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THE HINDU

UGC allows online degrees, certificates and diplomas

Does not include courses that need practical or lab work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With the University Grants Commission approving the UGC (Online Courses) Regulations, 2018, in its meeting on Thursday, higher educational institutions can now offer certificate, diploma and degree programmes in full-fledged online mode in line with their regular programmes.

An official release said only those disciplines in which qualifying institutions have already been offering the same or similar programmes/ courses at the undergraduate level in the regular mode (of classroom teaching), or in open and distance learning mode, approved by the statutory councils as applicable, and from which at least one batch has graduated, are eligible.

Laboratory courses

A minimum National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) score of 3.26 on the 4-point scale is required. However, online programmes requiring practical/laboratory courses as a curricular requirement are not permitted.

The release said that examinations would be conducted in the proctored mode and in conformity with any norms for such examinations stipulated by the UGC.

Online learning courses shall necessarily have video lectures, e-content, self-assessment and discussion forums to clarify doubts.

Page - 1

UGC sets rules for online courses, no nod for practical-based subjects

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HIGHER education institutions can offer certificate, diploma and degree programmes in full-fledged online mode in only those disciplines in which they have already been offering the same or similar programmes in regular mode, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has ruled.

As part of online course regulations, 2018, released on Thursday, the UGC has said the institutes must be offering these courses in open or distance learning mode, from which at least one batch has graduated.

The new norms say online programmes requiring practical/laboratory courses as a curricular requirement will not be permitted and the examinations will be conducted in proctored mode.

The online learning will have at least four quadrants—video lectures, e-content, self-assessment and discussion forum—to clarify doubts.

Institutions will be eligible to offer online courses if they have been in existence for at least five years and are accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with a valid minimum score of 3.26 on a four-point scale.

The institutes should also be in the top-100 in overall category in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) for at least two years in the previous three years. However, NAAC and NIRF conditions will not be applicable to existing government open universities till NAAC or similar accreditation system or NIRF is made available.

The regulations have enabling provisions for maintaining sanctity of admissions, teaching-learning, examination, authenticity of the learner and mandatory disclosure of programme-wise information such as duration and fee.

Aadhaar and passport shall be used to authenticate Indian and foreign students, respectively. The learners' engagement will be monitored via participation in asynchronous or synchronous discussions, assignment activity and programme involvement.

These regulations will be applicable from the academic session 2018-19. Officials in the HRD Ministry said the initiative was a big step towards attaining the targeted gross enrolment ratio of 30 per cent by 2020.

At present, 16 institutes in India offer online courses not recognised by any regulatory body. Officials pointed out that unlike regular correspondence course, advantage of online courses would be that students from other states could also opt for these.