

HIGHER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,

Madam Cama Marg, Hutatma Rajguru Chowk, Mantralaya,
Mumbai 400 032, dated the 25th February 2019.

NOTIFICATION

MAHARASHTRA PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES ACT, 2016.

No. Parini-2018/CR-125/Vishi-2.—In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (10) of section 72 read with sub-section (11) of section 71 and clause (b) of sub-section (2) of section 56 of the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016 (Mah. Act No. VI of 2017), the Government of Maharashtra hereby prescribes the Uniform Statute relating to the functional mechanism of working of the Students' Grievance Redressal Cell, namely:—

UNIFORM STATUTE No. 5 OF 2019

1. *Short Title.*—This Statute may be called the Maharashtra Public Universities (Functional Mechanism of Working of Students' Grievance Redressal Cell) Uniform Statute, 2019.

2. *Definitions.*—(1) In this statute unless the context otherwise requires,—

(i) "aggrieved student" means a student who has any complaint in the matter concerned with the grievances defined under this statute and includes a person seeking admission to a university or college or recognized institution of higher education ;

(ii) "declared admission policy" means such policy for admission to a course or program of study as may be offered by the university or college or recognized institution and published in the prospectus ;

(iii) "grievances" include the following complaints of the aggrieved students, namely :—

(a) making admission contrary to merit determined in accordance with the declared admission policy of the State and university ;

(b) irregularity in the admission process by the university or college or recognized institution ;

(c) refusing admission in accordance with the declared admission policy as published in prospectus ;

(d) non-publication of prospectus either hard copy or online, as specified in para 3 of this Statute ;

(e) publishing any information in the prospectus, which is false or misleading, and not based on facts ;

(f) withhold or refuse to return any document in the form of certificates of degree, diploma or any other award or other document deposited with the university or college or recognized institution by a person while seeking admission in such university or college or recognized institution, with a view to induce or compel such person to pay any fee or fees in respect of any course or program of study which such person does not intend to pursue ;

(g) demand of money in excess of that specified in the declared admission policy or approved by the competent authority to be charged by such university or college or recognized institution ;

(h) breach of the policy for reservations in admission as may be applicable ;

(i) insisting upon students to submit the original academic and personal certificates and testimonials like mark sheets, school leaving certificate and other such documents at the time of admission, wherever such original documents are not compulsorily required ;

(j) complaints of alleged discrimination of students on the grounds of gender, race, caste, class, creed, place of birth, religion and disability;

(k) non-payment or delay in payment of scholarships to any student by the university or college or recognized institution after receiving the same from concerned authority;

(l) non-adherence of rules of refund of fees in case of cancellation of admission;

(m) undue delay in conduct of examinations or declaration of results beyond that specified in the academic calendar ;

(n) failure to provide student amenities as may have been promised or required to be provided by the university or college or recognized institution ;

(o) non-transparent or unfair evaluation practices ;

(iv) "Department Grievance Redressal Cell (DGRC)" means a Cell constituted under this Statute, at the level of a university department or university institution as prescribed in sub-para (1) of para 5;

(v) "Institutional Grievance Redressal Cell (IGRC)" means a Cell constituted under this Statute, at the level of the university as prescribed in sub-para (2) of para 5;

(vi) "College Grievance Redressal Cell (CGRC)" means a Cell constituted under this Statute, at the level of a college or recognized institution, as the case may be as prescribed in sub-para (3) of para 5;

(vii) "University Grievance Redressal Cell (UGRC)" means a Cell constituted under this Statute, at the level of the university as prescribed in sub-para (4) of para 5;

(viii) "office of profit" means an office which is capable of yielding a profit or pecuniary gain, and to which some pay, salary, emolument, remuneration or non—compensatory allowance is attached ;

(ix) "Ombudsperson" means the Ombudsperson appointed under this Statute.

(2) Words and expressions used but not defined in this Statute shall have the same meanings respectively assigned to them in the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016 (Mah. Act No. VI of 2017).

