

UGC Guidelines for Pursuing Two Academic Programmes Simultaneously

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Short Communication

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued a partial modification to its guidelines for pursuing two academic programmes simultaneously. It is originally introduced in 2022 in alignment with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The revised guidelines were approved by the UGC in its 589th meeting held on 3 April 2025 and communicated to Higher Education Institutions on 5 June 2025. The guidelines provide greater flexibility for students seeking to pursue multiple areas of learning. A student may pursue two full-time academic programmes in physical mode, provided that the class timings do not overlap. Alternatively, a student may pursue one full-time physical programme along with another programme through Open and Distance Learning (ODL)/Online mode, or may pursue up to two ODL/Online programmes simultaneously. ODL/Online programmes must be offered by Higher Education Institutions recognised by the UGC, the relevant statutory council or the Government of India. An important modification introduced in 2025 concerns the validity of programmes pursued before the issuance of these guidelines. Such programmes may be treated as valid when they were undertaken in accordance with the applicable UGC First Degree and Master Degree Regulations, the statutes or ordinances of the concerned university or universities, and the norms of the relevant statutory or professional councils and the Distance Education Council/Distance Education Bureau, wherever applicable.

The provision is intended to support the learner-centred, flexible and multidisciplinary vision of NEP 2020. It recognises that students may have diverse academic interests and encourages combinations of disciplines across the sciences, social sciences, arts, humanities, languages, professional and vocational areas. The guidelines also seek to promote holistic development, intellectual curiosity, creativity, ethical values and wider opportunities for meaningful educational and professional growth. It is vital to note that these guidelines apply to academic programmes other than the PhD programmes. The Universities and affiliated institutions are expected to establish appropriate mechanisms through their statutory bodies for implementing the provisions for the welfare of the students. Hence, the modification of regulations for studying academic programmes simultaneously by UGC represents a significant step towards greater academic flexibility and multidisciplinary learning methods and approach in Indian higher education. Indeed, it also provides students with broader opportunities to combine academic interests while meeting the regulatory requirements of the relevant institutions and statutory authorities.

References

- [1] "Guidelines for Pursuing Two Academic Programmes Simultaneously." UGC April 2025. https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/6493421_UGC-Guidelines-pursuing-two-academic-programmes-simultaneously.pdf .

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