

Staying ahead EdLive

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pwc

Message from the Sector leader



Contents

<i>Domestic News</i>	06
<i>Regulatory News</i>	08
<i>International News</i>	09
<i>Deals</i>	10

Dear friends,

Welcome to the September edition of EdLive!

As part of its ongoing efforts to increase transparency, the AICTE released the Approval Process Handbook 2013-14 (“Handbook”) updating the norms to be followed by institutes under the aegis of the AICTE. The handbook is revised on a yearly basis to reflect the changing trends in technical education as well as the revised objectives of AICTE to promote and safeguard technical education in the country. Some of the key changes and additions in the Handbook are as follows:

- Revised guidelines on twining programs between Indian and foreign universities:
 - Offshore campus of AICTE approved Indian institutions offering Indian degrees and diplomas are now eligible to enter into such collaborations. Earlier the handbook permitted offshore campus of AICTE approved Indian institutions offering Indian degrees only to enter into twining arrangements
 - To protect the interest of students who fail to secure VISA into a similar program being conducted by the Indian partner institution following guidelines have been issued:
 - Foreign university/ institution and the Indian partner institution shall enter into a bipartite agreement/ MOU and,
 - The Indian institution and the concerned affiliating university/ Board of Technical Education in the respective states shall also enter into a bipartite agreement/ MoU
- Earlier, the Indian Institution, concerned affiliating university/ Board of Technical Education and the Foreign Institution had to enter into a tripartite agreement/ MoU to ensure the above
- Private Limited or Public Limited Company/ industry eligible to set up technical institutions: As per the handbook, Private Limited or Public Limited Company/ industry with a turnover of at least INR 100 crores per year for the previous 3 years shall be eligible for setting up technical institutions offering UG/ PG/ Diploma in Engineering & Technology, Pharmacy, Architecture & Town Planning, Applied Arts & Crafts and HMCT
- Other miscellaneous additions
 - List of approved nomenclature of courses as per Appendix 2 has been expanded substantially
 - The new hand book permits AICTE approved existing institutes seeking a change of affiliating university to apply on the AICTE portal
 - Duration and Entry level qualifications for grant of full time UG degree and diploma programs in Town Planning have been introduced
 - Duration and Entry level qualifications for grant of part time UG degree, Diploma programs, Post Diploma programs, Post Graduate degree and Post Graduate Diploma programs and full time Integrated Courses have been introduced for various fields

We feel that there needs to be greater synchronization between the recently released (yet publicly unavailable) UGC guidelines on twinning programs and the revised AICTE guidelines. Press reports suggest that UGC guidelines lay down mandatory accreditation requirement on part of the Indian institute to be eligible for twinning. The guidelines also mention that only the top 500 foreign institutes shall be eligible for collaborating within India and will have to necessarily obtain UGC approval for every MOU they sign with the Indian institutes. No such requirements are mentioned in the AICTE revised handbook. In addition, ambiguity still persists on minimum qualification norms for hiring faculty as AICTE and UGC stipulate different norms. While the UGC stipulation is that a candidate holding master's degree with 55% marks in the appropriate branch of engineering and technology is eligible for appointment as assistant professor, the AICTE norm is that a candidate must possess BE/B.Tech and ME/M.Tech in relevant subjects with first class or equivalent either in BE/B.Tech or ME/M.Tech.

A trend that has now persisted for the last 3 years has been the increasing number of institutions requesting permission from AICTE to shut down due to lack of students. As per press reports, overall growth of MBA education is negative in the books of AICTE. In 2011-12, 146 new B-schools came up and 124 that were already running closed down. This year so far, 101 management colleges have

closed down, only 82 have started. While some may blame the economic slowdown leading to poor placements and falling enrollments, the bottom line still remains quality; There is no payoff in running a bad college. As per the recently released QS Asian University ranking 2012, none of the top business or engineering schools in the country have made it to the list of best 30 educational institutes across Asia revealing the low performance and quality parameters prevailing amongst Indian colleges and universities. Institutes today need to be top of the line and offer quality education to ensure students are well groomed, trained and employable. The lack of quality institutions is a major concern which demands immediate attention from all stake holders if we are to achieve our target GER of 30% by 2020 while producing quality graduates that can productively contribute to industry and the economy.

