

**GUIDELINES FOR
AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES
DURING THE ELEVENTH PLAN PERIOD
(2007-2012)**



**UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION
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UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

XI Plan Guidelines

Scheme of Autonomous College

1. Introduction

Highlighting the importance of autonomous colleges, the UGC document on the XI Plan profile of higher education in India clearly states that: “The only safe and better way to improve the quality of undergraduate education is to link most of the colleges from the affiliating structure. Colleges with academic and operative freedom are doing better and have more credibility. The financial support to such colleges boosts the concept of autonomy.” It is proposed to increase the number of autonomous colleges to spread the culture of autonomy, and the target is to make 10 per cent of eligible colleges autonomous by the end of the XI Plan period.

Need for Autonomy

The affiliating system of colleges was originally designed when their number in a university was small. The university could then effectively oversee the working of the colleges, act as an examining body and award degrees on their behalf. The system has now become unwieldy and it is becoming increasingly difficult for a university to attend to the varied needs of individual colleges. The colleges do not have the freedom to modernize their curricula or make them locally relevant. The regulations of the university and its common system, governing all colleges alike, irrespective of their characteristic strengths, weaknesses and locations, have affected the academic development of individual colleges. Colleges that have the potential for offering programmes of a higher standard do not have the freedom to offer them. The 1964-66 Education Commission pointed out that the exercise of academic freedom by teachers is a crucial requirement for development of the intellectual climate of our country. Unless such a climate prevails, it is difficult to achieve excellence in our higher education system. With students, teachers and management being co-partners in raising the quality of higher education, it is imperative that they share a major responsibility. Hence, the Education Commission (1964-66) recommended college autonomy, which, in essence, is the instrument for promoting academic excellence.

2. Objectives

- a. **The National Policy on Education (1986-92) formulated the following objectives for autonomous colleges. An autonomous college will have the freedom to:**
 - determine and prescribe its own courses of study and syllabi, and restructure and redesign the courses to suit local needs; and

- prescribe rules for admission in consonance with the reservation policy of the state government;
- Evolve methods of assessment of students' performance, the conduct of examinations and notification of results;
- Use modern tools of educational technology to achieve higher standards and greater creativity; and
- Promote healthy practices such as community service, extension activities, projects for the benefit of the society at large, neighborhood programmes, etc.

b. Relationship with the parent university, the state government and other educational institutions:

Autonomous colleges are free to make use of the expertise of university departments and other institutions to frame their curricula, devise methods of teaching, examination and evaluation. They can recruit their teachers according to the existing procedures (for private and government colleges).

The parent university will accept the methodologies of teaching, examination, evaluation and the course curriculum of its autonomous colleges. It will also help the colleges to develop their academic programmes, improve the faculty and to provide necessary guidance by participating in the deliberations of the different bodies of the colleges.

The role of the parent university will be:

- To bring more autonomous colleges under its fold;
- To promote academic freedom in autonomous colleges by encouraging introduction of innovative academic programmes;
- To facilitate new courses of study, subject to the required minimum number of hours of instruction, content and standards;
- To permit them to issue their own provisional, migration and other certificates;
- To do everything possible to foster the spirit of autonomy;
- To ensure that degrees/diplomas/certificates issued indicate the name of the college;
- To depute various nominees of the university to serve in various committees of the autonomous colleges and get the feedback on their functioning; and
- To create separate wings wherever necessary to facilitate the smooth working of the autonomous colleges.

The state government will assist the autonomous colleges by:

- Avoiding, as far as possible, transfer of teachers, especially in colleges where academic innovation and reforms are in progress, except for need-based transfers;
- Conveying its concurrence for the extension of autonomy of any college to the Commission within the stipulated time of 90 days after receipt of the review committee report, failing which it will be construed that the state government has no objection to the college continuing to be autonomous; and
- Deputing nominees on time to the governing body of government colleges and other bodies wherever their nominees are to be included.
- All three stake holders, the parent University, the State Govt. and UGC have to play a very harmonious and pro active role as facilitators in letter and spirits.

c. Conferring autonomous status:

Autonomy granted to the Institution is Institutional and covers all the courses at U.G., P.G., Diploma, M.Phil. Level, which are being run by the Institution at the time of conferment of autonomous status. Also all courses introduced by the Institution after the conferment of autonomous status shall automatically come under the purview of autonomy. Partial autonomy cannot be given to any Institution.

