

UGC's new regulations for awarding PhDs

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In news– The University Grants Commission (UGC) has notified UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of PhD Degree) Regulations, 2022.

What are the new changes?

- One of the **notable changes it made was to the evaluation and assessment criteria for the award of the degree**, where **it has waived the need to mandatorily publish a research paper in a peer-reviewed journal**.
- This is accompanied by **completely abolishing MPhil**, which has been a gateway for PhD programmes, in line with the recommendation in the National Education Policy 2020.
- **The eligibility criteria for admissions too have been revised, and a candidate can register after completing a one-year** (or two semester) **master's degree** programme after a four-year (or 8-semester) bachelor's degree programme or a two-year (or four-semester) master's degree programme after a three-year bachelor's degree programme with at least 55% marks or its equivalent grade.
- There are also important changes to course work. **Earlier, the description of course work candidates needed to finish was more detailed**, with at least four credits assigned to courses on research methodology.
- Candidates were also required to finish this either in the first semester, or by the second semester. Only candidates who were awarded MPhil or had completed their MPhil were exempted. **But the new regulations leave it more open ended** and says that all PhD scholars "shall be required to train in teaching/ education/ pedagogy/ writing related to their chosen PhD subject."

- **They can also now be assigned 4-6 hours per week of teaching/research assistantship** for conducting tutorial, or laboratory work and evaluations.
- The **UGC now also allows part-time PhDs**, a practice that was disallowed under the 2009 and 2016 regulations.
- **PhD scholars will be required to undertake research work after completing their course work, make a presentation and produce a draft dissertation or thesis.**
- If the evaluation of the submission is satisfactory, the candidate will have to defend the thesis in a public viva voce. They will not have to publish a research paper in refereed journal and make two paper presentations in conferences or seminars before submitting the thesis.

University Grants Commission(UGC)-

- UGC is a statutory body set up by the Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 and is charged with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education in India.
- It provides recognition to universities in India, and disbursements of funds to such recognized universities and colleges.
- The headquarters are in New Delhi, and it has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore.
- A proposal to replace it with another new regulatory body called HECI is under consideration by the Government of India.
- The UGC provides doctoral scholarships to all those who clear JRF in the National Eligibility Test.