

Why UGC will issue equivalence certificates for foreign degrees

With some exceptions, the equivalence certificates will be valid for all academic institutions under the UGC, for higher education and research, and for employment in cases where a qualification recognised by the UGC is essential.

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The University Grants Commission (Recognition and Grant of Equivalence to Qualifications Obtained from Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations 2025 were notified on Friday.

These [regulations specify the procedure for obtaining equivalence certificates](#), which are documents certifying that a qualification obtained in an educational institution abroad (like a degree or diploma) is equivalent to a comparable qualification in India.

The UGC made a draft of these regulations public in 2023. The regulations have now been notified after considering the feedback.

What do these regulations apply to?

With some exceptions, the equivalence certificates will be valid for all academic institutions under the UGC, for higher education and research, and for employment in cases where a qualification recognised by the UGC is essential.

Disciplines like medicine, pharmacy, nursing, law, and architecture, and “other qualifications regulated by the norms of respective Statutory Councils in India” will not be covered under the regulations.

They will, however, be applicable for qualifications obtained via distance or online learning modes, contrary to what the draft regulations said. This change was made due to feedback received, UGC chairman M Jagadesh Kumar told [The Indian Express](#).

Equivalence certificates will not be required for qualifications obtained from foreign institutions that have collaborations with Indian institutions under UGC regulations for twinning/joint/dual degree programmes, or for setting up foreign institutions in India.

What are the conditions for granting equivalence?

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A qualification — a certificate, diploma, or degree — from a foreign institution can be recognised for grant of an equivalence certificate if:

- * It was awarded by a foreign institution that is recognised under the laws in its home country;
- * The entry-level requirements (like minimum credit requirements, or requirements of a thesis or internship) for admission to the programme are similar to a programme of that sort offered in India; and
- * If the student has pursued the programme as per the norms and standards specified by the foreign institution.

Qualifications obtained from off-shore campuses of foreign institutions can also be granted an equivalence certificate, provided that the academic programme complies with requirements in the country where the campus is located and in the country of origin of the institution.

The regulations will apply to school qualifications obtained by a student from abroad, in case they want to apply for admission to an undergraduate programme in India. For this, the student needs to have completed at least 12 years of school education.

What is the process for granting equivalence?

The UGC will maintain an online portal to receive applications for equivalence certificates. Applications will be considered by a standing committee with experts in the field of education. The committee will recommend that an application be accepted or rejected within 10 working days.

The UGC will communicate its decision to the applicant within 15 days of receiving the application. Equivalence certificates will be made available on the portal. In case of rejection, the applicant can apply for a review, which will be considered by a committee constituted by the UGC.

How has equivalence been determined thus far?

Instead of the UGC, at the moment, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) issues equivalence certificates for degrees from foreign universities, for higher education and employment in India (except for professional qualifications in disciplines like medicine, pharmacy, law, nursing, and architecture).

The AIU is a registered society with several universities, public and private, as its members. It also issues equivalence certificates for students who completed school examinations from foreign boards.

UGC chairman Kumar said that the AIU's system will be replaced by the UGC's, adding that this is the first time that the UGC has notified a dedicated regulatory framework for recognising foreign qualifications.

Why have the regulations been issued?

"This move is in tune with the thrust of National Education Policy 2020 on the internationalisation of higher education, and the need to provide clarity and consistency in recognition. These regulations aim to offer students and institutions a structured, transparent, and fair system aligned with global best practices," Kumar said.

He said that the regulations are "intended to formalise and streamline the qualification recognition process under a statutory framework," adding that they are "designed to enhance transparency, consistency, and accessibility in recognising foreign qualifications by laying down clear, publicly notified criteria".

The regulations too refer to the "internationalisation of the Indian education system" in the wake of the NEP 2020. "If Indian institutions are to attract international students, we must ensure fair recognition of degrees earned abroad," Kumar said.

He added: "Many students return with international qualifications to seamlessly integrate into India's higher education system or workforce. Such students need a structured procedure to evaluate foreign credentials without unpredictable delays and procedural ambiguity."