- Only top 500 foreign institutions in Times Higher Education World University Ranking or Shanghai Jiaotong ranking will be allowed to collaborate with Indian educational institutions
- Only those Indian institutions that have got highest accreditation grade from NAAC or NBA are eligible for a tie-up with a foreign institution
- The Indian and the foreign institution will have to enter into an agreement that will have to be approved by the UGC before it is implemented

- Existing collaborations will have to get UGC approval in 6 months' time
- No franchise agreement will be permitted

These regulations are already facing some criticism, in particular with regard to the rule that only those foreign universities which are ranked among the top 500 in the two selected rankings will be accepted for dual degree collaboration. In addition, insisting on NAAC "A" Grade is very stringent. Any evolved institution, which has been in existence for a number of years and has received an A grade is mature, has public recognition and perhaps does not even need a Foreign Collaboration. It is the new institutions that need academic and technical collaboration which may not be possible as they may find it difficult to obtain high grading. Added to that, the requirement of obtaining prior approval of UGC before signing an MOU/ agreement with a foreign partner could be considered as a move that breaches the autonomy of higher education (HE) institutes and gives undue power to the UGC.

Academic collaborations will enhance engagement with reputed foreign education institutes. Such tie-ups undoubtedly help improve the standards of HE- benefitting faculty, students, academic administration as well as research. However the legalities involved may discourage a healthy and inclusive education pattern to be developed in India.

Technology enabled learning for education



Dr. P. V. Ramana is Founder and Chairman of the ITM Group of Management Education Institutes. After obtaining B.E. (Hons) (Electrical) in 1961, he studied and worked in USA from 1970-77, earning a Professional Engineer qualification in Mechanical Engineering and MBA in Accounts/Finance from Washington State University. Returning to India, he served as Managing Director in TTK Group, Chennai (1978-84), and as Chief Executive, International Division of Grasim Industries till mid 1990, when he decided to serve the cause of Management Education. He is a specialist in Strategic Management and Business Management. He founded ITM (Institute for Technology & Management) in 1991 and is the Founder & Chancellor of ITM University since inception, in 2003.

1. Is the increasing GER in higher education accompanied by increase in quality education as well?

Not necessarily, GER is a national policy issue of increasing educational, literacy and knowledge levels. Quality is a perennial issue but constraints of budget and people resources will initially decrease quality as a whole while certain institutions will achieve higher quality levels.

2. How does one explain the rampant shutting down of several B-Schools and Engineering colleges in the country?

There are 50,000+ colleges in the country, a few hundreds closing down do not make a difference. Market forces will even out as population pressure and lack of jobs after 12th standard force many millions to seek tertiary education.

3. What does it take to have a quality institute? How does one define the parameters?

Quality is best defined as meeting stated claims and expectations. Education is such an intangible product that it is difficult to measure any quality. A degree is like a cup of coffee, is there a perfect coffee? In olden days when college education was introduced in southern towns like Madurai (which has a college before Chennai) a degree was considered the ultimate achievement and hence a cup of very good coffee was called Degree Coffee. You can order Degree Coffee in Kumbakonam even today. An institute can be called a quality institution merely by making available what it

promises. Take the example of a high school. High quality schools can either claim 100% pass rate or maximum number of students who go on to join an IIT. Both are good quality and both will reach there by following different methods. 100% pass rate demands equal attention to all students and a special attention to the weaker students. The school which sends maximum candidates to IITs does so by primarily concentrating on the brightest prospects to crack the JEE and ignoring or removing the weaker students from their rolls. You tell me which is a quality institute?

