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NCERT Granted Deemed University Status — NEP 2020 Milestone

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NCERT Granted Deemed University Status — NEP 2020 Milestone

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✍ WHY IN NEWS

The Ministry of Education notified the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) as a deemed-to-be university on March 30, 2026 under Section 3 of the UGC Act, 1956, empowering it to offer degree, post-graduate, doctoral, and specialised programmes in education, aligned with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.



BACKGROUND: WHAT IS A DEEMED-TO-BE UNIVERSITY?

Under **Section 3 of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956**, the Central Government may, on the advice of the UGC, declare an institution to be a “deemed-to-be university” if it is of sufficiently high standard in a specific field of study. Such institutions:

- Can award degrees (UG, PG, doctoral)
- Are subject to UGC regulations
- Cannot be affiliating universities (cannot affiliate colleges)
- Enjoy greater academic autonomy than regular colleges

The UGC maintains different categories: “Deemed-to-be Universities” (regular) and distinct categories for specialised institutions.

NCERT’s notification places it in a “**distinct category**” — unique status reflecting its specialised education research mandate.

NCERT: INSTITUTIONAL PROFILE

Establishment and Mandate

- **Established:** September 1, 1961 (as a Society and a literary, scientific and charitable institution)
- **Under:** Ministry of Education (formerly HRD Ministry)
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi (Sri Aurobindo Marg)
- **Mandate:** Advise the Central and State governments on school education; develop model curricula, textbooks, and teaching materials; conduct educational research; train teachers

Key Functions

- 1 **Curriculum development:** National Curriculum Framework (NCF) — most recent NCF 2023 (for school education), aligned with NEP 2020
- 2 **Textbooks:** Produces NCERT textbooks (Classes I–XII) — syllabus for CBSE schools; base for UPSC, NDA, and other competitive exams
- 3 **Teacher training:** B.Ed., M.Ed. programmes at constituent RIEs
- 4 **Research:** Educational research, educational psychology, and applied pedagogy

CONSTITUENT UNITS GAINING UNIVERSITY STATUS



The deemed university status covers NCERT and its **6 constituent units**:

INSTITUTION	LOCATION
Regional Institute of Education (RIE)	Ajmer, Rajasthan
Regional Institute of Education (RIE)	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
Regional Institute of Education (RIE)	Bhubaneswar, Odisha
Regional Institute of Education (RIE)	Mysuru, Karnataka
Regional Institute of Education (RIE)	Shillong, Meghalaya
Pandit Sunderlal Sharma Central Institute of Vocational Education (PSSCIVE)	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

RIEs: Role

RIEs were established in 1963 to develop model schools, train teachers, and serve as regional hubs for NCERT's educational programmes. The five RIEs collectively cover all geographic zones of India.

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES ENABLED

With deemed university status, NCERT can now offer:

- **Undergraduate programmes** in education and related fields
- **Post-graduate programmes** (M.A./M.Sc. in Education, Educational Psychology, etc.)
- **Doctoral programmes** (Ph.D.) — previously required affiliation with other universities
- **Specialised/diploma programmes** in teacher training, curriculum design, vocational education
- **Integrated programmes** (e.g., 4-year B.Ed. as mandated by NEP 2020)

Restriction: NCERT cannot engage in commercial or profit-making activities. The university status is specifically for academic and research advancement.

CONNECTION TO NEP 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 mandates:

- **4-year integrated B.Ed.** as the minimum qualification for school teachers by 2030
- **Two-year B.Ed.** for those with a 3-year UG degree; **1-year B.Ed.** for those with a 4-year UG
- NCERT, with its RIEs, is the natural anchor institution for implementing this transition
- NEP also calls for NCERT to develop a **National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)** framework



Without degree-granting power, NCERT could not run these programmes independently. The deemed university status is thus a prerequisite for NCERT to fully implement NEP 2020's teacher education vision.

UGC AND HIGHER EDUCATION REGULATION

UGC Act, 1956

- **University Grants Commission (UGC):** Established under the UGC Act, 1956
- **Functions:** Coordinate and determine standards in university education; grant recognition to universities; advise Central/State governments
- A UGC-recognised “deemed university” can use the word “University” in its name and award degrees per UGC norms

Recent UGC Reforms (2023-2026)

- **UGC Regulations 2023:** Allowing multiple entry and exit for UG degrees (as per NEP 2020)
- **Academic Bank of Credits (ABC):** Digital credit repository enabling transfer of academic credits across institutions
- **National Credit Framework (NCrF):** Unified credit system across school, vocational, and higher education

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2 — Governance / Education

- NCERT's role in school education and textbook policy
- NEP 2020: Key features, implementation, teacher education reforms
- UGC Act and regulatory framework for higher education
- Constitutional provisions: Education in Concurrent List (Article 246 + List III, Entry 25)

GS Paper 1 — Social Issues

- Quality of school education in India; teacher training deficits
- Regional disparities in educational outcomes; role of RIEs in bridging gaps

Prelims Key Facts

- NCERT: Est. 1961; Ministry of Education; HQ: New Delhi
- Section 3, UGC Act, 1956 — deemed university provision
- 6 constituent units: 5 RIEs + PSSCIVE (Bhopal)



- RIEs at: Ajmer, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Mysuru, Shillong
- NEP 2020: 4-year integrated B.Ed. by 2030

★ FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NCERT DEEMED UNIVERSITY:

Notified: March 30, 2026; Ministry of Education

Under: Section 3, UGC Act, 1956 (distinct category)

NCERT est.: September 1, 1961; HQ: New Delhi (Sri Aurobindo Marg)

6 constituent units: 5 RIEs + PSSCIVE (Bhopal)

RIEs: Ajmer (RJ), Bhopal (MP), Bhubaneswar (OD), Mysuru (KA), Shillong (ML)

NEP 2020 CONNECTION:

4-year integrated B.Ed. mandatory by 2030

NCERT as anchor for National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST)

KEY UGC TERMS:

UGC Act, 1956; Section 3: deemed university provision

Academic Bank of Credits (ABC); National Credit Framework (NCrF)

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION:

Education: Concurrent List, Article 246 + List III, Entry 25

Sources: [Ministry of Education](#), [UGC](#), [PIB](#)

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