Autonomous status covers certificate, diploma, undergraduate, postgraduate and M. Phil. programmes offered in colleges that are autonomous and those seeking autonomous status. The parent university will confer the status of autonomy upon a college that is permanently affiliated, with the concurrence of the state government and the University Grants Commission. Once the autonomy is granted, the University shall accept the students of autonomous college for award of such degrees as are recommended by the autonomous college. The Act and Statutes of the universities ought to be amended to provide for the grant of autonomy to affiliated colleges. Before granting autonomy, the university will ensure that the management structure of the applicant college is adequately participatory and provides ample opportunities for academicians to make a creative contribution.

3.Target Group and Eligibility Target Group:

All Colleges under Section 2(f), aided, unaided, partially aided and self-financing which are or are not covered under 12(B) of the UGC Act are eligible to apply for autonomous status. This includes Engineering Colleges also.

CRITERIA FOR IDENTIFICATION OF INSTITUTIONS FOR GRANT OF AUTONOMY

- a. Academic reputation and previous performance in university examinations and its academic/co-curricular/extension activities in the past.
- b. Academic/extension achievements of the faculty.
- c. Quality and merit in the selection of students and teachers, subject to statutory requirements in this regard.
- d. Adequacy of infrastructure, for example, library, equipment, accommodation for academic activities, etc.
- e. Quality of institutional management. (f) Financial resources provided by the management/state government for the development of the institution.
- f. Responsiveness of administrative structure. (h) Motivation and involvement of faculty in the promotion of innovative reforms.
- g. Self – Financing colleges can also apply for autonomy after they have completed minimum 10 years of existence. However, conferment of autonomy will not entitle them to receive autonomy grant. They will have to follow the same procedure as applicable to other colleges.
- h. Colleges that provide professional courses in Education, Engineering Technology Management and Physical Education, etc. will also be eligible to receive grants from the Commission. The sanction of such grants will depend on the size and stage of development of these colleges after attaining autonomous status.

4. Preparation prior to applying for autonomy:

Preparing a College for Autonomy:

There are several areas where proper preparation is necessary if college autonomy is to be implemented successfully. These are: faculty preparation, departmental preparation, institutional preparation, and preparation of students and the local community. Such multi-pronged preparation should be completed well before autonomy is sought and conferred upon a college so that no part of the college community is found unprepared for the new responsibility which it is called upon to shoulder.

Faculty Preparation:

It is essential to get the staff of the college involved in the thinking and planning processes from the very beginning. Seminars, workshops and consultations may be organised to make the staff familiar with the concept, objectives and rationale of autonomy. (This will help them have a sense of participation in decision making and motivate them to get involved in the entire exercise). This could form part of the academic calendar of the college.

Departmental Preparation :

An important responsibility of the department is that of designing suitable courses in the major and related subjects, introducing new courses of study, renaming obsolete courses by changing their content, updating existing courses to match the current state-of-the-art in each discipline, and preparing course materials and human resources.

These will be done in the light of the general objectives of autonomy and the specific objectives of the education institutions.

Common programmes to be adopted are:

- a. Semester pattern of study
- b. Continuous internal assessment
- c. Credit/grading system
- d. Student feedback
- e. Self-appraisal by teachers

Institutional Preparation:

Since an autonomous college is called upon to perform many of the functions that the university has hitherto performed, it must study the academic, administrative/management and financial implications of such a changeover and prepare itself to discharge its new functions efficiently.

5. Procedure for applying:

The UGC will invite proposals from eligible colleges seeking autonomous status, once in an academic year in September/October. The individual university can also send circulars asking the colleges to apply.

6. Procedure for approval by the UGC:

The approval for the grant of autonomous status will be done in two stages. At stage I a screening committee will be constituted by the UGC. The composition of the committee will be as follows:

- a. Three to five experts nominated by the UGC (one of the experts will be nominated as convener).
- b. Principal Secretary of Higher Education of the respective State or his/her nominee.
- c. Chairman, State Council for Higher Education or his/her nominee (wherever constituted).

- d. Commissioner/Director of Collegiate Education or his/her nominee.
- e. Vice-Chancellor or his/her nominee.
- f. Joint Secretary, UGC In-charge of Autonomous Colleges -Member Secretary.

At stage II short-listed colleges will be visited by another expert committee constituted by the UGC. This committee will submit its report with its findings and recommendations to the UGC. Thereafter, the UGC may send its recommendation to the university concerned for conferment of autonomy.

The university will notify the colleges concerned. Autonomy will be conferred initially for a period of six years.

7. Nature of Assistance:

PATTERN OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AND OTHER ENABLING PROVISIONS

The Commission will provide assistance under this scheme to autonomous colleges to meet their additional and special needs.

