

# UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

## NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the \_\_, 2021

**F.No. \_\_\_\_\_** . In exercise of the powers conferred by clauses (f) and (g) of sub-section (1) of section 26 read with clause (j) of Section 12 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 and in supersession of the University Grants Commission (Promotion & Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2016 notified vide Gazette Notification dated 11.07.2016, the University Grants Commission hereby makes the following Regulations, namely:-

**1) Short title, application and commencement: -**

- (1) These Regulations may be called the University Grants Commission (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Education Institutions to offer Joint Degree, Dual Degree and Twinning Programmes) Regulations, 2021 (hereafter referred to as the Regulations).
- (2) These Regulations shall apply to-
  - (a) Indian Higher Education Institutions intending to collaborate with Foreign Higher Education Institutions leading to award of diploma(s) and degree(s) including Post Graduate and Doctoral programmes; and
  - (b) Foreign Higher Education Institution intending to collaborate with Indian Higher Education Institutions.
- (3) These Regulations shall not be applicable to Programmes offered in online mode and Open and Distance Learning mode.
- (4) These regulations shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

**2) Definitions: -**

- (a) "Act" means the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 as amended from time to time;
- (b) "Academic Collaboration", for the purposes of these regulations, means academic partnership between Indian Higher Education Institution(s) and Foreign Higher Education Institution(s), put into place through an instrument of written Agreement for the purposes of
  - (i) Credit Recognition and Transfer;
  - (ii) Joint Degree Programme;
  - (iii) Dual Degree Programme;
  - (iv) Twinning arrangement.
- (c) "Assessment and Accreditation Agency", in respect of a Foreign Higher Education Institution, means an agency or body approved, recognized or authorized by an authority, established or incorporated under a law in its home country or any other statutory authority in that country or member of global network of accreditation bodies for the purpose of assessing, accrediting or assuring quality and standards of Higher education institutions;
- (d) "Commission" means the University Grants Commission established under section 4 of the Act;
- (e) "Degree" means a degree awarded by an Indian Higher Education Institution in accordance with the provisions of the section 22 of the UGC Act;

- (f) “Franchise” for the purposes of these Regulations, means and includes the practice of allowing, formally or informally, any person, institution or organization, other than Indian Higher Education Institution(s) and Foreign Higher Education Institution(s), recognized under these Regulations, for offering programmes under collaboration, or any related activity on behalf of or in the name of collaborating Higher Education Institution;
- (g) “Foreign Higher Education Institution” means—(i) a higher education institution duly established or incorporated or recognised in a foreign country and (ii) offering academic and research programmes at the undergraduate and/or higher levels;
- (h) “Indian Higher Education Institution” means a university within the meaning of Section 2(f) or an institution deemed to be university under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956 or a higher education institution duly recognized and empowered to offer diploma programmes by the competent regulatory authority for imparting education at undergraduate and/or higher levels;
- (i) “Programme” means educational programmes leading to award of Diploma(s) and Degree(s) including Post Graduate and Doctoral programmes;
- (j) “Statutory Body” means a body established or incorporated by or under a Central Act to regulate, coordinate, determine and maintain standards of teaching, examination and research in universities or programme(s) of study, including professional programme(s) leading to the award of degree(s);

### **3) Provisions of Collaboration: -**

Academic Collaboration between Indian and foreign higher education institutions under these Regulations shall facilitate the following academic activity:-

#### **(1) Credit Recognition and Transfer**

- (a) “Credit Recognition and Transfer” for the purpose of these regulations shall mean ‘Credit’ conferred by a foreign higher education institution to be recognised, quantified and included towards the credit requirements for a programme delivered by an Indian higher education institution solely or jointly with a foreign higher education institution and vice versa;

#### **(2) Twinning Arrangement**

- (a) “Twinning arrangement” shall be a collaborative arrangement whereby students enrolled with an Indian higher education institution may undertake their programme of study partly in India, complying with relevant UGC regulations, and partly in the foreign higher education institution;
- (b) The degree or diploma offered under such twinning arrangement shall be awarded by the Indian higher education institution only;
- (c) Under twinning arrangements, credits earned by the students at a foreign education institution shall be counted towards the degree/diploma awarded by the Indian higher education institution. Each institution shall issue a transcript for their respective courses, with a remark indicating that the student has taken certain modules at the partner institution, wherever applicable;
- (d) The Indian higher educational institution shall ensure that the credits earned by the students from the foreign education institution shall not be from overlapping course contents/curriculum.

