

UGC Act, New UGC Rules 2026, Provisions, Download UGC Bill PDF

August 4, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



The University Grants Commission (UGC) notified the Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions Regulations, 2026 to strengthen fairness, inclusion, and equal treatment across Indian universities and colleges. These rules aim to eliminate discrimination on campuses and ensure that students, teachers, and staff from all backgrounds feel safe, respected, and supported. The detailed UGC Act and New UGC Rules 2026 have been discussed below in detail.

Supreme Court Decision on UGC Rules 2026

The Supreme Court has stayed the **UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026**, observing that the regulations raise serious constitutional and social concerns which, if left unaddressed, could have far-reaching and divisive consequences for society, prompting judicial scrutiny of their validity and impact.

What is University Grants Commission?

The University Grants Commission (UGC) is a statutory body responsible for the coordination, funding, and maintenance of standards in higher education in India. It was established to ensure uniform quality and systematic development of universities across the country.

- The idea of a national higher education system originated from the **Sargeant Report, 1944**.
- A **University Grants Committee** was formed in **1945** to supervise Aligarh, Banaras, and Delhi universities.
- By **1947**, its jurisdiction was extended to all existing universities in India.
- The **University Education Commission (1948)** chaired by **Dr. S. Radhakrishnan** recommended restructuring it on the British model.
- In **1952**, the Union Government designated the **University Grants Commission** to oversee grants for higher education institutions.
- The UGC was formally inaugurated in **1953** by **Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**.
- It became a **statutory body in 1956** under the UGC Act, 1956.
- The UGC is headquartered in **New Delhi**.
- It consists of a **Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and ten members** appointed by the Central Government.
- Its main functions include **grant allocation, advising on higher education reforms, and maintaining academic standards**.

University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026 Provisions

- **Comprehensive Coverage of Caste-Based Discrimination:** The regulations clearly define caste-based discrimination to include unfair or biased treatment against **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and Other Backward Classes (OBCs)**. This explicitly extends legal protection to OBCs and addresses a major gap in earlier policy frameworks.
- **Expanded and Inclusive Definition of Discrimination:** Discrimination is broadly defined as any **unfair, biased, or differential treatment**, whether direct or indirect, based on caste, religion, race, gender, place of birth, or disability. It also includes actions that undermine equality in education or violate human dignity.
- **Mandatory Establishment of Equal Opportunity Centres (EOCs):** All higher education institutions are required to establish an **Equal Opportunity Centre (EOC)** to promote equity, social inclusion, and equal access, and to handle complaints related to discrimination on campus.
- **Formation of Equity Committees under EOCs:** Each institution must constitute an **Equity Committee** under the EOC, chaired by the head of the institution, with compulsory representation from **SCs, STs, OBCs, women, and persons with disabilities**, ensuring inclusive and balanced decision-making.
- **Reporting and Compliance Framework:** Equal Opportunity Centres must submit **bi-annual reports**, and institutions are required to file an **annual report on equity-related measures** with the UGC, strengthening transparency and institutional accountability.
- **Institutional Responsibility and Leadership Accountability:** The regulations place a clear obligation on institutions to eliminate discrimination and promote equity, with the **head of the institution held directly responsible** for effective implementation and compliance.

2. **Elimination of Discrimination:** Promote fairness among students, teaching, and non-teaching staff while removing actual and perceived discrimination.
3. **Inclusive and Conducive Campus Environment:** Create a socially harmonious atmosphere that encourages healthy academic interaction among students from diverse social backgrounds.
4. **Awareness and Sensitisation:** Sensitise students, faculty, and staff on issues of social inclusion, equity, and non-discrimination.
5. **Support and Protection for Disadvantaged Groups:** Provide assistance to individuals or groups from disadvantaged sections and protect complainants from retaliation.
6. **Information Dissemination and Reporting Mechanisms:** Disseminate information on welfare schemes and maintain an online portal for reporting incidents of discrimination.
7. **Institutional Coordination and Inclusive Processes:** Develop inclusive admission procedures and coordinate with government and other agencies to mobilise academic and financial support for disadvantaged students.

Equity Committee Composition

Every Higher Education Institution must constitute an Equity Committee under the Equal Opportunity Centre. The committee examines complaints, recommends action, and ensures compliance with equity norms.

1. The Head of the Institution shall be the ex-officio Chairperson
2. Three Professors/Senior Faculty Members of the HEI, as Members
3. One Staff Member, other than a teacher, of the HEI, as a Member
4. Two representatives from civil society having relevant experience, as Members
5. Two student representatives, to be nominated based on academic merit/excellence in sports/performance in co-curricular activities, as Special Invitees.
6. The Coordinator of the Equal Opportunity Centre shall act as the ex-officio Member Secretary

Representation Requirement

The committee must ensure adequate representation of:

- Scheduled Castes (SC)
- Scheduled Tribes (ST)
- Other Backward Classes (OBC)
- Women
- Persons with Disabilities

Legal Provisions Against Caste Discrimination

India has a strong constitutional and legal framework to prevent caste-based discrimination and ensure equality, dignity, and social justice. These provisions protect historically disadvantaged communities, especially Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), from exclusion and abuse.

- **Article 14 (Right to Equality):** Guarantees equality before law and equal protection of laws to all persons, prohibiting arbitrary discrimination.
- **Article 15 (Prohibition of Discrimination):** Prohibits discrimination by the State on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth and allows affirmative action for socially and educationally backward classes.
- **Article 16 (Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment):** Ensures equal opportunity in public employment and permits reservation for SCs, STs, and OBCs.
- **Article 17 (Abolition of Untouchability):** Abolishes untouchability in all forms and declares its practice a punishable offence.
- **Article 46 (Directive Principle of State Policy):** Directs the State to promote the educational and economic interests of SCs, STs, and other weaker sections and protect them from social injustice and exploitation.
- **Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955:** Enforces Article 17 by prescribing penalties for practising untouchability and denying civil rights.
- **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:** Provides stringent punishment for offences against SCs and STs and aims to prevent social, economic, and physical exploitation.
- **Right to Education Act, 2009:** Promotes inclusive and non-discriminatory access to elementary education for all children.
- **University Grants Commission Regulations:** Mandate higher education institutions to prevent caste-based discrimination and establish grievance redressal and equity mechanisms.
- **Judicial Safeguards:** Indian courts have consistently upheld constitutional values of equality and dignity and expanded protections through progressive interpretations.

Impact of Caste-Based Discrimination on Access to Education

- **Erosion of Constitutional Values:** Caste discrimination undermines **equality, dignity, and fraternity**, weakening trust in affirmative action and democratic institutions.
- **Restricted Access to Quality Education:** Prejudice and poor schooling outcomes reduce the representation of SC/ST/OBC students in elite institutions, limiting social mobility.
- **Higher Dropout Rates:** Combined academic, financial, and psychological pressures result in disproportionately higher dropout rates among marginalised communities.
- **Psychological Exclusion:** Stigma associated with “reserved category” status causes anxiety, low self-esteem, and adverse academic outcomes.
- **Weak Grievance Redressal:** SC/ST Cells in many institutions lack autonomy and effective enforcement powers, often prioritising institutional reputation.
- **Campus Segregation:** The **Thorat Committee (2007)** highlighted segregation in hostels, dining spaces, and sports facilities, leading to isolation of marginalised students.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/ugc-rule-2026/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.