



UGC GOES, HECI COMES IN HOW GOVERNMENT IS DESTROYING HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NAME OF REFORM

Ministry of Human Resource Development is [proposing to replace](#) the University Grants Commission (UGC) with a Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) in order to bring reform in how higher education is regulated in our country.

Do you know what is the UGC and how it regulates the college / university you study / teach in?

University Grants Commission, is an independent body set up in 1956 to perform the following functions:-

- ❑ Promote and coordinate University education
- ❑ Determine and maintain standards of teaching, examination and research
- ❑ Inquire into financial needs of the University and allocate funds
- ❑ Recommend and advise to the Universities measures to improve education
- ❑ In specific cases, regulate fee charged by Universities
- ❑ Undertake on-spot inquiry to inspect standards of education in a college / university

The Government claims that UGC needs reforms and has therefore come up with the [Draft Higher Education Commission of India \(Repeal of University Grants Commission Act\) Act, 2018](#)

What is HECI?

HECI will also be an independent regulatory body for higher education institutions / universities.

How is it an improvement over UGC?

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has provided no explanation on why UGC itself couldn't be fixed and how HECI is an improvement over UGC

How will HECI regulate the college / university you study / teach in?

- ❑ Promote quality of academic instruction and maintain those standards
- ❑ Lay down standards of teaching, assessment and research
- ❑ Evaluate performance
- ❑ Mentor institutions to improve performance
- ❑ Specify norms and processes for fixing of fee

[See what current students of different universities have to say about Government's move](#)

Sounds the same? So, what is the difference and how will this change directly affect you?

	UGC	HECI	Possible impact of this change
Grants/Funds	UGC to disburse grants to universities	HECI will not be disbursing grants. Now the Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry will disburse grants (HECI will lay down standards for performance based incentivization)	<p>FEE HIKE - Political interference in disbursement of funds.</p> <p>Pushing Universities towards privatization or self-financing models.</p> <p>Making higher education out of reach for students.</p> <p>Universities already starved of funds. Government silent on whether</p>
Scholarships	UGC provides scholarships for research etc.	HECI will have no role to play in this. Now HRD Ministry will disburse scholarships	<p>DELAY- Bureaucratic hassles and corruption</p>
Regulations	Set standards of teaching, examination and research, to be determined in consultation with Universities and other concerned bodies	<p>Set learning outcomes, standards for teaching, assessment and research (no requirement of consultation with Universities)</p> <p>Will lay down standards to grant authorization to Universities to award degrees, lay down standards for grant of autonomy and graded autonomy.</p>	<p>OVER-REGULATION- Too many standards for Universities to comply with.</p> <p>Conditional autonomy. Micro-management of colleges / Universities.</p> <p>Universities not involved in the process of regulation making, regulations are simply imposed on Universities.</p> <p>Government Propaganda pushed in syllabus and research. Interference in how students and teachers interact. Critical thinking will be replaced with tutoring.</p>
Authorization	UGC did not have powers to authorize a University to grant degrees (Universities are given this power by the law establishing those Universities)	<p>For new Universities which are established after HECI is formed, HECI will authorize such Universities before they can grant degrees or diploma</p> <p>For existing Universities, they have to comply with standards set by HECI within 3 years, otherwise their authorization can be revoked.</p>	<p>POLITICAL INTERFERENCE- One positive is that the Draft Act promotes proactive public disclosure and requires each University to upload all documents with respect to its infrastructure, facilities etc. which can be accessed by general public also.</p> <p>But even as HECI preaches autonomy, it is moving towards over-regulation.</p>

	For any University not complying with standards, UGC could stop grants and funds	For those Universities which do not comply with standards, HECI can refuse authorization and can even order closure of institutions while taking measures to ensure that academic interest of students are not affected	Existing institutions will have to comply with cumbersome standards otherwise they can lose their authorizations to award degrees of diplomas. It is not clear how the Commission will prevent students from getting affected by closure of Universities? Political tool, can be misused.
Composition of the Commission	<p>Will have Chairman, Vice-Chairman, secretary and 10 other members.</p> <p>Chairman will not be a officer of the Central / State Government.</p> <p>2 members - officers of Central Government</p> <p>At least 4 teachers of the Universities</p> <p>Remaining - from diverse fields and experience in - Agriculture, commerce, forestry, industry, medicine, legal, engineering or who are academicians or Vice-Chancellors of Universities</p>	<p>Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and 12 members should be scholars and eminent in the field of academics and research.</p> <p>Chairperson can be a Professor with 10 years experience and a scholar or an academician and administrator. Can be a citizen or an overseas citizen of India.</p> <p>No explicit qualifications of Vice-Chairperson are mentioned.</p> <p>The 12 members have the following composition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 from Central Government (Secretary of Higher Education, Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and Science and Technology) - 2 from the regulatory bodies (AICTE and NCTE) - 2 representing the accreditation bodies (it isn't specified which body is this) - 2 serving Vice-Chancellors - 2 serving professors of Universities and - 1 doyen of industry (it isn't clear who a 'doyen' is) 	<p>MORE GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF COMMISSION-</p> <p>Laying down the minimum qualifications for Chairperson is an improvement. But in the composition of the Commission, representation of teachers / Professors has come down (from 4 to 2) and representation of Government has gone up (from 2 to 3). Greater possibilities of political interference in functioning of HECI and less space for voice of teaching fraternity.</p> <p>There will be a doyen of Industry, but representations from agriculture, medicine, forestry, legal etc. have been removed (diluting the multi-stakeholder nature of UGC).</p> <p>There is no representation of women, or members of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe.</p>

[See this quick infographic video explaining the main pitfalls with the Draft Act](#)

Some questions we need to think about?

- ❑ Is HECI really an improvement over UGC? What was wrong with UGC which couldn't have been fixed while retaining the institution?
- ❑ By laying down standards for everything, will HECI really promote autonomy in Universities?
- ❑ Will HECI itself be autonomous or will it be vulnerable to political interference?
- ❑ Will the Ministry of Human Resource Development be capable of handling the function of granting funds to thousands of Universities and disburse scholarships to lakhs of students every year?
- ❑ By setting learning outcomes, will there be greater possibilities of political interference in what gets taught and discussed in Universities?
- ❑ Will political interference in fund disbursal and over-regulation lead to privatization and fee hikes and make higher education even more inaccessible?
- ❑ If the University you study / teach in does not get authorization because it does not comply with new standards laid down by the government, what about your future?

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

UGC does need reforms. As Prof. Sukhdeo Thorat, former UGC Chairperson has [explained in this interview](#), reforms have been proposed in the past, **but is HECI really the reform we need?**

Government wants to know what you think about their proposal to create HECI to replace UGC. Answer this [quick survey](#) and let us know what you think. We only have time till 20th July, 2018 to send in our comments.

Meanwhile, Tweet with hashtag **#SaveOurUniversities** and tag NSUI (@nsui) and HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar (@PrakashJavdekar) with your comments and concerns. You can also send him your comments directly on - reformofugc@gmail.com. You can also mail NSUI on - secretariat@nsui.in. We all need to come together to **#SaveOurUniversities**

