

# GOVERNMENT LOOKS TO REDUCE COMPLIANCE IN EDUCATION SECTOR

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In a changing environment, the higher education administration needs to evolve and take stakeholders along rather than create roadblocks, the official said.

The Union government is now pushing to reduce the compliance burden and improve ease of doing business in the education sector.

The education ministry, which has traditionally been criticized for over regulation, has started a process where it is asking all stakeholders, including universities, academicians, regulators, industry chambers, and private education players, to give them details on what needs to be done in the academic and administrative space to ease compliance.

"The ministry aims to improve the ease of doing business in higher education. There are too many compliances and issues that both institutions and students would like to come down so that it becomes easier to function," said Shalini Sharma, principal, education and innovation, at industry body Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

"The education ministry had an online deliberation on the issue, in which CII participated like several other stakeholders including university vice chancellors. We have given our views on issues that affect the students, on regular focus on information that is archaic and is not required to be collected every year from institutions. Soon, we shall send them a detailed formal feedback," Sharma said.

The education ministry has identified areas such as governance reform, reduction in repetitive demand for information, and use of technology, said a government official who did not want to be named. In a changing environment, the higher education administration needs to evolve and take stakeholders along rather than create roadblocks, the official said. This will aid implementation of the new national education policy.

"Certain areas have been identified for streamlining and reduction of compliance burden, including governance and regulatory reforms, re-engineering of process, and increased use of technology to help students, faculty, and staff. Repeated demands for information by regulatory bodies leads to a lot of repetitive work. Only information that adds value should be insisted on from higher education institutions," the education ministry said.

This is line with the government's thrust on ease of doing business and ease of living and a series of stakeholder engagements will take place for which the University Grants Commission (UGC) will be the nodal body, the ministry said. The vice-chancellors have also been asked to hold internal consultations on the subject.

"Key areas that need to be addressed for ease of doing business are ease of access to finance at a lower cost, reduced focus of regulators on physical infrastructure, and focus must be on output that an institution offers," said H. Chaturvedi, director, Birla Institute of Management Technology (Bimtech) in Greater Noida.

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