- (e) Any degree to be awarded under such twinning arrangement must be in conformity with the provisions of section 22 (3) of the UGC Act, 1956 and shall also be in conformity with the norms, standards & requirement for award of such degree, as laid down by the concerned statutory authority;
- (f) Any diploma to be awarded under such twinning arrangement shall be in conformity with the norms, standards & requirement for award of such diploma as laid down by concerned statutory authority;

### **(3) Joint Degree Programme**

- (a) In a “Joint Degree programme”, the curriculum shall be designed jointly by the collaborating Indian & Foreign Higher Educational Institutions and the Degree is awarded by the Indian Higher Education institution and the collaborating foreign higher education institution with a single Certificate bearing the crests and logo of both collaborating institutions, upon completion of the programme;
- (b) Any Joint degree programme to be offered shall conform to the nomenclature and duration of the degrees as specified in section 22 (3) of the UGC Act, 1956 and shall also conform to minimum eligibility and other norms & standards to offer such degree programme;
- (c) The students must earn at least 30 per cent of the total credits from each of the Indian and foreign higher education institutions;
- (d) The collaborating higher educational institutions shall ensure that the credits earned by the students shall not be from overlapping course contents/curriculum and the student shall submit to only one examination & evaluation process for each of the courses by the institutions in which he/she has registered for that course. Further, credits earned for the course(s) in an institution shall count towards the degrees jointly awarded by both the institutions.
- (e) In case of a doctoral degree programme, students must have a supervisor at each institution. However, the student shall submit a single thesis.
- (f) Tuition fee may be charged from the student only for the residential period in the respective higher education institution;
- (g) Each higher education institution shall issue a transcript for their respective courses, with a remark indicating that the student has taken certain modules at the partner institution;
- (h) The higher education institutions shall make provisions for exit pathways for students who are unable to complete the Joint Degree programme with clear specification with respect to future acceptance of credit earned by the student;

### **(4) Dual Degree Programme**

- (a) “Dual Degree Programme” for the purpose of these Regulations shall be degrees conferred by the Indian and foreign higher education institutions, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of degree requirements of both the institutions;
- (b) The Dual Degree programme shall be governed by statutes, ordinances, rules, regulations, policies, guidelines and procedures of the respective higher education institutions under the collaboration;
- (c) The Dual degree programme to be offered shall conform to the nomenclature and duration of the degrees as specified in section 22 (3) of the UGC Act, 1956 and shall also conform to minimum eligibility and other norms & standards to offer such degree

programme;

- (d) Prospective students must meet the admission requirements of both the Indian and foreign institutions and shall apply to and be admitted separately to both the institutions;
- (e) The students must earn at least 50 percent of total credits from the Indian institution;
- (f) The collaborating higher education institutions shall ensure that the credits earned by the students shall not be from overlapping course contents/curriculum;
- (g) The student shall submit to only one examination and evaluation process for each of the courses by the institutions in which he/she has registered for that course. Further, credit earned for the course(s) in an institution shall count towards degrees to be awarded by both the institutions;
- (h) In case of a doctoral degree programme, students must have a supervisor at each institution. However, the student shall submit a single thesis;
- (i) Tuition fee may be charged from the student only for the residential period in the respective higher education institution;
- (j) Each higher education institution shall issue a transcript for their respective courses, with a remark indicating that the student has taken certain modules at the partner institution;
- (k) Provisions for exit pathways shall be available to students who are unable to complete the Dual Degree programme;

