

Joint degrees approved by UGC

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In news- Recently, the University Grants Commission(UGC) has approved the UGC (Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Higher Educational Institutions to offer Twinning, Joint Degree and Dual Degree Programmes) Regulations, 2022.

About the new regulations-

- **The regulations allow three types of degree programmes:**
 - **Dual** (where both colleges award the degree, albeit in the same subject).
 - **Joint and twinning** (where part of the course is completed overseas with the upper limit being 30% in twinning programmes, and the lower limit being 30% in joint programmes).
- **This is the first time joint degrees are being permitted.** But regulations allowing some of these initiatives were first announced in 2012, and modified in 2016. But there were not many takers for the previous versions.
- **The UGC has set eligibility criteria for Indian and foreign higher education institutions for collaboration under the new regulations, they are-**
 - **An Indian college must have a minimum National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) score of 3.01** or figure in the top 100 in the university category of the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) or in the top 1000 of Times Higher Education or QS World University ranking.
 - **Foreign universities should be in the top 1000 of Times Higher Education or QS World University ranking** to be eligible to collaborate with Indian educational institutions.
 - For collaboration, the two colleges will have to

enter into a written Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or agreement.

- **The two higher educational institutions will have to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or written agreement** that will have to spell out provisions related to student obligations, fees and other financial arrangements, intellectual property rights, attendance patterns, duration of stay for the study programme in both the institutions, joint supervision arrangements, language of thesis and examinations, admission and evaluation process and graduation procedures.
- **The eligible institutions do not need approval from the UGC but have to get the programmes approved by the statutory body concerned** (for example, AICTE for engineering courses), enter into an agreement with the foreign institution and inform the UGC about the collaboration.
- **All three degree programmes (twinning, joint and dual) have to be in conventional or offline or face-to-face mode.**
- **Under the 'twinning programme',**
 - Students enrolled with an Indian university will be allowed to complete their programme in a foreign university.
 - Students can earn a maximum of 30% of the credits required for the programme in the foreign educational institution.
 - The degree offered under such twinning programmes shall be awarded by the Indian university.
- **For a 'joint degree programme',**
 - **The curriculum shall be designed jointly by the Indian and foreign institutions concerned.**
 - Students who complete the programme will be awarded a degree jointly awarded by the Indian higher educational institution and the collaborating foreign institution.
 - Students will have to earn at least 30% of the

total credits from each collaborating institution.

- **In the case of a dual degree programme,**
 - The students must earn at least 30% of the total credits from each institution.
 - The credit earned for the course(s) in an institution will be counted towards degrees to be awarded by both institutions.
 - In this case, the degrees shall be conferred by the Indian and foreign institutions, separately and simultaneously, upon completion of the degree requirements of both the institutions.
 - This shall not in any way be construed as two degree programmes in separate disciplines/subject areas and/or levels being pursued simultaneously.
- **For both dual and joint degree programmes, UGC requires the collaborating institutions to ensure that the credits earned by the students are not from overlapping course content or curriculum.**
- In case of a doctoral degree or PhD programme, students will be provided supervision at each institution, and they will have to spend a minimum of one semester in each of them.
- The regulations also mandate that collaborating institutions make provisions for exit pathways for students who are unable to complete requirements in the three programmes.
- **Admission to the collaborating institutions will be done on the basis of their existing admission process.**
- The collaborating institutions are required to come up with a **“reasonable fee structure”** to make quality higher education accessible and affordable to all sections of the society.