



## Higher Education Commission of India Bill

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### Why in news?

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- The draft Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) Bill is now in the public domain.

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### What is the bill on?

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- It proposes to replace the University Grants Commission (UGC) with a Higher Education Commission of India.

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- This is to provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth of this sector.

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- It is also to offer greater opportunities to Indian students at more affordable cost.

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- The new commission will cover all fields of education.

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- This is however except medical, agriculture and institutions set up under Central and State Acts.

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- The exemption does not cover institutes of national importance.

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## What are the provisions?

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- It proposes a clear separation between academic and grant-giving functions.

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- Academic functions would be discharged by the HECI.

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- The academic functions include

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- i. promoting the quality of instruction

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- ii. maintenance of academic standards

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- iii. fostering the autonomy of higher education institutions

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- The HECI will be bestowed with comprehensive and overriding powers.

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- This includes ordering the closure of institutions, in all academic and related matters.

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- The grant-giving function will be by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) directly.

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## What is the need?

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- **Multiple regulators** - The regime of multiple regulators started in the mid-1980s.

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- Various professional bodies also started asserting themselves as regulators from early 1990s.

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- It marked a galloping growth of the education sector with the setting up of many private universities.

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- Multiple bodies in addition to the existing ones came in to cope with the increasing complexity.

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- E.g. UGC, All India Council for Technical Education, professional bodies like the Bar Council of India and Council of Architecture.

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- **Quality** - The heavy hands of multiple regulators have not yielded the desired dividends.

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- Uneven and deteriorating standards in the quality of student output was witnessed.

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- This was against the requirements of the job market.

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- It is in this context that the need for a single regulatory body arose.

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**Source: The Hindu**

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