

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2912
ANSWERED ON – 18/03/2026

Education Sector frauds

2912 **Smt. Priyanka Chaturvedi**

Will the Minister of *EDUCATION* be pleased to state:

- (a) whether Government is aware of education sector fraud such as inflated enrolment, fabricated placements, unrecognised degrees and fake accreditation;
- (b) audit mechanisms of UGC, AICTE, NAAC for detecting fraud, percentage inspected annually, enforcement actions, including derecognition;
- (c) whether the National Academic Depository (NAD) verifies degree authenticity and whether employers' verification access prevents fake credentials;
- (d) measures against NIRF manipulation and accountability for institutions marketing unrecognised programs, students discovering worthless degrees; and
- (e) whether criminal prosecutions have been initiated against fraudulent institutions defrauding lakhs of students if so, details thereof and if not, reasons therefor?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
(DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR)

(a) to (e): Education is in the concurrent list and both the Central Government and the State Governments work together for development of education in India. The University Grants Commission (UGC) issues public notices through social media and the UGC website to caution the general public, students, parents, and other stakeholders regarding self-styled institutions/ fake universities. In addition, the UGC writes letters to State Governments enquiring about existence of any other self-styled educational institutions functioning in their state, and, if found, take stringent action against them under intimation to the UGC.

As of date, 32 fake universities/institutions have been identified by the UGC. State Governments are requested to verify their functioning and take stringent action against such self-styled institutions in their respective jurisdictions. In addition, the following measures have been taken by the Government and the UGC:

- i. Update the State-wise list of fake universities on the UGC website.
- ii. The Government as well as the UGC have requested the Chief Secretaries of all State/UT Governments to take appropriate action against those involved in defrauding

and cheating students by misrepresenting themselves as “Universities”, awarding degrees and using the word “University” with their name.

- iii. FIRs have been lodged against several self-styled institutions/universities.
- iv. Show Causes Notices/Warning Notices have also been issued to the unauthorized institutes awarding invalid degrees.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) has undertaken several measures to prevent fraud and strengthen the credibility of the accreditation process, namely:

- a) NAAC now finalizes peer teams 15 days to a month before visits, instead of 2–3 months in advance to instill credibility.
- b) NAAC scrutinizes and re-confirms the results of HEI by Re-DVV, revisit and both (akin to re-evaluation or re-totalling in university examination) in cases where:
 - i. defined difference between the Qualitative Metric (QIM) and Quantitative (QnM) score for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)
 - ii. in case of A, A+, A++ grades for first Cycle-1 HEIs
 - iii. in case there is a two or more than two grades jump
- c) NAAC’s Standing Committee rigorously scrutinizes results. In re-DVV cases, a new DVV partner and coordinators re-evaluate the SSR, with cross-verification to ensure accuracy and curb manipulation.
- d) The Peer Team Report has transitioned from a criterion-wise format to a metric-wise format, allowing the peer team to provide justifications for scores assigned to each qualitative metric.
- e) From February 2025, NAAC has significantly tightened its Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) protocols to ensure rigorous scrutiny and uphold the integrity of the evaluation process. Coordinators now undertake stringent prequalification checks, reinforcing transparency and eliminating opportunities for manipulation. In alignment with the Executive Committee’s recommendations, NAAC has implemented a series of corrective and preventive measures designed to enhance credibility, secure data handling, and ensure ethical conduct throughout the assessment process.
 - i. The visits are made online for colleges and hybrid for universities and the entire proceedings of meeting are being recorded and saved in cloud service.
 - ii. NAAC has dismantled its travel desk as part of its shift toward digital and hybrid visit models. For universities, only two peer team members travel physically, and they are responsible for arranging their own travel independently.
 - iii. Coordinators facilitate peer visits but receive team and institution details only an hour before to ensure confidentiality. Their roles are defined through SOPs for consistent and ethical conduct.
 - iv. A parallel portal has been made to organise the peer team visit right from selection, acceptance and communications as a measure to secure information. The peer team is integrated in the operational NAAC portal only on the day of visit. This ensures no information leakage from the NAAC portal.
 - v. Peer team visits are randomly assigned using systematic methods to prevent bias. Institutions from officers’ home states are excluded from allotments to uphold impartiality.

- vi. Code of ethical conduct is informed prior to and is confirmed after the visit from institutions and peer team members.
 - vii. SSR is shared shortly before visits-one day prior for colleges, two days for universities. Institution contact details are removed to prevent pre-visit communication and prevent unethical practices.
 - viii. Peer team members are restricted from contact outside official online meetings. All scoring decisions and deliberations are recorded, ensuring transparency and future accountability.
 - ix. An SMS and email alert system now notifies institutions, peer team members, and coordinators about upcoming visits without disclosing identities, replacing earlier ways of communication through coordinators.
 - x. New assessors are inducted, and those with zero prior visits are prioritized, ensuring full utilization of NAAC's assessor database.
- f) Around 20% assessors have been removed over a period of time from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) database of Assessors. NAAC has enabled feedback mechanisms for institutions to assess the assessor based on their behaviour and interaction with the institution. The institution rates their assessors from one star to five stars after the completion of peer team visit. NAAC also inducts new assessors as a regular affair. Removal or addition of assessors from the database of Assessors is a routine process of NAAC. The peer Review system is continuously improved by adding members as per the requirements.

The NIRF issues advisory to all participating institutions to uphold the integrity of India Rankings and ensure transparency in communication. The advisory states that the Institutions must display only the current year's ranking and clearly indicate the category and exact rank as published by NIRF. The institutions are prohibited from creating or advertising rankings under self-defined categories such as private, government, or not-for-profit. The participating institutions are also required to upload their submitted data on their official websites.

Maintenance of Law and order is a subject matter of State Governments. Accordingly, the Central Government has requested to Chief Secretaries of all the State Governments and U.T. Administration to take legal action for closure of these institutions and take appropriate action against those involved in defrauding and cheating students by misrepresenting themselves as "Universities", awarding degrees and using the word "University" with their name. As a result, 12 fake universities have been closed since 2014.