4. What innovations have you inculcated at ITM group of institutes to address this quality gap and other issues faced by graduates in the country?

Attention to academics, measuring academic outcomes, enormous attention to placement activity, increasing internships, both duration and activity level, changing to project based learning by doing, not selling seats ever etc.

5. Way forward and the recent trends that suggest an improvement/ deterioration to the current situation and what must be further done?

I believe that the answers and future direction lies in the statement that future employers need candidates who combine in them highly deliverable and demonstratable technical skills while possessing an academic degree which does not compromise on knowledge levels and analytical skills. Leadership potential is a bonus which is best discovered on entry through profiling and aptitude testing.

Goa second best in higher education access

The state has 24.59 institutes of higher education available per lakh for its youth in the age group of 18 to 23. As per a University Grants Commission (UGC) report higher education might not be up to the desired level in Goa, but is definitely one of the best available in the country in terms of access.

Goa is among 14 states that have better access to higher education than the national average of 12.14. The report also reveals that Goa ranks second in the country after Chandigarh in terms of gross enrolment ratio with over 13% of its young population enrolled in colleges. The state government has facilitated accessibility of higher education and the concentration is not just city-based. In terms of money too, accessibility is good. The fee structure has been kept at an affordable level and various scholarships, interest free loans and schemes to SC and ST are provided.

(Source: The Times of India)

100 community colleges planned to plug education and skills gap

In a rapidly changing world, India's demographic potential is increasingly in the limelight. However, the Minister for Human Resource Development, Kapil Sibal highlighted the importance of skilling and educating this growing 'young' population to ensure that the potential for success does not become a recipe for disaster. To optimise the potential in the country, Sibal said the Ministry will institute 100 community colleges in the country, of which 10 would be in collaboration with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. These colleges will impart education as well as vocational skills to adult illiterates. Sibal said that the country has over 400 million individuals in the age group of 0-14 and another 100 million in the 14-18 years bracket.

(Source: Hindu Business Line)

CBSE schools to offer foreign vocational courses

CBSE students wanting an international touch to their education need to look no further than their school. CBSE schools will soon feature vocational courses designed in Australia, known for hosting international students pursuing vocational education. The board has tied up with the Central Institute of Technology (a vocational education institution under the department of training and workforce development), Government of Western Australia, to design the curriculum and train teachers in vocational courses. The programme, 'VET in Schools', will be conducted at the senior secondary level from the next academic year. It will cover four courses design fundamentals, business administration, music technical production and beauty services.

The board plans to offer the programme as a pilot project in 100 to 150 schools from the next academic year. The board has called for schools to volunteer to take up these courses so students can be equipped with skills that are globally accepted.

(Source: The Times of India)

UGC draws flak for changing national eligibility test rules

Academics and teacher aspirants have criticised the UGC for its decision to change the eligibility criteria for lectureship after the National Eligibility Test (NET) results were announced. The UGC had earlier mentioned a minimum qualifying percentage in three individual papers of the NET, but after the results were out a third criterion - aggregate of all three papers - was brought in. Candidates said that the UGC only prescribed minimum required marks in papers 1, 2 and 3 to qualify for lectureship when the notification for the test was announced. There was no mention of the requirement of an aggregate score in the NET. Candidates claimed that based on

the answer key for NET published by the UGC earlier, at least 70% were able to secure the prescribed minimum marks in the individual paper. But the aggregate score requirement ensured that only 7.69% finally qualified for lectureship. Academics questioned the benefit of high academic standards when none could meet them. "There is a huge shortage of college teachers, but the eligibility criteria are being raised.

(Source: The Times of India)

Industries may soon get a role in higher education

In an effort to boost research and employable workforce, India is preparing to involve industries in higher education. The Ministry for HRD expects this will solve issues related to land availability and finance. In return, the government will give industries independence and fast-track regulatory clearances for opening institutes that will focus on research specific to industry requirements.

