

**Newspaper Clips**  
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## **IIT-K launches research project**

Kolkata, March 3

Experts at the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur, have launched a ₹25 crore project aimed at transforming and enhancing living conditions in cities through inter-disciplinary research and new technologies. Christened 'Future Of Cities', the mammoth project, supported by the ministry of human resource development, involves 59 key researchers and 32 research modules. Currently underway in cities like Kolkata, the venture has identified four actionable areas — planning and policy, design and development, habitation and maintenance and governance. IANS

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## ENCOURAGING RESEARCH

# HRD ministry increases fellowship grants by 55%

BY NIKITA MEHTA &  
PRASHANT K. NANDA

NEW DELHI

The government on Tuesday increased fellowship grants to researchers at science and technology institutes by up to 55%, a move that will incur an additional expenditure of ₹1,300 crore a year.

With this, the centre has not only increased the monthly grants to researchers but also has done away with differential grant slabs. For example, all junior research fellows will get ₹25,000 per month, up from ₹16,000 per month in their first two years and ₹18,000 in the next three years.

Similarly, senior research fellows will get ₹28,000 instead of ₹18,000 in the first two years and ₹20,000 in the next two years, according to a ministry circular, a copy of which has been reviewed by *Mint*.

At the Masters in Technology (M.Tech) and Masters in Engineering (ME) level, the research grants have been increased to ₹12,400 from ₹8,000 earlier.

An official with the human resources development (HRD)

ministry said this will improve the research environment in India and encourage students to pursue a career in research instead of taking up jobs directly after bachelor's degrees. It will benefit more than 75,000 researchers per year, the HRD ministry estimates.

The ministry had earlier planned to implement the decision from February, but protests by research scholars in several cities pushed it to make it effective from October 2014 for PhD students and December 2014 for students pursuing M.Tech. The department of science and technology had effected a similar raise in grants in October last year but the ministry was undecided then.

Anindita Brahma, academic secretary at IISc, said that parity in research grants is necessary to create a "healthy lab environment". If a researcher under the science ministry gets a certain monthly grant and another researcher under HRD ministry gets less, it hampers the productivity and quality of research and "creates unnecessary divisions among fellows", said Brahma.

Pankaj Jain, a PhD student at

IISc, said researchers welcome the ministry's decision.

Although the ministry has hiked the research grants, the onus is now on the institute to bear the extra expenditure from their own kitty, at least in 2014-15. "The additional cost, on account of this revision may be met by the individual institutes from their existing budgetary grants without any additionality in the current financial year, 2014-15," its circular said. "During the next financial year 2015-16, the expenditure will be met, as first charge out of the sanctioned allocations to the institutions by the department of higher education."

The ministry said this decision has been taken with approval from the department of expenditure of the finance ministry.

The ministry communicated its decision to centrally funded institutions such as the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), the National Institutes of Technology (NITs), the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bangalore, the Indian Institute of Mines, Dhanbad, and others.

*nikita.m@livemint.com*

## CAMPUS RECRUITMENT

# Over 115 firms recruit 375 IIM-A students; Accenture top hirer

By MAULIK PATHAK  
maulik.p@livemint.com

AHMEDABAD

Accenture Strategy emerged as the top recruiter at the Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIM-A) hiring 21 of its 375 postgraduate students in campus placements this year.

More than 115 firms participated in the placements, IIM-A said in a statement. Eleven students opted out of the placement process to start their own ventures in adventure tourism, data analytics, e-commerce and food processing, among others.

Accenture was the top recruiter across all clusters in terms of number of offers, picking up 21 students. In the strategy and consulting space, **McKinsey and Co.** and the **Boston Consulting Group** made 10 offers each, followed by **Bain and Co.** with nine. Other recruiters in the consulting space included **Alvarez and Marsal**, **AT Kearney Inc.**, **Deloitte and Touche LLP**, **KPMG LLP**, **Oliver Wyman** and **Roland Berger**.

The placement process was held in two stages. The first was the laterals process where firms interviewed students with prior work experience and offered them mid-level managerial positions. The second stage was the final placement where firms were grouped into cohorts based on the profile offered, and groups of cohorts were invited to campus across different clusters.