3. *Mandatory publication of prospectus, its contents and pricing.—*

(1) Every university or college or recognized institution shall publish and upload on its website, before expiry of at least sixty days prior to the date of commencement of the admission process to any of its courses or programs of study, a prospectus containing the following for the information of person intending to seek admission to such university or college or recognized institution and the general public, namely:—

(i) the list of programs of study and courses offered along with the broad outlines of the syllabus specified by the appropriate statutory authority or by the university, as the case may be, for every course or program of study, including teaching hours, practical sessions and other assignments;

(ii) each component of the fee, deposits and other charges payable by the students admitted to such university or college or recognized institution for pursuing a course or program of study, and the other terms and conditions of such payment;

(iii) the number of seats approved by the appropriate statutory authority in respect of each course or program of study for the academic year for which admission is proposed to be made;

(iv) the conditions of educational qualifications and eligibility including the minimum and maximum age limit of persons for admission as a student to a particular course or program of study, specified by the university or college or recognized institution;

(v) the process of selection of eligible candidates applying for such admission, including all relevant information in regard to the details of test or examination for selecting such candidates for admission to each course or program of study and the amount of fee prescribed for the admission test;

(vi) rules or regulations for imposition and collection of any fines specified heads or categories, minimum and maximum fine may be imposed.

(vii) the percentage of tuition fee and other charges refundable to a student admitted in such university or college or recognized institution in case student withdraws from such university or college or recognized institution before or after completion of course or program of study and the time within and the manner in which such refund shall be made to that student;

(viii) documents to be submitted at the time of admission;

(ix) details of the teaching faculty, including their educational qualifications, alongwith the category they belong to Regular or Visiting and teaching experience of every member of its teaching faculty;

(x) information with regard to physical and academic infrastructure and other facilities including hostel accommodation, library and hospital or industry wherein the practical training to be imparted to the students and in particular the facilities accessible by students on being admitted to the university or college or recognized institution ;

(xi) all relevant instructions in regard to maintaining the discipline by students within or outside the campus of the university or college or recognized institution;

(xii) clear demarcation of aided and un-aided courses;

(xiii) any such information as the university or college or recognized institution may deem fit.

(2) The university or college or recognized institution shall publish or upload information referred to in sub-para(1) above, on its official website, and inform prospective students and the general public by giving wide publicity in newspapers and through other media.

(3) The university or college or recognized institution shall fix the price of each printed copy of the prospectus including admission form, being not more than the reasonable cost of its publication and distribution, and no profit be made out of the publication, distribution or sale of prospectus.

4. *Exclusion to Entertain Grievances.*—Grievances relating to subject matters governed by any Statutory Mechanism evolved by the State Government for which grievance redressal mechanism has specifically been provided under the relevant State Act, shall not be entertained by the Grievances Redressal Cells or the Ombudsperson.

5. *Grievance Redressal Cells.*—(1) Department Grievance Redressal Cell (DGRC)

(i) In case of universities, all complaints relating to university department or university institution shall first be addressed to Department Grievance Redressal Cell (DGRC) to be constituted at the level of university department or university institution, composition of which shall be as follows:—

(a) Head of the university department or university institution – Chairperson;

(b) A Professor from outside the university department or university institution to be nominated by the Vice-Chancellor- Member ;

(c) A faculty member well-versed with grievance redressal mechanism to be nominated by the Head of the university department or university institution – Member-Secretary.

(ii) The Chairperson and members of the Cell shall have a term of two years.

(iii) The quorum for the meeting shall be two, including Chairperson.

(iv) The DGRC shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding the grievances of the students.

(v) The DGRC shall resolve the grievance within period of fifteen days of receiving the complaint and shall submit its report to the head of the department or head of the institution, as the case may be.

(vi) The DGRC shall provide a copy of the order to the aggrieved person(s).

(2) Institutional Grievance Redressal Cell (IGRC) :

(i) The complaints not related to university department or university institution and the grievances not resolved at the DGRC shall be referred to the Institutional Grievance Redressal Cell (IGRC) to be constituted by the Vice-Chancellor of the university, composition of which shall be as follows:—

(a) Pro-Vice Chancellor / Dean / Senior professor – Chairperson.

(b) two senior professors other than Chairperson - Member

(c) one Senate member from the constituency of registered graduates - Member

(d) Director, Students' Development -Member Secretary.

(ii) The Chairperson of IGRC and DGRC shall not be the same. The tenure of the Cell members shall be two years.

(iii) The quorum for the meetings shall be three, including Chairperson.

(iv) The IGRC shall consider the recommendation of DGRC while taking the decision. However, the IGRC shall have the power to review recommendations of the DGRC.

(v) The IGRC shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding the grievances.

(vi) The IGRC shall resolve the grievance within period of fifteen days of receiving the complaint. The IGRC shall suggest periodically to the University, different ways and means to minimize and prevent such grievances.

(vii) The IGRC shall provide a copy of the order to the aggrieved person(s).

