

Govt to ease norms for technical institutes from coming session

Better performing schools can increase their class size and offer new courses in keeping with demands

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The Union government will reduce inspection, curb over-regulation and allow a degree of autonomy to technical institutions, including business and IT schools.

The new rules will come into force from the coming academic year and once in place, will allow better performing schools to hire teaching staff from abroad without government approval. It will also allow these schools to increase their class size and offer new courses in keeping with market demands, said Anil Sahasrabudhe, chairman of the All India Council of Technical Education or AICTE, the technical education regulator of the country.

"We have debated the issue for several months and have decided to go ahead. We want to play a facilitator's role for all those institutions who are established and doing well," Sahasrabudhe said.

The move looks to be an extension of the human resource development ministry's initiative to relax regulation in higher education. The government gave significant autonomy to the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) to run almost independently through their board. It has also allowed a



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certain amount of autonomy in academic and administrative matters to universities.

"...AICTE recognizes that autonomy is pivotal to promoting and institutionalizing excellence

said in the rules it has shared with institutions.

Over-regulation has been a constant problem for the Indian education system. It has been long argued by educators that educa-

such technical institutions need to be accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA). They need to have a score of 700 and above in a scale of 1000. Institutions falling in the top 500 ranks globally too will have an added advantage as per the rules.

Harivansh Chaturvedi, director of the Birla Institute of Management and Technology in Greater Noida, welcomed the step and said it was long overdue. "There has long been a demand for reduction of unwanted paperwork, yearly approvals and run-around to the offices of AICTE. We have met the

authority several times... The AICTE move will encourage institutions to perform better and encourage standalone institutions to go for NBA accreditation," said Chaturvedi.

Institutions having a score of over 750 in the NBA accreditation scale can hire—without AICTE permission—20% foreign faculty from top 500 universities in the world on a contract or tenure basis.

"Stand-alone institutions shall be free to admit foreign students on merit, subject to a maximum of twenty percent, over and above of the strength of their approved domestic students. Stand-alone institutions would be free to fix and charge fees from foreign students without any restriction," the rules said, a copy of which has been reviewed by *Mint*.

Such institutions will be allowed to build an incentive structure to attract talented faculty, with the condition that the "incentive structure shall have to be paid from their own revenue sources and not from AICTE or government funds".

Though the institutions will be free to design their incentive structures, they will need to inform the regulator within 30 days of their management board approving the structures. Institutions with a score of less than 700 in the NBA accreditation process will be offered two windows every year to prove that they have improved their quality standing.

OPERATIONAL, ACADEMIC FREEDOM

GOVT to give certain autonomy to top professional schools, similar to the IIMs

FREEDOM in designing and offering courses to students as per market need

IT, management schools can hire foreign faculty without regulatory approval

25% foreign students over and above the sanctioned student strength can be admitted

in higher education and that the regulatory framework needs to facilitate better performing institutions towards excellence in higher education," the regulator

tion regulators in India should be facilitators of quality education rather than inspectors.

However, to be eligible to enjoy the benefit, courses offered by