About half of the batch was eligible for lateral placements. Firms that participated in the laterals process included **Aditya Birla Group**, **Alvarez and Marsal**, **Amazon**, **Flipkart**, **Google**, **Microsoft** and **Star TV India**.

The banking and financial services sector witnessed participation from global investment banks such as **Aventus Capital Pvt. Ltd**, **Citigroup Inc.**, **Credit Suisse AG**, **Deutsche Bank AG**, **Goldman Sachs**, **Hong Kong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd** and **Nomura**. This year, IIM-A also saw participation from private equity and venture capital firms such as **Matrix Partners** and **Apollo Global Manage-**



**Independent ventures:** Eleven students opted out of the placement process to start their own ventures in adventure tourism, data analytics, e-commerce and food processing, among others.

ment.

A large number of students took up roles in sales and marketing in various firms such as **Asian Paints**, **Hindustan Unilever**, **ITC**, **Johnson and Johnson**, **L'Oreal**, **Mondelez International**, **Nestle**, **PepsiCo**, **P&G**, **Reckitt Benckiser**, **Shell**, **Vodafone** and **Wipro Consumer Care**.

General management and leadership profiles were offered to students by **Aditya Birla Group**, **Bharti Airtel Ltd**, **C.K. Birla Group**, **Lodha Group**, **Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd**, **Reliance Group** and **TAS** among others, it said.

Among global investment banks, **Goldman Sachs** made five offers. In the consumer goods and services sector, **Hindustan Unilever** and **Star TV India** were leading recruiters, making six offers each. In the general management sector, **Bharti Airtel** made nine offers while **Aditya Birla Group** and **Future Group** made eight offers each. In the Internet and e-commerce and technology sector, **Amazon** made 13 offers and **Samsung** 10.

Recruiters in pharma domain included **Dr. Reddy's Laboratories Ltd** and **GlaxoSmithKline Pharmaceuticals Ltd**.

Several first-time recruiters such as **Hopscotch**, **Future Group** and **Practo**, among others, participated.

**BrowserStack**, a self-funded, fast-growing and young technology start-up operating in 130+

countries, also recruited for the first time. **Ritesh Arora**, co-founder of **BrowserStack** said, "Due to the innovative nature of our company, the challenges we need solved are unique. Recruiting from IIMA gives us access to a talented pool of candidates, who have out-of-the-box thinking and thus are ideal for our work environment."

**Rahul Gangal**, partner at **Roland Berger**, said, "Considering the needs of a global consulting firm like ours, we have always got applicants with appropriate experience levels and strong analytical skills at IIM-A, a fact that keeps bringing us back here."

**Satish Y. Deodar**, chairperson of the institute's placement committee, said, "If consistency is a virtue, this was the semi-centennial year of a yet another successful placement season at IIMA. Each one of the PGP students, having acquired his or her domain knowledge over two years, received a range of top offers from different firms."

**Sumit Patil**, recruitment secretary at IIM-A, expressed his happiness. "Participation of a large number of recruiters stands testimony to the quality of students and robustness of the process. Our efforts to promote entrepreneurship were boosted with several students opting for their own ventures. We thank all recruiters for participating in the process, and look forward to further strengthening our relationship."

HT.COM ND 04.03.15 P-6

# UNIVERSITIES OPT FOR NAAC

**GOING FOR THE GRADE** NAAC accreditation improves the standard of teaching, learning

Gauri Kohli

In a move in January this year aimed at improving the quality of higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued a notification to universities/institutions to apply for accreditation with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) by December 31, 2015. Such accreditations make it easier for students to opt for quality institutes to study in. For universities, access to grants becomes easier.

Professor AN Rai, director, NAAC, says "Assessment and accreditation are broadly used for understanding the quality status of an institution. The accreditation status indicates that the particular college, a university, or any other recognised unit therein, meets the standards of quality as set by the accreditation agency. To judge colleges and universities on an equal platform, we follow these criteria for assessment—curriculum, teaching-learning and evaluation, research, consultancy and extension, infrastructure and learning resources, student support and progression, governance, leadership and management and innovations and the best practices available."