(3) College Grievance Redressal Cell (CGRC):

(i) In case of colleges or recognized institutions, all complaints shall first be addressed to College or Recognized institution Grievance Redressal Cell (CGRC) composition of which shall be as follows.—

(a) Principal of the college or head of the recognized institution-Chairperson;

(b) two senior faculty members nominated by the Principal of the College, or head of the recognized institution;

(ii) The tenure of the members shall be two years.

(iii) The quorum for the meeting shall be two, including Chairperson.

(iv) The CGRC shall follow the principles of natural justice while considering the grievances of the students.

(v) The CGRC shall resolve the grievance within period of fifteen days of receiving the complaint. The CGRC shall suggest periodically to the Management and University, as the case may be different ways and means to minimize and prevent such grievances.

(vi) The CGRC shall provide a copy of the order to the aggrieved person(s).

(4) University Grievance Redressal Cell (UGRC):

(i) In case of grievance against the university and the grievance not resolved by CGRC, it shall be referred to University Grievance Redressal Cell (UGRC) for which the Vice-Chancellor of the affiliating university shall constitute a University Grievance Redressal Cell (UGRC) consisting

of the six members for an individual college or recognized institution or a group of college or recognized institution keeping in view the location of the college or recognized institution. The UGRC shall be constituted by the Vice-chancellor of the university consisting of:—

- (a) Pro-Vice Chancellor / Dean / Senior professor – Chairperson;
- (b) three Principals from amongst the members of the Senate, of whom one shall be a woman and one shall be from Scheduled Castes or Scheduled Tribes or Denotified Tribes or Nomadic Tribes or Other Backward Classes;
- (c) one member of the Senate from the constituency of registered graduates;
- (d) Director, Students' Development - Member Secretary.
- (ii) The Chairperson and members of the Cell shall have a term of two years.
- (iii) The quorum for the meeting shall be three, including Chairperson.
- (iv) The UGRC shall follow the principles of natural justice while deciding the grievance of the students.
- (v) The UGRC shall resolve the grievance within a period of fifteen days of receiving the complaint. The UGRC shall suggest periodically to the Management and University, as the case may be different ways and means to minimize and prevent such grievances.
- (vi) The UGRC shall provide a copy of the order to the aggrieved person(s).

(5) Any person aggrieved by the decision of the Institutional Grievance Redressal Cell or University Grievance Redressal Cell may within a period of six days prefer an appeal to the Ombudsperson.

(6) In case the grievance is against any member in the Cell, the concerned member shall abstain himself from the proceeding on such issue.

6. Ombudsperson.—(1) The university shall appoint an Ombudsperson to hear and decide the appeals against the decisions of the Institutional Grievance Redressal Cell or University Grievance Redressal Cell.

(2) The Ombudsperson shall be a person not related to the university and who is a judge not below the rank of retired District Judge or a retired Vice-Chancellor or a retired Registrar or a retired Professor or a retired Principal.

(3) The Ombudsperson shall not, at the time of appointment during one year before such appointment or in the course of his tenure as Ombudsperson be in a conflict of interest with the university where his personal relationship, professional affiliation or financial interest may compromise or reasonably appear to compromise, the independence of judgement towards the university.

(4) The Ombudsperson, or any member of his immediate family shall not—

- (i) hold or have held at any point in the past, any post or employment in the office of profit in the university;
- (ii) have any significant relationship, including personal, family, professional or financial, with the university;
- (iii) hold any position in university by whatever name called, in the administration or governance structure of the university.

(5) The Ombudsperson in the university shall be appointed by the Vice-Chancellor of the university, with the approval of the Management Council of the university, on part-time basis from a panel of three names recommended by the Search Committee consisting of the following members, namely:—

- (i) Eminent educationist nominated by Chancellor-Chairperson;
- (ii) Vice-Chancellor of the public university to be nominated by the State Government ... Member;
- (iii) Vice-Chancellor of the concerned university..... Member;
- (iv) Registrar of the concerned university.... Secretary.

(6) The Ombudsperson shall be a part-time officer appointed for a period of three years, from the date he resumes the office and may be re-appointed for another one term in the same university. It shall be ensured by the university that the office of Ombudsperson shall not remain vacant for a period more than three months and within such period of vacancy, the Vice-Chancellor shall assign temporary charge to the sitting Ombudsperson from any of the universities governed by the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016 (Mah. Act No. VI of 2017).

(7) The Ombudsperson shall be paid the sitting fee per day as approved by the Management Council of the University for hearing the cases, in addition to reimbursement of the conveyance.

