

UGC's New Equivalence Regulations for Foreign Degrees: A Step Toward Global Education Standards

October 27, 2025 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in Today's Article?

- UGC Regulations Latest News
- Introduction
- Scope and Applicability of the New Regulations
- Key Conditions for Granting Equivalence
- The Online Application and Review Process
- Transition from AIU to UGC
- Impact on Students and Institutions
- Safeguarding Standards and Ensuring Integrity
- Conclusion
- UGC Equivalence Certificate for Foreign Degrees FAQs

UGC Regulations Latest News

- The UGC has announced a new set of regulations to streamline the process of recognising and granting equivalence to academic qualifications obtained from foreign institutions.

Introduction

- In a significant reform aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the **University Grants Commission** (UGC) has notified the “**Recognition and Grant of Equivalence to Qualifications Obtained from Foreign Educational Institutions Regulations, 2025.**”
- These regulations are set to bring much-needed clarity, transparency, and structure to the process of validating foreign academic degrees for Indian students and institutions.
- Effective from April 2025, the regulations replace the role previously held by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) in issuing equivalence certificates. This marks a shift toward a more regulated and standardized system, led by the UGC, to align India’s education framework with global best practices.

Scope and Applicability of the New Regulations

- The new UGC framework covers academic qualifications, degrees, diplomas, and certificates, obtained from foreign institutions, including offshore campuses.
- These certificates will be recognized for:
 - Admission into Indian higher education institutions
 - Pursuing research in India
 - Employment, wherever a UGC-recognized qualification is mandated
- However, professional qualifications governed by statutory councils such as those in medicine, law, pharmacy, nursing, and architecture remain outside the purview of this framework.
- Notably, the regulations also apply to school-level qualifications earned abroad for admission into Indian undergraduate programs, provided the student has completed at least 12 years of school education.

Key Conditions for Granting Equivalence

- The regulations define clear eligibility criteria for recognizing a foreign qualification:
 - The awarding institution must be recognized by accreditation authorities in its home country.
 - Entry-level requirements (like credits, thesis, or internships) should align with comparable programs in India.
 - The program must be pursued in full compliance with the foreign institution’s standards.
- Qualifications earned via distance or online learning will also be eligible an inclusion based on public feedback on the 2023 draft regulations.
- However, degrees acquired through franchise arrangements (where institutions operate under the name of a foreign entity but lack actual affiliation) will not be recognized.

The Online Application and Review Process

- The UGC will operate a dedicated online portal for processing equivalence applications. Here’s how the process will work:

- Applicants submit their documents and relevant details on the portal.
- A standing committee of subject experts evaluates the application within 10 working days.
- The UGC will communicate its decision within 15 days of submission.
- In case of rejection, a review committee will re-examine the application if appealed by the applicant.
- Once granted, the equivalence certificate will be valid for academic and professional purposes across UGC-regulated institutions in India.

Transition from AIU to UGC

- Until now, equivalence certificates were issued by the AIU—a registered body comprising public and private universities.
- While functional, this system lacked a statutory regulatory framework, often leading to procedural inconsistencies and delays.
- With the UGC stepping in, this process will now be more accountable, transparent, and directly aligned with national education reforms.
- UGC Chairperson M. Jagadesh Kumar stated that this move is a critical part of NEP 2020's thrust on internationalisation and academic mobility.

Impact on Students and Institutions

- The updated regulations are expected to benefit multiple stakeholders:
 - **Students returning from abroad:** A streamlined, predictable process to integrate into India's higher education or job market.
 - **Academic Institutions:** A clear and consistent method to assess foreign qualifications during admissions.
 - **Employers:** Standardized documentation to verify the legitimacy and relevance of a candidate's foreign degree.
- Furthermore, by recognizing offshore campus degrees and online learning modes, the UGC is acknowledging the evolving nature of global education.

Safeguarding Standards and Ensuring Integrity

- By emphasizing recognition from legitimate accrediting bodies and rejecting franchise-based arrangements, the UGC aims to uphold the integrity of Indian higher education.
- This move ensures that only reputable foreign institutions' qualifications are accepted, thus protecting students from fraudulent or subpar courses.
- The system also supports a fair mechanism for redressal and review, strengthening trust among stakeholders.

Conclusion

- The 2025 UGC regulations mark a forward-thinking reform in India's education policy landscape.

- By shifting the responsibility of issuing equivalence certificates from AIU to UGC, the government ensures better transparency, consistency, and alignment with international standards.
- With the rise in Indian students studying abroad and the push for India to become an international education hub, this regulatory framework is both timely and transformative.

UGC Equivalence Certificate for Foreign Degrees FAQs

Q1. What is the purpose of UGC's new equivalence certificate regulation?

Ans. To provide a transparent and structured process for recognizing foreign academic qualifications for higher studies and employment in India.

Q2. Are qualifications from online or distance learning programs eligible?

Ans. Yes, the regulations now include distance and online programs, based on feedback to the draft version.

Q3. Who will issue the equivalence certificate under the new system?

Ans. The UGC, through an expert committee and a dedicated online portal.

Q4. Do the new regulations apply to all foreign degrees?

Ans. They apply to most degrees but exclude professional programs like medicine, law, nursing, and architecture.

Q5. What happens if an equivalence application is rejected?

Ans. Applicants can request a review, which will be handled by a separate UGC-constituted review committee.

Source: [IE](#) | [IE](#) | [TH](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/ugcs-new-equivalence-regulations-for-foreign-degrees/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.