanent PhD supervisors and the required infrastructure such as a library and laboratory facilities to conduct experiments. Pointing at the challenges, P Deiva Sundari, principal, KCG College of Technology, Chennai, says, "The implementation is difficult, especially in institutes that do not offer PhD courses as they do not have PhD supervisors. Universities in rural areas are likely to struggle the most. However, the departments already



## Implementation of the rule is difficult in HEIs not running PhD courses or not having at least two PhD supervisors

recognised for conducting the PhD programmes may effectively speed up the FYUP research component as they do not require approval."

Implementation challenges are part and parcel of any new rule when introduced in the system, says Sanjay Padode, founding president, Vijaybhoomi University, Maharashtra. This can be solved by collaborating with industry experts and other resourceful universities, he says.

"Most PhD supervisors are exhausted with their current workload to onboard new UG students for research projects. Collaborating with industry experts and recruiting them as adjunct faculty could be helpful. UG students will learn better if research work is assigned by industry experts in relevant segments," says Padode.

## New research pathways

There is a great probability that the flexibility offered in FYUP Honours will broaden research pathways, says Balvinder Shukla, vice-chancellor, Amity University. "Research ideas aligned with national priorities, such as defence, environment, sustainability and mental health should be at the forefront."