Recently, the Ministry, in association with Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), invited 17 government departments and ministries and nearly 60 companies to a two-day conference in Delhi. "If we reach an agreement, then we don't have to go to Parliament and it will be more of a ministry-level decision to engage industry in higher education," said SS Mantha, Chairman, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), the regulator in the higher education sector for technical institutes and a part of the HRD Ministry. Shalini Sharma, Head of the education wing, CII, said companies are open to the idea and want to know what the government is offering, "Through the conference we want to understand what the industry requires on the regulatory front. We will try to accommodate that." Mantha added, "The government cannot do everything by its own. Once the industry participates, issues like land and finance will be taken care of easily." He said that involving the industry will

promote theme-based research and innovation during the 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-17). This will 'stimulate discussion between industry players and ministries' on setting up institutes that will focus on specific research and enter into twinning and collaborative programmes with other universities and research organisations.

(Source: Mint)

Centre not to bear cost of RTE fee reimbursement

The state governments will now have to bear the entire cost of fee reimbursement to schools under the Right to Education Act as the centre will not provide financial aid to any state this year. According to sources, the proposal of the Ministry of MHRD to support states in a 65:35 cost sharing ratio is still pending before the union cabinet. "Not just Karnataka, no other state will receive finance from the centre. That is why the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has no provision for fee reimbursement in its budget this year," said an SSA official. Karnataka's Minister for Primary and Secondary Education Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri, who has been stressing on the need for the centre to financially support the state to reimburse schools, maintained that the centre has to 'prove its commitment' by supporting the government. Meanwhile, the Department of Public Instruction has issued circular asking block education officers to make a final list of admissions made under the RTE quota and calculate the total amount of reimbursements to be made (separate calculations for class I and pre-primary). This information has to be submitted to the Director (primary education) before 15 September 2012.

(Source: The New Indian Express)

New York Film Academy comes to Noida

The New York Film Academy plans to set up its first South Asian campus in Greater Noida and the first term will begin in January 2013. A press release stated that the year-long, four-week and eight-week courses offered at the Indian campus will be similar to New York. The course will focus on filmmaking, acting and photography. International filmmakers, such as Steven Spielberg and Mira Nair, and Bollywood actors such as Imran Khan and Abhay Deol, among others, are alumni of the academy. The academy has also ventured into tie-ups with several media firms and production house for placements and internships, the release added.

(Source: The Hindu Business Line)

Vocational courses at school level

The Haryana government is set to launch a project, under which students at the school level will be trained in vocational courses. The project, to be run under the National Vocational Education and Qualification Framework, was recently inaugurated by HRD Minister Kapil Sibal and Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda in Gurgaon. Eight districts of the state have been selected for the project and five schools in each district are going to come under it. The project includes four vocational courses such as IT, retail, security and automobile along with basic education and students can avail employment opportunities after pursuing these courses.

(Source: The Times of India)

AICTE allows firms with Rs 100 cr turnover to start their own colleges

Aiming to bridge the gap between technical educational institutes and the expectations of those who employ their graduates, the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has decided to allow industries and businesses with Rs 100 crore turnover to set up technical institutions of their own. Such institutions will be allowed to admit double the number of students allowed at regular institutions, and would be able to start a single branch or theme institute of their choice, according to the AICTE's notification inviting applications to start new institutes for the 2013-14 academic year. "We often hear that students graduating from technical institutes are not industry-ready or employable. Hence, we want to bring in the best practices of industry and want them to participate in the higher and technical education sector," said AICTE chairman S S Mantha. "Accordingly, a private limited or public limited company or industry, with a turnover of Rs 100 crore in the last three years, will now be eligible to apply to start a new institute." Such institutions can teach any technical discipline, including engineering, pharmacy, architecture and town planning, applied arts and crafts, and hotel management and catering technology. They can offer undergraduate or postgraduate or diploma courses.