Besides assessing and grading a college or university after evaluating it against specific parameters and peer review, NAAC also generates a report elaborating on the strengths and weakness of the institution. "Those desiring to improve their quality have a ready reckoner," says Rai.

Established by the UGC, NAAC's assess higher education institutions (HEI) in the country UGC had also issued a similar notification in 2013. Since then, the number of colleges and universities applying for NAAC accreditation has increased manifold. While the council received about 800 letters of intent or applications for accreditation till 2012, this went up to more than 2,600 in 2013 and over 3,700 in 2014.

For HEIs, getting a rating as high as A

## ADD UP: APPLICATIONS RECEIVED BY NAAC FOR ACCREDITATION

The first UGC notification to institutes of higher education asking them to go for NAAC accreditation was issued in January 2013. Another one came out in January 2015

### APPLICATIONS

**2012:** About 800 letters of intent or applications received from colleges and universities

**2013:** Close to 2697 letters of intent or applications received from colleges and universities

**2014:** Nearly 3743 letters of intent or applications received from colleges and universities



All figures are approximate

Applications received from January 2013 till date

## WHY A NAAC GRADE IS NECESSARY

- The accreditation enables an institution to know more about its strengths and weaknesses and opportunities through an informed review process

- Helps institutions identify internal areas of planning and resource allocation

- Helps institutions as funding agencies look for objective data for performance-funding

- Enables institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy

- Helps colleges and universities

- get in touch with employers by providing information they can rely on regarding the quality of education offered to prospective recruits

- Boosts interaction between different institutes through allied programmes.

- Some colleges in the US accept a three-year degree by a NAAC-accredited institution as equivalent to their four-year programmes

- Leads to collegiality on college campuses

- Gives a new sense of direction and identity to accredited universities across the country.

means they score really high on all assessment parameters, which include curriculum, infrastructure, research, leadership and teaching. "In the last 20 years of its existence, NAAC has accredited 192/700 universities and 5627/38,000 colleges in the country. Only one-third of such institutions are rated Grade A. This explains why quality of education is so low and the number of unemployed graduates so large. We, therefore, do not figure in the top 200 institutions of the world," says MM Ansari, member, UGC.

"To incentivise the institutions to go for accreditation, both UGC and MHRD have tied development grants to the accreditation process. The results of the accreditation process will determine the grants that each university will receive. So it is now imperative for universities to not

only maintain quality but to also opt for a peer review. Even grants to be disbursed through Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan are tied to NAAC accreditation," says Praveen Singh, convener, NAAC Steering Committee, Ambedkar University Delhi.

With an increasing number of HEIs sending applications to NAAC, the council is faced with a challenging task of dealing with application rush.

"There are inordinate delays in carrying out the accreditation process as a large number of requests for accreditation are piling up with the NAAC. This is attributable to inadequate infrastructure with NAAC or lack of appreciation of the problem by UGC/MHRD.



In fact, it is the lackadaisical attitude of the concerned authorities, which has led to perpetuation of 'quality crisis' in the country," adds Ansari.

NAAC, however, is taking steps to rise to the challenge. "We set up a Central Application Processing Unit in order to streamline the process of applications in September 2014. It is a single point access for institutions to submit letters of intent, applications for Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment and Annual Quality Assurance Report," a senior NAAC official said.

HT.COM ND 04.03.15 P-6

# Universities and colleges having NAAC accreditation in Delhi

Gauri Kohli

Delhi may be a popular study destination among students from across the country, but the number of graded colleges and universities isn't too high. Students should, therefore, check whether the institution they are applying to is accredited by NAAC.

Currently, just seven universities and 15 colleges are NAAC accredited in Delhi. These are Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University (GGSIPU), Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD), Jamia Hamdard and Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Jamia Millia Islamia and Delhi University have already applied for NAAC accreditation and are awaiting a review.

"AUD applied for NAAC accreditation the moment it was eligible for it (ie after it completed five years). It is the only university among the other 20-odd new ones that were launched around 2007-08, to apply for accreditation," says Praveen Singh, convener, NAAC Steering Committee, Ambedkar University Delhi.

"The NAAC Peer Team visited AUD during September 2014. After meetings with all the faculty and staff, the committee awarded AUD a sterling 'A' grade in December 2014," adds Singh.

