

Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025: A New Regulatory Framework for Higher Education

6 March 2026

Background

The Central Government has introduced the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan Bill, 2025 (Bill) in Parliament, seeking to overhaul the regulatory framework for higher education in India. The Bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha on 15 December 2025 and referred to a Joint Parliamentary Committee the following day.

The Bill proposes to repeal the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, the All India Council for Technical Education Act, 1987, and the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993, consolidating their functions under a unified regulatory architecture. Upon enactment, the UGC, AICTE and NCTE will stand dissolved.

Rationale

The Bill's Statement of Objects and Reasons acknowledges that India's higher education sector has expanded to over one thousand universities and more than 60,000 higher educational institutions. According to the Government, this growth has resulted in the establishment of several statutory regulatory bodies, requiring multiple approvals by higher educational institutions, inspections and related compliances, resulting in over-regulation and duplication of control.

The Government also positions the Bill as part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's envisaged overhaul of regulation and governance, aimed at "re-energising" the sector through a "light but tight" framework emphasising transparency and resource efficiency through audit and public disclosure.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons further notes that the Bill is informed by an analysis and suitable adaptation of global best practices and is intended to usher in an era of autonomy particularly for well performing higher educational institutions, supported by technology-driven, single-window regulation based on public self-disclosure and accreditation.

New Regulatory Architecture

The Bill establishes a four-tier structure comprising the following bodies:

1. **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhishthan (Commission):** The apex body tasked with providing high-level strategic direction for higher education and ensuring coordination between the three constituent councils. The Commission will consist of a Chairperson and up to 12 members, including the Presidents of the three Councils as ex officio Members.
2. **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Viniyaman Parishad (Regulatory Council):** Established as the common regulator of higher education in India. Key functions include requiring full public self-disclosure by institutions, developing policy to prevent commercialisation of higher education, specifying standards for foreign universities operating in India and facilitating Indian universities to establish campuses abroad.

3. **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Gunvatta Parishad (Accreditation Council):** Responsible for supervising an independent ecosystem of accreditation, developing an outcome-based Institutional Accreditation Framework and empanelling accrediting institutions.
4. **Viksit Bharat Shiksha Manak Parishad (Standards Council):** Tasked with determining academic standards, framing expected learning outcomes and, consistent with the existing standards-setting position for degrees, being expressly empowered to provide nomenclature for certificates and diplomas.

Application

The Bill applies to all institutions of national importance established under a Central statute and within the Ministry of Education's purview, universities established under Central or State statutes, deemed universities, affiliated colleges, institutions regulated under the Architects Act, 1972, institutions currently regulated by AICTE and NCTE, institutions of open and distance learning, online education and digital education, institutions of eminence, and such other programmes and institutions as the Central Government may notify.

Certain professional programmes remain outside the Bill's scope, including those regulated by the Pharmacy Council of India, Bar Council of India, Veterinary Council of India, National Medical Commission, National Commission for Indian System of Medicine and related healthcare regulators.

Key Provisions

1. **Degree-granting powers:** The right to confer degrees remains restricted to universities and institutions specially empowered by Parliament. However, the Regulatory Council may authorise accredited higher educational institutions other than universities to grant degrees, with prior Central Government approval.
2. **Certificates and diplomas:** The Standards Council is empowered to provide the nomenclature of "certificate" and "diploma" and specify levels of educational qualifications. Degrees continue to remain within the standards-setting framework, as was already within the UGC's standards mandate. The Bill, however, expressly adds nomenclature-setting for certificates and diplomas, bringing these programmes within the formal regulatory architecture.
3. **Foreign universities:** The Regulatory Council will specify standards for select foreign universities operating in India, with prior Central Government approval. Existing foreign campuses established under UGC regulations will transition to the new regulatory framework.
4. **Public disclosure:** Higher educational institutions will be required to make full online and offline public self-disclosure of finances, audits, procedures, infrastructure, faculty, courses and educational outcomes on a public website maintained by the Regulatory Council and on their own websites.

Penalties

The Bill introduces a graduated penalty framework for contraventions:

1. **First-time contraventions:** If an institution fails to rectify a contravention within the time specified in a notice issued by the Regulatory Council, a penalty of not less than INR 10,00,000 may be imposed.
2. **Repeat contraventions:** A penalty of not less than INR 30,00,000, along with possible removal of persons responsible, revision of graded autonomy or withholding of grants.
3. **Persistent or continuing contraventions:** A penalty of not less than INR 75,00,000, along with possible suspension of degree-conferring rights, revocation of affiliations, or recommendation of closure.
4. **Unauthorised establishment:** Any person establishing a university or higher educational institution without the approval of the Central or State Government faces a penalty of not less than INR 2,00,00,000 along with immediate closure.

Transitional Provisions

The UGC, AICTE and NCTE will continue to operate until the Commission and Councils are established. Existing educational standards, requirements and regulations will remain in force until superseded by standards specified under the new Act. Institutions currently regulated by these bodies will be deemed to fall under the new framework.

Employees of the UGC, AICTE and NCTE will be absorbed by the Commission or Councils on the same terms and conditions, including pension and provident fund entitlements.

Next Steps

The Bill is currently before a Joint Parliamentary Committee. If enacted, the Act will come into force on a date to be notified by the Central Government. We will continue to monitor developments and provide updates as the legislative process progresses.

- *Monika Srivastava (Partner) and Romit Kohli (Associate)*



About Khaitan & Co

Khaitan & Co is a top tier and full-service law firm with over 1300+ legal professionals, including 300+ leaders and presence in India and Singapore. With more than a century of experience in practicing law, we offer end-to-end legal solutions in diverse practice areas to our clients across the world. We have a team of highly motivated and dynamic professionals delivering outstanding client service and expert legal advice across a wide gamut of sectors and industries.

To know more, visit www.khaitanco.com



This document has been created for informational purposes only. Neither Khaitan & Co nor any of its partners, associates or allied professionals shall be liable for any interpretation or accuracy of the information contained herein, including any errors or incompleteness. This document is intended for non-commercial use and for the general consumption of the reader, and should not be considered as legal advice or legal opinion of any form and may not be relied upon by any person for such purpose. It may not be quoted or referred to in any public document, or shown to, or filed with any government authority, agency or other official body.

www.khaitanco.com | © Khaitan & Co 2026 | All Rights Reserved.

Ahmedabad · Bengaluru · Chennai · Delhi-NCR · Kolkata · Mumbai · Pune · Singapore