Separately, AICTE has also eased norms to help students wanting to pursue a masters degree in computer applications (MCA). "Students who have completed their undergraduate education in any discipline can apply for MCA. But we have introduced a new rule in which students who have done their bachelors in any computer related subject like B.Sc IT/BCA/computer science, will get lateral or direct entry to second year of MCA," said Mantha. AICTE is also introducing a dual degree programme in MCA in which students will complete BCA and MCA in five years instead of six.

(source: The Indian Express)

Accreditation to be made mandatory for all varsities and colleges

To enhance the quality of higher education, the UGC has decided to make accreditation mandatory for all universities and colleges coming under its purview. All universities, institutions of higher learning and colleges in the country in future have to obtain accreditation certificates from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore, to get funds from the UGC for various academic and research programmes.

Speaking on the sidelines of the recently held NAAC accreditation award ceremony, UGC Chairman (acting) Ved Prakash said, "An order will be issued soon to make accreditation mandatory for all universities and colleges to come under the UGC. The rule to make accreditation mandatory will be soon vetted by the Human Resource Development Ministry. The accreditation helps an institution to identify its strengths, weaknesses, challenges and opportunities. All educational institutions coming under UGC must obtain accreditation once in three years."

(Source: The Hindu)

AICTE instructs to accept CMAT scores or penalty

Many leading B-Schools have denied accepting the CMAT scores to enrol students even after receiving instructions from the All India Council of Education (AICTE). The latter has given strict instruction to all its affiliated colleges and institutes to accept CMAT scores or to face the consequences. From this year on the exam will be conducted twice a year to offer more flexibility and opportunity

to submit the best score in B-Schools. An AICTE official said that they are not facing problems with Tier II and III B-schools, but with leading B-schools. Most of them prefer to accept CAT, XAT or MAT scores to enrol students rather than this newly initiated test.

In 2011, the Supreme Court after hearing a petition against the exploitation by management institutions had instructed government to come out with a solution as soon as possible, so that the aspirants will not get affected with the tussle between the AICTE and B-schools. The AICTE is planning to blacklist these institutions. It could also mean derecognising these institutions. This means that students graduating from these institutions will not be considered for jobs in government and public undertakings."

(Source: www.cmat.learnhub.com)

225 B-schools, 52 engineering colleges close in two years

In the early part of the last decade, hundreds of new institutes came up and thousands of aspirants queued up to join them. A decade later, the picture is one of stark contrast in technical professional colleges. Since 2011, 225 B-schools and over 50 engineering colleges across India have closed down. Many more colleges have trimmed programmes, branches of engineering or streams in the management course.

Similarly, the Master of Business Administration programme was once the most sought after. Now, for the first time, the overall growth of MBA education is negative in the books of the AICTE. In 2011-12, 146 new B-schools came up and 124 that were already running closed

down. This year so far, 101 management colleges have closed down, while only 82 have started. Similar is the story with the Master of Computer Application (MCA) course—84 colleges stopped offering the programme this year; only 27 started MCA courses. As a result, the AICTE has decided to allow colleges to offer a five-year dual degree programme and also permit graduates of science, BSc (computer science) and BSc (information technology) to jump to the second year of the MCA course. Yet, the small positive growth in the sector is from the engineering colleges where new institutes are coming up faster than closures taking place, largely in Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab and Rajasthan.

S S Mantha, AICTE Chairman, said, "This is a turning phase for the professional education sector. Colleges in remote India and institutes of poor quality are not getting students. And for colleges, there is just one key to attracting students: institutes need to be top-of-the-line colleges. There is no pay-off in running a bad college." "The problem is also linked to the slowdown," said IIM-Ahmedabad Director Samir Barua and added, "The job market has been tight for a couple of years. Earlier, many would give up a job to get an MBA and then re-enter the job market after pumping up their CV. They are hesitant to take such a risk now. The pressure is being felt and applications for MBA are falling. But undergraduate programmes such as engineering will not feel the same tension as everyone wants their first college degree."