(8) The Ombudsperson may be removed on charges of proven misconduct or misbehaviour or for violation of any of the conditions mentioned in sub-clauses (3) and (4) above, by the Vice-Chancellor with the approval of the Management Council of the University.

7. Powers and Functions of Ombudsperson.—(1) The Ombudsperson shall have power to hear and decide appeals against the decisions of the Institutional Grievance Redressal Cell or University Grievance Redressal Cell.

(2) No appeals for revaluation or remarking of answer sheets shall be entertained by the Ombudsperson. However, appeals relating to issues of malpractices in the examination and evaluation processes may be referred to the Ombudsperson.

(3) The Ombudsperson may seek an assistance of any person as *amicus curiae*, for hearing complaints of alleged discrimination.

(4) The Ombudsperson shall make all efforts to resolve the grievances within a period of 30 days of receiving an appeal from the student.

8. Procedure for Redressal of Grievances by Ombudsperson and Grievance Redressal Cell.—

(1) University or college or recognized institution shall, within a period of three months from the date of issue of this notification, have an online portal where any aggrieved student of that university or college or recognized institution may submit an application seeking grievance redressal.

(2) On receipt of any online complaint, the university or college or recognized institution shall refer the complaint to the appropriate Grievance Redressal Cell or the Ombudsperson, as the case may be, along with its comments within 15 days of receipt of complaint on online portal.

(3) The Grievance Redressal Cell or the Ombudsperson, as the case may be, shall fix a date for hearing the complaint which shall be communicated to the university or college or recognized institution and the aggrieved person.

(4) An aggrieved person may appear either in person or be represented by such person other than legal practitioner, as may be authorized to present his case.

(5) The grievances not resolved at the appropriate Grievance Redressal Cell(s) shall be referred to the Ombudsperson.

(6) The university or college or recognized institution shall co-operate with the Ombudsperson or the Grievance Redressal Cell(s), as the case may be, in redressal of grievances and failure to do so may be reported by the Ombudsperson or Grievance Redressal Cell(s), as the case may be, to the Vice-Chancellor of the university.

(7) On the conclusion of proceedings, appropriate Grievance Redressal Cell or the Ombudsperson, as the case may be, shall pass such order, with reasons for such order, as may be deemed fit to redress the grievance and provide such relief as may be desirable to the affected party at issue, after giving due hearing to both the parties.

(8) Every order under the signature of the Ombudsperson or Chairperson of the appropriate Grievance Redressal Cell, as the case may be, shall be provided to the aggrieved person and the university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, and shall be placed on the website of the university or college or recognized institution.

(9) The university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, shall comply with the recommendations of the Ombudsperson. Any recommendations of the Ombudsperson not complied with by the university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, shall be reported by the Ombudsperson to the University Grants Commission.

(10) In case of any false or frivolous complaint, the Ombudsperson may recommend appropriate action against the complainant.

9. *Information Regarding Ombudsperson and Grievance Redressal Cell.*—The university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, shall provide detailed information regarding provisions of Grievance Redressal Cell(s) and Ombudsperson on their website and in their prospectus prominently.

10. *Consequences of Non-Compliance.*—The University Grants Commission, in respect of any university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, which wilfully contravenes this Statute or repeatedly fails to comply with the recommendation of the Ombudsperson or the Grievance Redressal Cell(s), as the case may be, may proceed to take one or more of the following actions, namely:—

(1) Withdrawal of declaration of fitness to receive grants under section 12B of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956);

(2) Withholding any grant allocated to the university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be;

(3) Declaring the university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, ineligible for consideration for any assistance under any of the general or special assistance programmes of the University Grants Commission;

(4) Informing the general public, including potential candidates for admission, through a notice displayed prominently in suitable media and posted on the website of the University Grants Commission, declaring that the university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, does not possess the minimum standards for redressal of grievances;

(5) Recommend to the affiliating university for withdrawal of affiliation, in case of a college and withdrawal of recognition in case of recognized institution;

(6) Recommend to the concerned State Government for necessary and appropriate action, in case of a university;

(7) Take necessary and appropriate actions against any university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, for non-compliance :

Provided that no action shall be taken by the University Grants Commission unless the university or college or recognized institution, as the case may be, has been given an opportunity to explain its position and an opportunity of being heard has been provided to it.

By order and in the name of the Governor of Maharashtra,

SIDDHARTH KHARAT,
Joint Secretary to Government.