

State Legislative Brief

Goa

The Goa Public Universities Bill, 2025

Key Features

- The Bill establishes public universities in Goa consisting of a cluster of colleges.
- Upon creation of a public university, the colleges will stand disaffiliated from Goa University. Staff of colleges will be deemed to be the staff of the newly created public university.
- The Governor of the state will be the Chancellor, and will head the governing body.
- The Vice-Chancellor will be appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the state government. The Vice-Chancellor will be the principal executive officer, and will head the executive council.

Key Issues and Analysis

- The Bill provides for creation of a university by notification. In contrast, most central and state public universities are established by law.
- The Bill may not secure autonomy of the university. Several powers remain with the state government and the Chancellor.
- The Bill does not provide for constitution of a search committee to recommend appointment of the Vice-Chancellor. This is in contradiction with UGC Regulations, and also different from various central and state laws.
- The Bill may not provide for autonomy of colleges. Several matters related to colleges remain at the discretion of the university.

PART A: HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILL

Context

Education is in the concurrent list of the Constitution, i.e., both Parliament and State Legislatures can make laws on the subject.¹ In addition, the Centre has powers to determine standards for higher education while States have powers to incorporate, regulate, and wind up universities.^{2,3} Parliament has passed a law to establish the University Grants Commission (UGC), which oversees and sets standards for higher education.⁴

Universities are established either by an Act of Parliament or an Act of State Legislature, or deemed-to-be so by the UGC.⁵ As of November 2025, there are 1,368 universities in India.⁶ Four of these are in Goa. These include: (i) Goa University, a state public university, (ii) Indian Institute of Technology, Goa and National Institute of Technology, Goa, which are institutions of national importance set up under Acts of Parliament, and (iv) India International University of Legal Education and Research, a private university set up by a state law.

Currently, many colleges may be affiliated to one university. As of December 2025, there are 49,482 affiliated colleges and 2,454 constituent colleges in the country.⁶ Affiliated colleges are institutions recognised by the university.⁷ Constituent colleges are colleges which are entirely part of the university.⁹ Goa University has 67 affiliated colleges.⁸ It does not have any constituent colleges.⁸ The National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) notes that large affiliating universities result in low standards of undergraduate education.⁹ It recommends every college to become either an autonomous degree granting institution or a constituent college of a university. The National Knowledge Commission (2009) had observed that colleges can be provided autonomy either as individual colleges or as a cluster of colleges.¹⁰ In 2016, Maharashtra had passed a law empowering the state government to set up a university comprising a cluster of colleges.

The Goa Public Universities Bill, 2025 was introduced in the Goa Legislative Assembly in August 2025. It seeks to provide for establishment of public universities comprising a cluster of colleges. It aims to implement the goals of NEP. It has been referred to a Select Committee (Chair: Mr. Subhash Shirodkar) for scrutiny.

Key Features

- **Public universities:** The Bill provides for establishing public universities in Goa. A public university will comprise a cluster of colleges as agreed by the management of such colleges. These may include government colleges or government-aided colleges that fulfil norms or guidelines laid down by the government. A public university will be set up by a government notification. These universities will impart multidisciplinary education. They will be funded by the Consolidated Fund of the State.

- **Transitional provisions for cluster colleges:** Colleges will stand disaffiliated from the existing Goa University upon establishment of the public university. However, existing students will continue to be students of Goa University. Assets and liabilities of colleges will continue to be with the management of colleges. It will be deemed that the management has permitted use of assets to the public university for administrative and academic purposes. All teaching and non-teaching staff of colleges will be deemed to be the staff of the public university. Terms and conditions of service will continue to be decided by the management of the colleges, except for promotion and career advancement (to be provided by statutes of the public university).
- **Administrative structure:** The Bill specifies the administrative structure of public universities. The authorities of a public university will include: (i) governing body, (ii) executive council, (iii) academic council, and (iv) finance committee. The Governor of the state will be the Chancellor of the university and will head the governing body. Functions of the governing body include reviewing broad policies, programs, accounts, and audit reports. The executive council will be the principal executive body and will be headed by the Vice-Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellor will be appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the state government. Both the governing body and the executive council will have representatives from the state government, experts from the industry, academicians, retired judicial officers, and certain other officers of the public university. Functions of executive council, academic council, and finance committee will be specified under the statutes of the university. The principals of colleges will be appointed by the management of the colleges upon approval of the Vice-Chancellor.
- **Statutes, ordinances, and regulations:** The executive council will have powers to make statutes with approval of the Chancellor. The statutes will provide for matters such as: (i) appointment, duties, and tenure of teachers, officers, and authorities of the university, (ii) dispute resolution mechanism, (iii) creation and abolition of departments and centres of studies, and (iv) fees chargeable from the students.