(Source: The Times of India)

Ban Ki-moon's new education initiative lays emphasis on teaching and targets

As presidents and prime ministers gather in New York at the UN General Assembly, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has launched an unprecedented special initiative called 'Education First'. This is driven by Ban's own personal experience-education transformed both his own life and the fortunes of his country, Korea. The aim of the initiative is to galvanise new action on education, get children into school, improve the quality of learning and fostering global citizenship. Powerful messages, bold communications, stark statistics and strong arguments have been put forward in support of the scheme.

Certainly, there is much to be welcomed in placing education squarely on the agenda of heads of state. Too often, debates on education become technocratic – a refuge for specialists and experts – and the big picture is lost. Education can and should be the most powerful equalising force in a country, and so the direction of education reforms should be open to inclusive democratic dialogue. But key decisions tend to be taken behind closed doors in ministries of education without public awareness, let alone open consultation. In this context, any high-level renewal of international attention to education is welcomed. But the key challenge is to translate this into sustained changes at national and local levels. Education requires strategic, long-term investments and only delivers returns after many years, so we need to ensure the new initiative moves beyond short-term headline-grabbing into practical, long-term action.

(Source: www.guardian.co.uk)

North Korea announces education reforms, silent on economy

North Korea held the second meeting of its Supreme People's Assembly (SPA) this year on 25 Sept. The meeting, which took place amid widespread attention, produced decisions on educational and organisational matters, but no mention was made of agricultural and economic reforms.

The Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported that the members of the assembly increased the duration of compulsory education from eleven to twelve years across the board. With this change, all young people are to receive free education for a period of 12 years between the ages of five and 17. The system includes one year of pre-school, five years of elementary school, three years of primary middle school, and three years of advanced middle school. Since 1972, the country has had compulsory education for an eleven-year period, including one year of pre-school, four years of elementary school, and six years of middle school. University education lasting five-to-seven years is not included.

The KCNA explained the nature of the change as 'responding to the demands of the times by making decisive improvements and reinforcements to secondary general education and implementing a more stable and developed system of socialist education.' The timeline for the change involves splitting six-year middle schools into primary and advanced levels during 2013 and 2014, and increasing the elementary school education period from four to five years following a two-to-three-year preparation period beginning in 2014 and 2015.

(Source: www.english.hani.co.kr)

NZ education is among the world's best

The Programme for International Student Achievement (PISA) rankings, which compare national performance in reading, science and mathematics, provide a credible and widely accepted "league table". Conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development OECD, they represent an objective measure of our educational success in comparison with that of other so-called developed and developing countries and, by implication, are indicative of the effectiveness of our teaching profession in New Zealand. A close perusal of the 2009 results provides some interesting food for thought.

According to the ranking, New Zealand students rank seventh out of 74. Above them are five Asian countries or regions: Shanghai-China, Singapore, Hong Kong-China, Japan and South Korea. The only western hemisphere country to rank above them is Finland. Below NZ are countries such as Canada, Australia, Britain, the United States, France, Germany and Sweden.

(Source: www.stuff.co.nz)

Deals

04

Edserv Softsystems acquires Alta Vista UAE

Indian education services company Edserv Softsystems said it acquired its UAE-based peer Alta Vista UAE. Financial terms of the deal were not disclosed. Acquisition is in line with Edserv's strategy to expand its overseas online learning business. Alta Vista UAE provides various contents for K-12 and UG / Skill development in the Middle East. Edserv will offer the newly acquired contents through mobile platforms. Edserv is a 4th generation education company established in 2001. The company is listed on the listed in BSE and NSE. In 2011 the company posted a revenue of INR 1.1bn (USD 22.3mn) and a net profit of INR 416.9mn (USD 8.7mn).

(Source: www.equitybulls.com)



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