**4) Conditions for Collaboration: -**

- (1) No programme of study and/or research shall be offered which is against the national security and territorial integrity of India;
- (2) The Indian higher education institutions shall obtain the approval of its Board of Governors/Board of Management/Syndicate/Executive Council etc. for academic collaboration with any foreign higher education institution;
- (3) The Indian higher education institutions shall abide by the norms prescribed by the Government of India from time to time for collaboration with specific countries;
- (4) Academic infrastructure, including laboratory, library and workshop facilities of the Indian higher education institutions shall meet the requirements of the relevant professional Statutory Councils/ Bodies;
- (5) The Indian higher education institution shall have to enter into a written Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement with its partner foreign higher education institution(s) for collaboration. The MoU or Agreement must categorically include the purposes and related provisions of collaboration;
- (6) The academic requirements and other details of the programme(s) of study to be offered under collaborative arrangements shall be made public by displaying prominently in the Indian higher education institution's website, before the commencement of such programmes;
- (7) Wherever foreign exchange is involved, the higher education institution (Indian and foreign), shall abide by and comply with the relevant Regulations, Norms, Notifications and Instructions issued by the Reserve Bank of India and Government of India from time to time;
- (8) The Institutions concerned shall comply with all the provisions of these Regulations and also abide by any other condition(s) specified by the Government of India and Statutory Body (ies) from time to time.

**5) Eligibility and Procedure for collaborations:**

Academic Collaboration between Indian and foreign higher education institution will be

permitted through two modes i.e. (1) Automatic mode and (2) Approval mode.

**(1) Automatic Mode:**

**Eligibility:** To be considered under Automatic mode, the collaborating higher education institutions must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a) Any Indian higher education institution as mentioned in 2) (h) and accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with a minimum score of 3.01 on a 4-point scale (at the time of application)  
or  
must figure in the top 100 in University category of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) (at the time of application)  
or  
shall be an Institution of Eminence;
- b) Any foreign higher education institution as mentioned in 2) (g) figuring in top 500 of Times Higher Education or QS World University ranking (at the time of application)

**Procedure:**

- a) On fulfilment of the eligibility criteria as mentioned in above, the Indian Higher Education Institutions shall approach the Commission
- b) The Indian Higher Education Institutions shall be required to submit online, the desired information and an affidavit in duly prescribed format to the Commission
- c) On verification of the eligibility criteria, the Commission shall grant approval automatically without any further processing.
- d) The approval shall be granted for a period of 5 academic years at a time. The Indian higher education Institution shall apply, for renewal of approval, granted under these regulations, before six months of its expiration.

**(2) Approval Mode:**

**Eligibility:** To be considered under Approval mode, the collaborating higher education institutions must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- a) Any Indian Higher Education Institutions as mentioned in 2) (h) above
- b) Any foreign higher education institution as mentioned in 2) (g) accredited by an Assessment and Accreditation Agency in their homeland. Specialised institutions, if not accredited may be considered if they have sufficient demonstratable accomplishments

**Procedure**

- a) On fulfilment of the eligibility criteria as mentioned above, the Indian Higher Education institution shall apply online to the Commission as per the duly prescribed format along with all relevant documents and an affidavit to comply with these Regulations.
- b) Any deficiency or defect in the application shall be communicated to the Indian Higher Education Institution and the same shall be required to remove or rectify such deficiencies with the necessary documents or information, if any, within fifteen days;
- c) The proposal shall be considered by an Expert Committee duly constituted by the Commission.
- d) The Expert Committee shall consider the proposal taking various factors into account while evaluating the applications such as credibility of the higher education institutions, faculty, student, research profile, overall merit and feasibility of the proposal,

infrastructural resources available, quality of academic programmes offered etc.

- e) The recommendations of the Expert Committee shall be placed before the Commission for its consideration.
- f) The decision of the Commission on the application shall be communicated to the applicant Indian higher education institution within a period of 90 days.
- g) The approval shall be granted for a period of 5 academic years at a time. The Indian Higher Education Institution shall apply, for renewal of approval, granted under these regulations, before six months of its expiration.