Ordinances and regulations will provide for matters such as admissions, conduct of examinations, management of departments and colleges, and financial procedures. The Vice-Chancellor will make the first ordinance and regulations with approval from the governing body. These may be added or amended by the executive council, subject to approval by the governing body.
- **Dissolution of the university:** Grounds to dissolve a public university include: (i) mismanagement, (ii) maladministration, (iii) indiscipline, and (iv) economic hardships. It may also be dissolved if the university does not meet its objective. The governing body is required to submit the proposal for dissolution to the state government in advance. The state government may ask for dissolution upon consultation with UGC and regulatory bodies of the state or central government. The university will be dissolved after the last batch of students complete their academic programs. The expenditure for taking over the university may be met through the funds of the university. The assets and liabilities of public universities will belong to the state government and management of the colleges in case of dissolution of the university. The expenditure during dissolution may also be met by disposing the properties and assets of the public university.
- **Appeal:** An employee or a student of the university may appeal to the executive council against a decision of any officer or authority. The procedure of appeal will be provided through the statutes of the university.

PART B: KEY ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

Manner of establishing a university different from other laws

Bill:
Clause 3

Under the Bill, the state government may establish a public university by notification. Such a university will have powers to grant degrees. This is different from other central and state university laws. Central universities have been established by either: (i) a specific Act of Parliament (such as the Delhi University Act, 1992), or (ii) one common Act (such as the Central Universities Act, 2009) where Parliament amends the schedule to the Act each time to establish a new university. Most states also follow these two methods (see Table 2 in the annexure). In states such as Gujarat (2023) and Maharashtra (2016), new public universities may be established by amending the schedule to the Act by government notification.^{24,28} In Maharashtra, such a notification may be issued only after a resolution is passed in this regard by both Houses of the State Legislature.²⁸

The Bill may not ensure autonomy of universities

The National Education Policy, 2020 (NEP) aims to move towards full institutional autonomy for higher education institutions. This includes academic and administrative autonomy. It envisages governance of higher education institutions by a high-qualified independent board of governors. It states that the board should be empowered to take all decisions regarding governance and make all appointments. The National Knowledge Commission (2009) had observed that it is imperative to separate governance mechanisms of the university from

the day-to-day operations of the government, to protect functional autonomy.¹⁰ Under the Bill, the state government and the Chancellor, who is the Governor of the state, will have several powers with regard to a public university. We discuss these powers below.

Constitution of the governing body

Bill:
Clause 19 Under the Bill, the governing body will have at least 19 members. The Governor of the state will be the Chancellor of the University and the head of the governing body. The Education Secretary and Finance Secretary of the state government will be ex-officio members of the governing body. Several members of the governing body will be nominated by the state government. These include: (i) five outstanding academicians, (ii) three industry experts or industrialists, and (iii) one retired judicial officer. This is in contrast with NEP which recommends that the selection of new board members should be done through an expert committee appointed by the board itself.

Under the IIM Act, 2017, the board of governors itself nominates four eminent persons to be members of the board.¹¹ Under the Central Universities Act, 2009, the Chancellor is the head of the university. He is appointed from amongst eminent persons by the Visitor (the President of India) based on recommendations of a search committee.¹² The composition of the Court under the 2009 Act, which has similar powers to the governing body under the Bill, is determined by the statutes of the university.¹³

Appointment of the Vice-Chancellor

Bill:
Clause 10(2) The Bill provides that the Vice-Chancellor of a public university will be appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the state government. The mechanism differs from several state and central laws, which constitute a search committee to recommend appointments (Table 2 in the annexure for inter-state comparison).¹⁴ The National Knowledge Commission (2009) had recommended that the appointment of Vice-Chancellors must be made through search process and peer judgement alone.¹⁰ It observed that the appointment process must be independent of direct or indirect interventions of the government.¹⁰ NEP (2020) also recommends empowering the board to appoint the head of the institution.⁹ It further recommends that the selection of the head of the institution should be done through a rigorous, impartial, merit and competency-based process led by an expert committee. Such a committee should be constituted by the board.