- Guest/visiting faculty
- Orientation and re-training of teachers.
- Re-designing courses and development of teaching/learning material
- Workshop and seminars
- Examination reforms
- Office equipment, teaching aids and laboratory equipment
- Furniture for office, classrooms, library and laboratories
- Library equipment, books/journals
- Expenditure on meetings of the governing body and committees
- Honorarium to Controller of Examinations (full-time) not exceeding Rs. 8000/- p.m.
- Accreditation (NAAC) fee
- Renovation and repairs not leading to construction of a new building
- Extension Activities

Following shall be the guiding principles for utilization of autonomy grant.

- Autonomy grant cannot be used for creation of posts, payment of salary to any of the college staff, payment of honorarium (except clause [x] above) to existing staff, to meet normal college contingency requirement or to subsidies.
- Examination fee should be fixed so that income from fee can meet the expenditure on examinations and other staff appointed in examination cell.
- The ceiling of normal assistance will be as follows:

S. No.	Nature Of Institution	Amount of Grant in Rs.
a.	Only Under Graduate:	
	1. Arts/Science/Commerce – one faculty only	9,00,000/-
	2. Arts/science/commerce More than one faculty:	15,00,000/-
b.	Both Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels:	
	1.Single faculty	10,00,000/-
	2.Multi-faculty	20,00,000/-

8. Governance of an Autonomous College:

The college will have the following committees to ensure proper management of academic, financial and general administrative affairs.

The following are statutory bodies:

- Governing Body
- Academic Council
- Board of Studies
- Finance Committee

(*The Governing Body is different from Trust Board/Board of Management/ Executive Committee/Management Committee).

The composition and functions of the above committees are given in **Annexure- III** to VII. The college will, in addition, have other non statutory committees such as the Planning and Evaluation Committee, Grievance Appeal Committee, Examination Committee, Admission Committee, Library Committee, Student Welfare Committee, Extra-Curricular Activities Committee and Academic Audit Committee.

Governing Body:

The constitution of this body will be according to the structure given in **Annexure- III**.

Academic Council:

The Academic Council will be solely responsible for all academic matters, such as, framing of academic policy, approval of courses, regulations and syllabi, etc. The Council will involve faculty at all levels and also experts from outside, including representatives of the university and the government. The decisions taken by the Academic Council will not be subject to any further ratification by the Academic Council or other statutory bodies of the university. The composition and functions of the Academic Council are given in **Annexure IV**.

Board of Studies:

The Board of Studies is the basic constituent of the academic system of an autonomous college. Its functions will include framing the syllabi for various courses, reviewing and updating syllabi from time to time, introducing new courses of study, determining details of continuous assessment, recommending panels of examiners under the semester system, etc. The composition and functions of the Board of Studies are given in **Annexure V**.

Finance Committee:

The Finance Committee will advise the Governing Body on financial matters and shall meet at least twice a year. The constitution and functions of the Finance Committee are given in **Annexure**.

9. Procedure for Monitoring/Evaluation and release of grant:

- ❖ The right of autonomy may not be conferred once and for all. It has to be continuously earned by the college. The status of autonomy will be granted initially for a period of six years.
- ❖ Each autonomous college will, with the approval of its Academic Council, formulate an appropriate mechanism to evaluate its academic performance, improvement of standards, and assess the extent and degree of success in the utilisation of autonomy. Self-evaluation will be made annually. In addition, there will be two external evaluations, the first after four years and the second after six years. The latter will determine the continuance or revocation of autonomous status.

A Joint Expert Committee consisting of two representatives each from the affiliating University and the concerned State Government and three representatives from the UGC out of which, one shall be the Convener of the Committee to examine the proposal of the colleges for extension of autonomous status after completion of first and subsequent tenures of autonomy.

To avoid hardship to existing autonomous colleges, provision of 80% of the admissible grant will be released to such autonomous colleges by the Regional

Offices as an “On Account” grant, in case the review of the autonomous colleges is delayed beyond the expiry of tenure of autonomy.

Also in the event of delay in the review report and renewal of autonomy, the college will continue to enjoy autonomy with the entitlements of benefits, fiscal or otherwise so conceived under the scheme, unless the government or parent university by a special order withholds such continuation.

In the event of the availability of evidence confirming decline in standards in an autonomous college, it shall be open to the UGC and the university to revoke the autonomous status of that college after careful scrutiny, and mutual consultation and due notification to the management. In such cases the students already admitted under the autonomous scheme would be allowed to complete the course under autonomous status. An autonomous college should get themselves accredited by the NAAC within a period of two years from the date of conferment/extension of autonomous status.