GGSIPU was first accredited with NAAC in 2007 with 'A' grade for a five-year period. The university was again accredited with highest grade 'A' in 2013 for a further five-year period" adds Singh.

## INSTITUTES WITH NAAC ACCREDITATION

NAME OF THE INSTITUTION	GRADE	ACCREDITATION VALID UP TO
Bharat Ratna Dr BR	A	December 2019
Ambedkar University	A	October 2018
Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University	A	October 2018
Jamia Hamdard University	A	July 2017
Jawaharlal Nehru University	A	July 2017
Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan	A	July 2017
School of Planning and Architecture	B	September 2019
TERI University	A	March 2018

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MANAGEMENT GRADUATES OPT OUT OF PLACEMENT PROCESS

# These IIM students show the way to self-reliance

**RATHIN DAS**rathindas\_2000@yahoo.com  
Ahmedabad, 3 March

As many as 11 graduating students from the premier B-school, Indian Institute of Management (IIM) here have opted out of the placement process this year to start their own ventures.

These IIM-A graduates have declared their intentions to start own ventures in diverse fields like adventure tourism, e-commerce, data analytics, food processing and such non-conventional sectors.

This is not the first time that the IIM-A graduates have opted out of the placement process, the trend having started about a decade back



with nearly half a dozen choosing to start their own ventures every year.

The most publicised of these IIM-A graduates opting out of the placement process to start up own ventures was one poor student who had helped his mother earn a livelihood by selling idlis on Marina Beach of Chennai, later studied at this B-School on merit scholarship and finally started his meals supply chain successfully.

In encouraging this trend, the IIM-A administration too had chipped in with allowing those opting out to participate in the placement process during the next two years should their own venture runs aground.

But, according to sources in the IIM-A, none of these graduates have yet availed themselves of the opportunity offered under the 'placement holiday' scheme.

Prof Satish Deodhar, Fac-

ulty in-charge of Placements at the IIM-A, told The Statesman on Tuesday that no one coming back seeking placements is a good sign. "That means they are successful in whatever ventures they have started on their own", he added. These eleven are among the batch of 375 IIM-A graduates who have successfully completed their placement process which ended early this week.

More than 115 firms which participated in the placement process this year include the usual consulting companies, multinational banks and financial institutions, e-commerce sector, cola companies and consumer goods manufacturing and marketing firms.

## Why should students go for a graded university?

Hindustan Times (Jaipur)

The Capital may be a popular study destination among students from across the country, but the number of graded colleges and universities isn't too high. Students should, therefore, check whether the institution they are applying to is accredited by NAAC.

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AUD applied for accreditation in October 2013 and submitted the Self Study Report (SSR) in March 2014. The SSR was prepared by a committee comprising faculty and staff. The committee took responses and feedback of all stakeholders of the university.

“The NAAC Peer Team visited AUD during September 2014 and AUD was awarded an ‘A’ grade in December 2014,” adds Singh.

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## Universities push for quality

Hindustan Times (Lucknow)

### After a UGC notification, many institutes of higher learning are opting for NAAC accreditation to improve standards of teaching, learning, student support and research, etc

In a move in January this year aimed at improving the quality of higher education in the country, the University Grants Commission (UGC) issued a notification to universities/institutions to apply for accreditation with the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) by December 31, 2015. Such accreditations make it easier for students to opt for quality institutes to study in. For universities, access to grants becomes easier.

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For HEIs, getting a rating as high as A means they score really high on all assessment parameters, which include curriculum, infrastructure, research, leadership and teaching. “In the last 20 years of its existence, NAAC has accredited 192/700 universities and 5627/38,000 colleges in the country. Only one-third of such institutions are rated Grade A. This explains why quality of education is so low and the number of unemployables so large. We, therefore, do not figure in the top 200 institutions of the world,” says MM Ansari, member, UGC.

“To incentivise the institutions to go for accreditation, both UGC and MHRD have tied development grants to the accreditation process. The results of the accreditation process will determine the grants that each university will receive. So it is now imperative for universities to not only maintain quality but to also go for peer review. Even grants to be disbursed through Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan are tied to NAAC accreditation,” says Praveen Singh, convener, NAAC Steering Committee, Ambedkar University Delhi.