The UGC Regulations also require constituting a search-cum-selection committee for appointment of Vice-Chancellors.¹⁵ The Supreme Court (2022) held that the appointment of the Vice-Chancellor must follow UGC Regulations and state Acts must be amended to align with UGC Regulations.¹⁶ It observed that UGC Regulations become a part of the UGC Act being a subordinate legislation.¹⁶ In case of any conflict between central and state law, central law will prevail as per the Constitution.¹⁶ Hence, any appointment contrary to provisions of UGC Regulations amounts to violation of the central law.¹⁶

Removal of the Vice-Chancellor

Bill:
Clause 10(5) The Bill specifies that a Vice-Chancellor may be removed if his continuance is not “in the interest of the university”. Other central and state laws specify a list of grounds on which a Vice-Chancellor may be removed. For instance, in Gujarat, a Vice-Chancellor may be removed if he is: (i) declared insane by the Court, (ii) convicted for an offence involving moral turpitude, (iii) is declared an undischarged insolvent, (iv) physically unfit, (v) associated with any political party, or (vi) refuses to carry out duties or abuse powers.²⁴ It may be argued that the powers to remove the Vice-Chancellor under the Bill are wider than other comparable laws. A lack of clear and narrow grounds may reduce certainty of the term for the Vice-Chancellor and affect independent functioning.

Powers of the Chancellor

Bill:
Clause 9, 10(2), 10(5), 29 Under the Bill, the Chancellor has several powers with regard to the university. Other than the appointment and removal of the Vice-Chancellor, these also include: (i) suspending the Vice-Chancellor pending an enquiry, (ii) issuing directions in the interest of the university, (iii) initiating proceedings against the officers of the university for violation of statutory provisions, (iv) approving statutes framed by the executive council, and (v) annulling any proceedings which are not in conformity with the law. The IIM Act originally entrusted the board of governors with powers to issue directions and institute inquiries against officers.¹⁷ However, through an amendment in 2023, these powers have subsequently been given to the Visitor (the President of India).¹⁸

Control of the state government on creation of posts and certain appointments

Bill:
Clause 5(xxv), 5(xxvi) The Bill states that the university may create the following posts only with the approval of the state government: (i) professorship, associate professorship, and any other teaching or academic posts, and (ii) administrative and ministerial and other necessary posts. It may be argued that powers to create positions and appoint staff forms part of administrative autonomy that the NEP aims to provide. As per the NEP, appointment-related decisions should be made by the board.⁹ Under the Central Universities Act, 2009, the university does not require approval of the government to create posts and appointments.¹⁹

Powers of the state government to inspect

Bill:
Clause 49

According to the Bill, the state government will have powers to inspect a public university. Inspection powers may be exercised to ascertain the standards of teaching, learning, examinations, and research, or any other matter. The government may cause an assessment to be made as per the prescribed manner. The recommendations of the government will be binding on the University. Such powers to the government may help ensure the accountability of the university. The National Knowledge Commission (2009) had also emphasised on making universities accountable.¹⁰ It also stated that inspections are a form of state control.¹⁰ The Commission observed that to meet the objective of accountability, the power of the state should not be increased.¹⁰ The NEP recommends audits, public disclosures, and regular assessment by experts as accountability mechanisms.⁹

Autonomy of colleges

Bill:
Clause
5(vi), 5(viii),
5(xv),
12,
14,
30(1)(p), 34,
35

Under the Bill, a university will comprise a cluster of colleges. Yashpal Committee (2009) had also recommended clubbing a number of colleges in clusters and recognising them as universities.²⁰ It had observed that along with this change, colleges should also be given more autonomy in academic, administrative, and financial matters. It had also recommended giving teachers autonomy in academic matters. This includes framing of courses and assessing the students. Under the Bill, several matters with regard to colleges may be at the discretion of the university. The university will have powers to determine the criterion for admission in cluster colleges and hold examinations to confer degrees. It will also have powers to inspect facilities and academic infrastructure and take measures to ensure proper standards of instruction. The principals of cluster colleges will be appointed by the respective college management upon the approval of the Vice-Chancellor of the university. The executive council of the university will make ordinances and regulations which will provide for the matters in relation to the management of cluster colleges. Staff of colleges will be deemed to be the staff of the university. Their career advancement and promotion will be as per the statutes of the University.