Procedure for release of Autonomy Grant by UGC:

Following procedure is laid down for release of autonomy grant to Autonomous Colleges enjoying autonomy in the tenure period.

1. Autonomous College should hold meeting of Finance Committee in the month of April 1st week to take stock of the utilization of autonomy grant of previous year and to discuss the budget of for the autonomy grant of coming year. A detailed Blue Print of budget should be duly approved by the Finance Committee in this meeting.
2. Only those items should be included, which are admissible as per clause 7 of these guidelines. No expenditure other than these items shall be accepted for utilization.
3. The budget so prepared and approved by the Finance Committee will be submitted to the Governing Body for final approval, before 25th of April every year.
4. The budget duly approved by the Finance Committee and the Governing Body should be submitted to the concerned Regional Office of the UGC on or before 30th April. In case the meeting of the Governing Body is not held before 30th April due to unavoidable reasons, the Principal in the capacity of Member Secretary of Governing Body, may submit the budget to the concerned Regional Office of the UGC under approval of the Chairman of the Governing Body.

General matters starting of new courses:

An autonomous college is free to start diploma (undergraduate and postgraduate) or certificate courses without the prior approval of the university. Diplomas and certificates shall be issued under the seal of the college.

An autonomous college is free to start a new degree or postgraduate course with the approval of the Academic Council of the college. Such courses shall fulfill the minimum standards prescribed by the university/UGC in terms of number of hours, curricular content and standards, and the university shall be duly informed of such courses.

An autonomous college may rename an existing course after restructuring/redesigning it with the approval of the college Academic Council as per UGC norms. The university should be duly informed of such proceedings so that it may award new degrees in place of the old.

The university should have the right to review all new courses of an autonomous college. Where there is evidence of decline in standards or quality, the university may, after careful scrutiny, and in consultation with the UGC, either help modify them, wherever possible, or cancel such courses.

Award of Degrees through Parent University

The parent university will award degrees to the students evaluated and recommended by autonomous colleges. The degree certificates will be in a common format devised by the university. The name of the college will be mentioned in the degree certificate, if so desired. Autonomous colleges that have completed three terms can confer the degree under their title with the seal of the university.

10. Special features of an autonomous college:

Starting of New Courses

An autonomous college is free to start diploma (undergraduate and postgraduate) or certificate courses without the prior approval of the university. Diplomas and certificates shall be issued under the seal of the college.

An autonomous college is free to start a new degree or postgraduate course with the approval of the Academic Council of the college. Such courses shall fulfill the minimum standards prescribed by the university/UGC in terms of number of hours, curricular content and standards, and the university shall be duly informed of such courses.

An autonomous college may rename the existing course after restructuring/redesigning it with the approval of the college Academic Council as per UGC norms. **The new nomenclature should be as specified by UGC under section 22 of UGC Act.** The university should be duly informed of such proceedings so that it may award new degrees in place of the old.

The university should have the right to review all new courses of an autonomous college. Where there is evidence of decline in standards or quality, the university

may, after careful scrutiny, and in consultation with the UGC, either help modify them, wherever possible, or cancel such courses.

Procedure to introduce a new course by autonomous college:

Step 1

The concerned department of the college should conceive the idea of introducing new course and it should be well discussed in the Board of Studies of that subject. The Board of Studies will formulate the idea into a proposal with all necessary details such as objectives, eligibility, course content and fees structure. Such proposal will be forwarded to the Academic Council. The proposal will be in the shape of an ordinance.

Step 2

The Academic Council will discuss such proposal in its meeting and shall approve the proposal. In case the Council finds the proposal appropriate. The Academic Council shall have the right to send back the proposal to the Board of Studies for revision/modification or may reject the proposal giving suitable reasons. The proposal can be resubmitted to the Academic Council for reconsideration after the necessary modifications are made.

Step 3

The proposals approved by the Academic Council will ultimately be submitted to the Governing Body of the college for final approval and for permission to execute the proposal.

Step 4

Autonomous college shall send all proposal approved by the Governing Body of the college to the University for information.

University may ask clarification regarding the issues in the proposal from the college. The college is bound to give such clarification with an understanding that the university shall accept the students for award of degree under such newly proposed courses.

11. Meetings of the Statutory Bodies:

Introduction of a new course should be executed after due preparation and large scale participatory discussions.

- Preparation for a course to be introduced in the next academic session should start in the month of October of the preceding session with meetings of Board of Studies.