**6) Office for International Affairs: -**

The Indian Higher Education Institution must have an office for International Affairs which shall function as single point contact and will be responsible for carrying out all collaborative activities including but not limited to

- (1) To liaise with regulatory/statutory bodies;
- (2) To work as coordinating agency for all students registered under collaborative arrangements with foreign higher education institutions.
- (3) To address matters related to Indian students proceeding abroad to foreign institutions under collaborative arrangements;
- (4) To maintain records and disseminate information related to international collaborations;
- (5) To work as the nodal agency for foreign students and coordinate all matters relating to welcoming and supporting foreign students;
- (6) To engage in promotional activities and brand building campaign abroad.

**7) Miscellaneous conditions: -**

- (1) The Degree or Diploma awarded under these Regulations shall be equivalent to any corresponding degree or diploma awarded by the Indian Higher Education institution; there shall be no further requirement of seeking equivalence from any authority; and the degree or diploma shall have all benefits, rights and privileges as obtaining in the case of degree or diploma, awarded by an Indian higher educational institution ordinarily.
- (2) A franchise arrangement, whether overtly or covertly, by whatever nomenclature used, between a foreign higher education institution and an Indian higher education institution shall not be allowed under these Regulations;
- (3) An Institution Deemed to be a University under section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 shall enter into academic collaboration in accordance with the extant Deemed to be University Regulations and also in compliance with the provisions of these regulations.
- (4) The MoU/Agreement for collaboration shall include provisions related to student obligations, tuition fees and other financial arrangements, intellectual property rights, student's attendance patterns, duration of stay for the study programme in both the higher education institutions, joint supervision arrangements, language of thesis and examinations, admission and evaluation process and graduation procedures, wherever applicable;
- (5) The office for International Affairs as mentioned in 6) above, shall make the information relating to academic collaboration available on the higher education institution's website and provide the same to Commission whenever asked for;
- (6) Matters relating to the grievances of students including legal matters relating to the collaboration shall be addressed by the Indian institution entering into academic collaboration;

(7) The monitoring shall be done through mandatory public disclosure.

**8) Consequence of violations: -**

(1) The Commission shall, *suo motu* or on the basis of any complaint from any quarter may cause an inquiry, including physical inspection, of the collaborative arrangements and after having satisfied itself that the collaborating institution(s)is/are not functioning in accordance with these regulations, may revoke the approval for collaboration and while issuing such directions, the Commission shall ensure that the students, who have already enrolled for such course or programme are permitted to continue till they obtain requisite qualification;

Provided that before revocation of approval, an opportunity of representation and hearing shall be given only to the Indian higher education institution concerned.

(2) If the Indian Higher Education Institution concerned is found to have violated these regulations, the Commission shall take action as provided under section 14 of the Act and shall also notify on its website and also through media that the programme(s) offered or conducted through the said collaborative arrangements are not in conformity with these regulations.

(3) If an Indian higher education institution issues an advertisement that it is offering a degree/diploma from a Foreign higher education institution and if such collaboration does not have the approval of the Commission, the Commission shall conduct a preliminary inquiry and on completion of its inquiry, the commission shall initiate appropriate penal action against the Indian Higher Education Institution.

(4) The Commission may also take further action against Indian higher education institution(s) for violating the regulations.

**9) Interpretation: -**

(1) Any question as to the interpretation of these regulations shall be decided by the Commission and its decision shall be final and binding in the matter.

**10) Power to remove difficulty:-**

(1) If any difficulty arises in implementation or in giving effect to the provisions of these Regulations, the commission may by an order published in the official gazette make provisions, not in consistent with the provisions of the UGC Act, 1956 or these Regulations, as may appeared to be necessary or expedient for removing the difficulty.

Provided that no order under this provision shall be made by the commission after the expiry of a period of two years from the date of coming into force of these Regulations.

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