Under the Maharashtra Public Universities Act, 2016, a college or a department of a university may apply to the university for grant of autonomous status.²¹ Autonomous status will empower such an entity to prescribe own courses of study, evolve its own teaching methods, and hold examinations, subject to procedure under the statutes of the university. Under the Bill, such mechanisms will be at the discretion of the university.

Annexure

Table 1: Comparison of the Bill with recommendations of the National Education Policy, 2020

Para	Recommendation	Bill clauses
10.3	The university will be a multidisciplinary institution	4(iii)
10.3	The university will offer high quality teaching, research, and community engagement	4(vi), 4(xiv), 4(xvii)
10.10	Institutions will have option for open distance learning	Not specified
10.10	Institutions will have option for online programs	4(iv)
10.12	Affiliated colleges to be converted into either autonomous degree granting colleges or constituent colleges of a university	3(1), 38
11.12	Institutions to focus on research and innovation, establish industry-academic linkage, and interdisciplinary research	5(ii), 5(iii), 5(v)
19.2	The board of an institution to govern the institution independently	Not provided
19.4	The head of the institutions to be appointed by eminent expert committee constituted by the board	Not provided

Sources: The National Education Policy, 2020, Union Ministry of Education; PRS.

Table 2: Comparison of Public Universities Acts in select states

State	University established by	Chancellor of the university	Vice-Chancellor (VC) appointed by	Search committee for VC appointment	Statutes made by	Statutes require Chancellor's approval/assent	Powers to inspect university with
Andhra Pradesh ²²	Act	Governor	State government	Yes	Governing body	Yes	State government
Bihar ²³	Act	Governor	Chancellor	Yes	Governing body	Yes	Chancellor
Gujarat ²⁴	Notification	Governor	State government	Yes	Governing body; subject to a model statute prescribed by government	No; instead requires the assent of the government	State government
Karnataka ²⁵	Act	Governor	Chancellor, in concurrence with the state government	Yes	Executive council	Yes	Chancellor
*Kerala ²⁶	Act	Governor	Chancellor	Yes	Governing body	Yes	State government
Madhya Pradesh ²⁷	Act	Governor	Chancellor	Yes	Coordination Committee	No	Chancellor
Maharashtra ²⁸	Notification, upon a resolution passed by both Houses	Governor	Chancellor	Yes	Governing body	Yes	State government
*Tamil Nadu ²⁹	Act	Governor	Chancellor [#]	Yes	Governing body	Yes	State government
Telangana ³⁰	Act	Governor ³¹	State government	Yes	Executive council	Yes	State government
Uttar Pradesh ³²	Act	Governor	Chancellor	Yes	Executive council	Yes	State government
*West Bengal ³³	Act	Governor	Chancellor	Yes	Governing body	Yes	State government

Note: *Public universities in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal are established under separate Acts for each university. The Table compares the provisions for Kerala University, Madras University, and Calcutta University, respectively.

Kerala and West Bengal passed amendment Bills in 2022 to remove the Governor as the ex-officio Chancellor.^{34,35} As per news reports, the President withheld assent to these Bills.^{36,37}

[#]In April 2025, the Supreme Court granted deemed assent to universities laws amendments which transferred powers to appoint VC from the Chancellor to the government.^{38,39} The government notified amendment laws for universities other than Madras University.⁴⁰ In November 2025, in response to a Presidential reference, the Supreme Court opined that the Constitution does not allow for 'deemed assent'.⁴¹

Sources: Refer to endnotes marked in "State" column; PRS.

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2. Entry No. 66, List I-Union List, Seventh Schedule, The Constitution of India.
3. Entry No. 32, List II-State List, Seventh Schedule, The Constitution of India.
4. The University Grants Commission Act, 1956, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/1627/1/195603.pdf>.
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6. Dashboard of All India Survey on Higher Education as accessed on December 19, 2025, Ministry of Education, <https://dashboard.aishe.gov.in/hedirectory/#/hedirectory>.
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12. Second Schedule, The Central Universities Act, 2009, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2080/7/a2009-25.pdf>.
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18. Section 10A, Section 17, The IIM Act, 2017, as amended up to September 2025, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2248/1/AA2017-33.pdf>.
19. Section 6 (vi), (ix), The Central Universities Act, 2009, <https://www.indiacode.nic.in/bitstream/123456789/2080/7/a2009-25.pdf>.
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