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CURRENT AFFAIRS

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UGC RULES, 2024

THIS ARTICLE COVERS 'DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS' AND THE TOPIC DETAILS OF "UGC RELEASES DRAFT GUIDELINES NAMED UGC RULES, 2024". THIS TOPIC IS RELEVANT IN THE "GOVERNANCE" SECTION OF THE UPSC CSE EXAM.

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has released new draft rules named "UGC (Fitness of Colleges for Receiving Grants) Rules, 2024" seeking feedback from the public. If accepted, the new criteria will supersede the 1975 UGC norms, which encompass all institutions recognised by the commission.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF UGC'S DRAFT GUIDELINES (UGC RULES, 2024)

- **Applicability and Accountability:** The proposed rules will apply to every college affiliated with universities established **under the UGC Act, 1956**. Emphasizing the importance of **Section 2(f)**, the UGC mandates colleges to be listed under this section for accountability and to ensure quality standards. This inclusion opens the door for colleges to attain the **coveted 12(B) status**, making them eligible for funding.
- **Eligibility Criteria for Grants:**
 1. To be eligible for grants, the UGC suggests that universities should either have **accreditation from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** or have a significant percentage of programs **accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA)**.
 2. For colleges offering **less than three programs**, all eligible programs must be accredited. Failing accreditation, colleges should secure a position in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) thrice after five participations or twice after three participations.
- **Compliance Requirements:**
 1. The draft mandates that colleges adhere to government-set fees, refrain from additional charges like capitation fees, and ensure **at least 75% of sanctioned teaching posts are filled**.
 2. The colleges need to follow **reservation policies**. Notably, teachers must be compensated according to UGC, Central, or state government policies.
- **Application for Recognition:**
 1. Colleges seeking recognition under **Section 12B of the UGC Act, 1956**, can apply online through the UGC portal.

2. The affiliating university is responsible for reviewing applications and recommending approval to the UGC **within 60 days**. The UGC reserves the right to withdraw the status if any violation is detected.

- **Future Implications and Public Feedback:**

The proposed guidelines, if approved, have the potential to reshape the landscape of educational funding and quality standards. As the UGC opens the floor for public comments, stakeholders, including educational institutions, policymakers, and the public, have the opportunity to provide valuable insights and perspectives on these significant changes.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT: EVOLUTION OF UGC

- In 1944, the **Sargeant Report** laid the foundation for a national education system in India. Subsequently, the **University Grants Committee** was formed in **1945** to manage universities then.
- Post-independence, the University Education Commission (1948) recommended restructuring, leading to the **establishment of the University Grants Commission (UGC)** in **1953**, officially recognized by the **UGC Act 1956**. Currently, a proposal for the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) is under consideration.
- **Dual Mandate of UGC: Funding and Standards:** The UGC is distinctive for its **dual role** as a **grant provider and coordinator for standards in higher education institutions**. The funding responsibility is coupled with ensuring the quality and coordination of standards in these institutions, making it a pivotal entity in shaping the nation's educational landscape.

NIRF: SHAPING INSTITUTIONAL RANKINGS

The National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF), **initiated in 2015**, outlines a methodology to **rank Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** in India. This government-led effort became **mandatory for all government-run institutions in 2018**. NIRF aims to **provide a comprehensive assessment of HEIs**, promoting healthy competition and enhancing the overall quality of education

CONCLUSION:

In the ever-evolving realm of education, the UGC's proposed guidelines represent a crucial step in aligning funding with quality standards. The emphasis on accreditation, rankings, and compliance reflects a concerted effort to ensure that financial support is directed towards institutions committed to excellence. As the education sector awaits the finalization of these guidelines, it stands at the threshold of a transformative era that could redefine the dynamics of higher education in India.

PRELIMS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1) Consider the following statements:

- 1) The primary role of the National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) in India is Grant distribution
- 2) University Grants Commission (UGC) is responsible for accrediting higher education institutions in India

3) Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) initiative in India put emphasis on Higher Education

How many of the above statements are *Not* correct?

- a) One
- b) Two
- c) Three
- d) None

ANSWER: B

MAINS PRACTICE QUESTIONS

Q1) Explore the role of public-private partnerships in higher education. How can collaboration between government and private entities contribute to the growth and development of educational institutions?

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