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Students in limbo as UGC yet to decide on final year exams

7 States announce cancellation; others waiting for orders

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NEW DELHI

Eleven days after the Centre asked the University Grants Commission (UGC) to review its guidelines on final year university examinations, there is still no clarity for many anxious students across the country.

At least seven States have cancelled their college and university examinations – Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Odisha, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal – without waiting for the UGC's fresh guidelines. However, some private universities will continue to conduct online examinations in these States.

Gujarat cites MHRD

Gujarat Education Minister Bhupendrasinh Chudasama told mediapersons that the Union Human Resource Development Ministry had sent a communication to all States asking them to postpone all exams till further notice, and the State has



The Centre had asked the UGC to review its guidelines eleven days ago.

done so. The HRD Ministry did not respond to requests for confirmation on this.

Karnataka's Deputy Chief Minister and Higher Education Minister C.N. Ashwathnarayan said the State is waiting for instructions from the HRD Ministry and the UGC.

"After we receive some instructions from them, the state government will make a decision," he told *The Hindu*.

Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, has set up its own pa-

nel to recommend a decision.

For Central universities, the UGC decision is still awaited, with Delhi University students scheduled to begin online open book examinations in a week's time, despite multiple difficulties with mock tests.

With COVID-19 cases increasing at the rate of more than 22,000 per day, some students have stepped up a campaign – through letters, social media, and court cases – to cancel examinations and grant degrees on the basis of their performance in internal assessments and previous semester examinations.

The hashtag #NoMoreWaitUGC was trending on Sunday with almost 40,000 tweets. "Students, parents & teachers are not ready to risk lives during COVID-19," tweeted an Andhra Pradesh student's group, using hashtag #StudentsLives Matter.

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A group of students from the Gujarat Technological University wrote to UGC asking that their exams, which have been postponed, be cancelled and alternative assessment methods approved, so that they can go ahead with future plans. Other GTU students, however, said they were depending on the final year examinations to boost their grades.

In April, a UGC panel headed by Vice-Chancellor of Central University of Haryana R.C. Kuhad had recommended that final year examinations could be held in July, while intermediate semester students could be

graded based on internal assessment or examinations where possible. On June 24, HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said he had advised UGC to review its earlier guidelines.

Board exams

Since then, the HRD Ministry has cancelled school board examinations, and postponed medical and engineering entrance examinations. However, the fate of university exams are still undecided, with students looking for a job or applying for further studies left hanging in the limbo.

(With inputs from Tanu Kulkarni in Bengaluru)