

AIR Spotlight - UGC on Common University Entrance Test

AIR Spotlight is an insightful program featured daily on the All India Radio Newsonair. In this program, many eminent panellists discuss issues of importance which can be quite helpful in [IAS exam](#) preparation. In this article, the Central University Entrance Test introduced by the UGC is discussed.

Participants:

1. Professor M Jagdish Kumar, Chairman of UGC
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Context:

The introduction of the Central University Entrance Test (CUET) by the [University Grants Commission \(UGC\)](#).

Details:

- The University Grants Commission (UGC) has recently made it mandatory for all the 45 Central universities to admit students to the undergraduate courses based on the scores obtained in the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) from the year 2022-23.
- The proposal to conduct a common entrance test is in line with the vision of the [National Education Policy \(NEP\), 2020](#).

Central University Entrance Test (CUET)

- The test will be conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA).
- The CUET will be a computer-based test held in the first week of July based on the Class 12 syllabus of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- CUET will have 13 languages as the medium of test and is being made compulsory for admission into the 45 Central universities.
- The proposal aims to conduct admissions using a single national level test score and replace institution-level entrance tests or the use of ranking policy using Class 12 scores for admissions.
- This scheme of entrance examination was previously introduced as the Central Universities Common Entrance Test (CUCET) in 2010 but had not succeeded since only 14 central universities had adopted it.
- Other than the 45 central universities, other universities (which are State-owned, private or deemed) can also use CUET scores for their admissions.
- Admissions to technical programmes which already use the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) are exempt.

Need for the introduction of CUET

- The National Education Policy 2020 mandates the use of a common admission test to ensure uniformity across the country.
- The Common Entrance Test will further reduce the cost and efforts of all stakeholders in conducting the examination and admission process.
- CUET is also introduced to ease the burden and reduce the stress on the students who were earlier supposed to take up multiple entrance tests to get admission to different universities.

- Also, different universities adopted different admission methods and one such was the use of Board marks for admission.
 - Since there was a huge disparity in the evaluation methods across different Boards, the proposal to conduct CUET will introduce a level playing field among the students of different regions.

Criticism

- One major criticism about such large-scale admission tests is they provide undue advantage to students who have access to coaching institutions.
- Critics also point out that the computer-based format of the test and the digital process of admissions will be a disadvantage to students from rural backgrounds and far-flung areas.
- Critics feel that this move is in line with the current government's policy of pushing the 'one nation, one standard' in different sectors.
- States such as Tamil Nadu, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh have raised concerns.
 - They argue that the test would affect the interest of the students in the State to secure admission to a university in their State itself.

UGC's measures to address various challenges

- The UGC has instructed the paper setters to design the exam keeping in mind the large number of students who would be appearing in the exam from far-flung regions.
- UGC has provided an option of choosing the medium of the examination and the exam would be conducted in 13 different languages of the country.
- The UGC also plans to address the issues in the online application process and would ensure to ease up the process in the coming days.
- The commission plans to conduct the examination in a maximum number of centres such that it does not affect students of far-flung areas.
- It also plans to conduct mock tests prior to the actual test to help prepare the students for the main examinations.

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