- Academic Council meeting should be held twice, once in the month of January to discuss proposals for the next academic session and again in the month of August to monitor status of newly introduced courses. Academic Council shall propose ways and means to maintain quality norms.
- Governing Body meetings should follow the meetings of Academic Council. In the month of August the Governing Body should pass the budget of the autonomous fund including the autonomy grant received from UGC.
- Finance committee should meet at least twice in a financial year. The meetings can be organized in the month of April and September of every year. The meeting in the month of April shall be the budget meeting for autonomy grant and in September in will be another budget meeting for autonomous fund created by the college through examination and other relevant fees.

12. Examination Cell & System

Autonomous College shall have an Examination Cell headed by Controller of Examination who will be a permanent faculty nominated by the Principal on the basis of potential of the person. The Principal of the college shall be the Chief Controller, Examinations.

The Controller of Examination will create his/her own team with the approval of the Principal of the College. The team shall consist of Deputy Controllers/Assistant Controllers, the number of persons to be nominated shall depend on the quantum of work in the Examination Cell. Teachers working in the college shall be nominated in the Examination Cell for a tenure of 3 years. They will continue doing their teaching work as scheduled by the college.

There shall be a team of Office Assistants, Computer Programmers, Data Entry Operators and other helpers in the Autonomous Cell.

Examination Cell will have appropriate printing unit also for printing of question papers and other relevant confidential material.

All part-time/full time functionaries of the Examination Cell shall be paid honorarium for the extra work being done by them apart from their usual work. Such honoraria shall be proposed by the Finance Committee and shall be approved by the Governing Body.

Governing Body may also approve appointment of full time office staff in the examination cell on contractual basis on the recommendation of Finance Committee. The salary of such staff will also be decided by the same mechanism.

There shall be continuous, comprehensive evaluation of students through internal and external examination. At least 2 internal examinations per semester and 1 semester ending examination should be conducted.

In order to motivate students to be free of rote learning, various mechanisms of internal evaluation should be adopted such as group discussion, paper reading, home assignments and viva voce.

Remuneration for examination work should be decided by the finance committee and should be approved by the Governing Body. In no case it should be less than that paid by the parent university.

13. Award of Degrees:

Through Parent University

- The parent university will award degrees to the students evaluated and recommended by autonomous colleges. The degree certificates will be in a common format devised by the university. The name of the college will be mentioned in the degree certificate, if so desired.

14. Few General issues:

- All recruitments of teaching staff will be made by the Governing Body/state government in accordance with the policies laid down by the UGC and state government.
- Universities shall consider both internal and external assessment of students in autonomous colleges for admitting them to higher-level courses.
- Organisation of special need-based short-term courses under the colleges department of continuing education may be an important activity of an autonomous college. Such courses ought to benefit the students of the college besides outsiders who may enroll for them.
- The time spent by teachers on projects and extension work shall be counted for reckoning their workload as prescribed by the Commission.
- An autonomous college should prepare a calendar for meetings of various bodies to ensure that the implementation of the recommendations made by them is not unduly delayed for reasons of non-convening of such meetings.
- A wide variety of courses may be evolved in modules so that students may opt for them according to their convenience. Such courses may help them acquire additional credits.
- Teacher evaluation in autonomous colleges may include periodical self-evaluation, institutional assessment of teacher performance, student feedback, research appraisal and other suitable forms of teacher appraisal.
- Autonomous colleges in a given region may form a consortium for mutual cooperation/collaboration in chosen areas such as management skills,

national services, entrance examinations, services projects, inter-collegiate/intra-collegiate sharing of expertise and human resources for teaching programmes.

- Credit system and credit transfer among colleges in general and autonomous college in particular may be suitably adopted.
- Autonomous colleges to be involved in recurrent academic innovative activities which are carefully designed keeping the interest of the students and quality of education at non compromising end.
- Autonomous colleges due to their permanent affiliation with the university need not apply for affiliation for new subjects at the time of introduction. Any new subject to be started by an autonomous college shall be covered under autonomous scheme.
- The Principal of the government autonomous college will be empowered to make purchases from UGC fund without prior approval/permission of the State Government.
- Autonomous college need not pay affiliation fees to the Parent University every year. One time fees can be paid at the time of conformant of autonomous status. Such fees can be decided by the Executive Council of the Parent University.
- The UGC will provide VSAT to each autonomous college for Internet connectivity.
- Autonomous colleges are free to institute medals for meritorious students. The value and other terms of reference may be decided with the approval of appropriate bodies in the college.