With an increasing number of HEIs sending letters of intent to NAAC, the council is faced with a challenging task of dealing with application rush.

“There are inordinate delays in carrying out the accreditation process as a large number of requests for accreditation are piling up with the NAAC. This is attributable to inadequate infrastructure with NAAC or lack of appreciation of the problem by UGC/MHRD. In fact, it is lackadaisical attitude of the concerned authorities, which has led to perpetuation of ‘quality crisis’ in the country,” adds Ansari.

NAAC, however, is taking steps to rise to the challenge. “We set up a Central Application Processing Unit in order to streamline the process of applications in September 2014. It is a single point access for institutions to submit letters of intent, applications for Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment and Annual Quality Assurance Report,” says a senior NAAC official.

## Modi budget fails to cheer scientists

<http://www.vancouverdesi.com/business/modi-budget-fails-to-cheer-scientists/851286/>

Bengaluru, March 3 (IANS) — The national budget presented by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has been hailed as “growth oriented” by the corporate sector, but Indian scientists seem not too enthused and say the much-touted “achhe din” (good days) are yet to arrive.

According to the budget documents, the government has provided Rs.356 billion (\$6 billion) for research to various departments in the ministries of science, atomic energy defence, health, earth sciences, new and renewable energy and space. This allocation is 17.2 percent more than last year’s but is still a mere two per cent of the total Rs.17,775 billion available with the government for expenses this year.

The scientists, who were expecting some big bang announcements and a huge hike for scientific research in the wake of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s rhetoric in the past, are depressed that Jaitley’s 90-minute speech left no cause for such celebration.

They note that the word science finds only a cursory mention in the 47-page budget document and that, unlike in previous years, science and technology does not get the prominence it deserved.

It is sad that funding for science in India continues to remain sub-optimal, C.N.R Rao, scientific adviser to former prime ministers since 2004 and a Bharat Ratna awardee, lamented. “I do not know what to say except that (our) science continues to be in bad shape due to inadequate funding,” Rao told IANS.

Only 10 days ago, thousands of PhD scholars turned the spotlight on the poor state of research funding through nation-wide protests demanding a hike in the fellowship amount. Noting that no new science projects have been initiated in this year’s budget, Rao said “even existing programmes” are already feeling the crunch.

“My appeal to the prime minister is that even now it is not too late to rectify the mistake and allocate additional funds for science,” Rao said. “The increase required is so small (in comparison to the available total budget) that it will not even be noticed.” He hoped that the science academies in the country would collectively take up the issue.

M. Vijayan, former president of the New Delhi-based Indian National Science Academy and a professor in the Indian Institute of science in Bengaluru, said he too was surprised at science not getting emphasis on allocations in the budget. “The hike in allocation this year is only slight, and our science spending is still hovering around 0.8 per cent of the GDP – far short of the two percent target,” Vijayan told IANS.

The finance minister’s announcement that the government will set up one more IIT in Karnataka and six more institutions of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences-type has not brought any cheer either. Rao says this is a futile exercise “as many such institutions established earlier remain headless and without laboratory facilities”.

But K. Vijay Raghavan, secretary in the department of biotechnology, an incurable optimist, did not think the government has let scientists down. “The budget is good news (for science). No cuts, a modest increase and new opportunities in entrepreneurship,” Raghavan told IANS.



Subhash Lakhota, professor emeritus at the Banaras Hindu University, cautioned that though the modest increase is good news, “an allocation, by itself, does not mean much unless the amount is really made available in good time”.

Last year, the allocated budget of the government laboratories and grants for research projects were cut by as much as 35 percent. “This feature is a greater worry as it upsets any planning by the agencies,” Lakhota told IANS.

But the government’s move to establish an Innovation Promotion Platform involving academics, entrepreneurs, and researchers and another mechanism called SETU (Self-Employment and Talent Utilisation) to support all aspects of start-up businesses in technology-driven areas has been widely welcomed.

“If administered well, these steps can act as a force multiplier for both the Make in India initiative and for employment generation,” Bhaskar Ramamurthi, director of the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, told IANS.