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Single body to replace UGC, AICTE ?

The University Grants Commission (UGC) and All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE) are soon going to be a thing of the past with the government planning to replace them with a single higher education regulator.



The proposed Higher Education Empowerment Regulation Agency (HEERA) is aimed at eliminating overlaps in jurisdiction and remove irrelevant regulatory provisions. The human resource development ministry is working with the Niti Aayog on a plan to bring technical as well as non-technical institutions under the same umbrella.

According to sources, a detailed blueprint of the proposed regulator and its legislation is being worked upon. "Both Niti and HRD ministry officials are working on the proposal. It was felt that multiple regulatory bodies led to excessive and restrictive regulation and hence contributed to lack of institutional autonomy," a source said.

Impact of GST on higher educational institutes decoded



The importance of education cannot be undermined in a country like India, where nearly half of its billion plus population is below the age of 25. In the years to come, the country will need to cater to a huge demand for jobs, a challenging prospect in an environment which could be dominated by robotics and artificial intelligence.

Helping higher educational institutions can impart cutting edge knowledge, at times in collaboration with foreign institutions, is the need of the hour. Even as private higher educational institutions are emerging, these are forced to continue to operate under the umbrella of 'not-for-profit'.

The GST Council's decision to continue to exempt services provided by educational institutions to its students is a step in the right direction. However, services to higher educational institutions are not GST free. Higher educational institutions will have to pay GST when availing of a wide range of services.

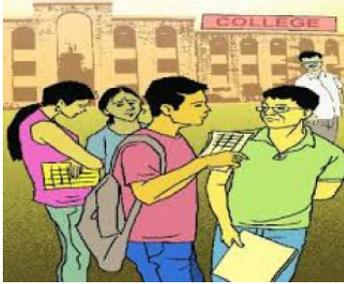
Earlier, a vast majority of services provided to educational institutions were classified as 'business auxiliary services' and procurement of such services did not attract service tax. Then, the category of services supplied to educational institutions which would not attract service tax were restricted to four.

Bipin Sapra, indirect tax partner at EY India, explains: "The first step to distinguish between services provided to educational institutions v/s higher educational institutions, was taken in March, much before the GST bills were passed in the Parliament". Services in the nature of transportation, catering, housekeeping, admissions or examination conduct if provided to higher educational institutions were subject to service tax. "Unfortunately, the GST Council, has continued with this. Given the importance of higher education, in a country like ours, there is an urgent need to revisit this," says Sapra.

Services provided to higher educational institutions are taxable. While services provided by an educational institution are out of the GST ambit, unfortunately the same is not the case with services provided to an educational institution.

Many institutes have tied up with foreign counterparts for various courses, such as Bennett University's tie up with Georgia Tech or with Johnson Cornell. BML Munjal has a tie up with Imperial College London. SPJIMR partners with ESB Business School of Reutlingen University, Germany.

"Lower tax costs would enable the educational institutions, who as non-profits earn small margins, to upgrade their infrastructure and also reduce costs for students," explains Sapra. Higher educational institutions in India have the potential to attract more foreign students and also fulfil the educational aspirations of our own students. But for this to happen, the government needs to think like a business partner.



Magadh University VC: Boost education for inclusive growth

Vice chancellor of Magadh University Prof Qamar Ahsan stressed the need for more investments in education.

"Education plays a key role in meeting social development objectives, which, in turn, supports inclusive growth,"

Ahsan said while addressing the two-day workshop on 'Inclusive growth process', jointly organised by the Asian Development Research Institute and Bihar State Higher Education Council.

ADRI director Prabhat P Ghosh outlined the theme of the workshop. "The objective of the workshop is to expose young research scholars to the emerging ideas on the challenges of inclusive growth process in India," he said.

Around 30 research scholars from different universities of Bihar are participating in the workshop. Ahsan said the student-friendly choice-based credit system should be implemented in higher education. In the first technical session, director of A N Sinha Institute of Social Science Sunil Ray talked about institutional requirement of inclusive growth, while Dr Vinay K Kantha delivered a lecture on 'Role of education in inclusive growth'

Education Technology Vendors in Higher Ed: Friends or Foes?

During recent interviews with education technology decision-makers at institutions of higher education, about the process of procuring tools to support teaching and learning, Company representatives are anathema to some, yet indispensable partners to others.

Yet all higher-ed institutions need and use technology, and most rely on external developers rather than develop their own tools. As a result, like them or not, relationships with vendors must be developed and sustained. So what makes a particular product or company more “trustworthy” than others?

The most common factors, according to our research, include the company’s capacity to deliver high quality products at scale, track record, product roadmap, financial stability, and quality of partner relationships.

How vendors can build better relationships with higher-education decision-makers

Here are some recommendations for vendors seeking to work with higher-ed institutions:

1. Transparency around products is critical. Be clear about what is currently functional and what is aspirational. Help decision-makers estimate total cost of ownership.
2. Aim for mutually beneficial relationships with “partners,” rather than simply offering a product to “clients” or “customers.”
3. Work to build trust - understand the need, empathize with the front lines, be able to explain product in a way that would be compelling to non-technical people like end users.
4. To build long-term relationships and customer loyalty, be prepared to customize your product to meet user needs.
5. Stay open to the idea that researchers in higher education may have an intellectual and non-commercial interest in opening up the black box of products and helping to improve them.
6. Consider a pro bono exchange with schools for edtech

research. For instance, a company can provide the tools and support, while the faculty can do the kind of research that higher-ed decision-makers care about and publish the findings.

Of course, this is only one side of the story here. . After all, partnerships have to be two-way relationships.

CONFERENCES :

- **World Engineering Education Forum (WEEF) 2017** : Date 13 - 16 November , 2017 , Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia , www.weef2017.org
- **The Fifth International Conference on Transformations in Engineering Education (ICTIEE'18)** : Date : Jan 4,5 & 6, 2018 at Bennett University, Greater Noida, UP and Jan 8 & 9 , 2018 at Thiagarajar College Of Engineering, Madurai , Tamil Nadu, ictiee.org/

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