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Exams are not confined to educational institutions but are also used in other areas to evaluate talent for employment or elevation. In this context, the cancellation of two exams held in Uttar Pradesh in February is disturbing. The police recruitment exam taken by over 43 lakh candidates was held across 2,385 centres across 75 districts and had a mere 0.014 probability of success. The State Public Service Exam for the post of Review Officers had over 10 lakh candidates and was held across 2,000 centres in 58 districts.

There are two aspects of concern. One is the mental stress and anxiety of the candidates who would have not only worked to prepare but would have had to deal with the logistics and expenses to take the exam. Second is the reason for cancellation: leaking of the question papers. There is talk of coaching centres, individuals and candidates being involved in this.

In the past

The issue of question paper leakages has been a vexing problem in education. Just take a look at the following examples: January 2024, Rajasthan Teacher Recruitment Exam; April 2023, a teacher leaked a Class 10 exam paper in Telangana; 2020, four government employees were arrested with regard to a recruitment exam for junior engineers in Rajasthan; 2003, the CAT exam paper was leaked;



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1997, the IIT-JEE question paper was leaked in some centres, including Tirupati.

Today with exams being conducted both offline and online, the question paper may be a printed one or an electronic one.

In the first case, the issue of security begins at the press. The printer should be selected on the basis of reputation rather than the “lowest quote”. A representative of the examining organisation should be physically present during printing, packaging and despatch of the papers.

The packets should be received by the superintending officer of each centre who should store them securely until the exam. Anna University, Chennai, had adopted this procedure for

its entrance exams, including the Tamil Nadu Professional Courses Entrance Exams, without a problem.

On the other hand, when the question paper is sent to the exam centre to be printed, the email should be encrypted and the password made available only to the designated authority.

Online mode

When it comes to online exams, in many cases, the paper may differ from candidate to candidate. However, technical glitches can affect the conduct of the exam and also have an impact on the question paper security.

This is what happened in the first edition of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) in 2022 and the

exams had to be postponed in many centres

In 2018, technical snags of a large magnitude occurred in the online exam conducted by the Ministry of Education of the United Arab Emirates. The authorities immediately switched over to offline mode in the affected institutions and got over the difficulty with only 30 minutes delay. Such measures can be adopted by allowing for adequate manpower and basic materials such as a master copy of the question paper kept ready to create the required number of hard copies in convenient nodal centres.

The writer is Former Professor and Director, Entrance Exams and Admission, Anna University, Chennai.



OFF THE EDGE  
Nandini Raman

I am 24 years old and have a B.Com with over two years of work experience. I want to pursue an MBA and have quit my job to prepare for the CAT. Am I too old to do an MBA? Natasha

Dear Natasha,

You are not too old to study further. But ensure that doing an MBA aligns with your long-term goals and objectives. Identify your specialisation, as it will contribute to your professional development. Your work experience will offer a practical advantage. The CAT is a tough exam, so, develop a study plan and consider joining a coaching centre or an online training programme that will give you the discipline and time management skills you need.

I am currently pursuing a degree in Economics. How can I get a related job in the U.K.? Aparna

Dear Aparna,

Do well in your current course and cover key and relevant areas such as microeconomics, macroeconomics, and econometrics. Apply for a Master's programme in the U.K. based on your career goals, as many positions require a Master's or Ph.D. Stay updated and informed about the current trends, policies, and industry developments. Specific job

## Gain practical experience

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This career counselling column may help

requirements will vary and so you might need to tweak your application and resume to highlight relevant skills and experiences. Work on developing your quantitative and analytical skills and proficiency in statistical software like Stata, R, or Python; gain practical experience through internships and summer jobs; and join professional associations to network and meet professionals. Attend career fairs, conferences, seminars and company presentations to learn about job openings. Explore portals like Indeed, LinkedIn, and industry-specific websites to find jobs. Build an online presence to showcase your education, skills and experience.

I completed B.Sc. Industrial Microbiology and Biochemistry in 2023. I wish to pursue M.Sc.Psychology. Is this possible? Hisana

Dear Hisana,

In India, the eligibility criteria for M.Sc. Psychology is an undergraduate degree in Psychology. But many universities also accept students from diverse undergraduate Science backgrounds. So check the admission criteria and specific requirement of the institutions you are interested in. While it possible to pursue a Master's in Psychology abroad even if your

undergraduate degree is in a different field, you may need to fulfil certain prerequisites by taking additional classes or credits to meet the requirements. Some universities offer pre-Master's programmes or post-Baccalaureate courses to help students bridge this gap and complete this mandatory requirements. Check the college website for admission requirements and start a discussion with the academic counsellor to understand their process. You might also need a GRE score, letters of recommendation (LORs) from professors or professionals about your abilities and academic potential in the field of psychology and a compelling statement of purpose (SOP) that outlines your motivation to do a Master's in the field. Highlight all relevant experiences, such as internships, research projects, or work experiences that demonstrate your interest in and commitment to the field.

I am 21 years old and in the final year of B.A. English through IGNOU. While I want to do my PG, I am unable to do so due to my financial situation. What are the possible options for a job? Sabith

Dear Sabith,

Financial difficulties can be a challenge. However, there are various job options

available. Your skills in communication, critical thinking, and writing are valuable in several fields. Here are some potential options that may not be directly related to your field of study but can serve as a stepping stone to gaining work experience and financial stability. Explore opportunities and study further when your financial situation improves. You can be: a content writer, creator or editor in websites, blogs, and marketing materials; a copywriter in advertising agencies and marketing firms for advertisements, promotional materials, and campaigns; a social media manager to manage the online presence of organisations and companies; a customer service representative at a call centre, addressing inquiries and concerns; or a freelance writer on platforms like Upwork or Fiverr. Other options include teaching, tutoring, working as administrative assistant, a data entry operator, digital marketing assistant or sales and marketing assistant

**Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.**

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to [eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com](mailto:eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com) with the subject line Off the Edge

## Grappling with uncertainty

As the U.K. enters recession, Indian students in the country face challenges in finding jobs and deal with financial strain



Akash Dhanurkar

The U.K.'s economy has officially entered recession, as its GDP contracted by 0.3 % in the fourth quarter 2023. According to reports from Reuters, the recession is the longest run without growth on record as GDP per person shrinks. This has left international students from India worried about their future in the face of economic turmoil. Many have expressed their fear of exhausting their post-study work visa without getting a job.

Job crisis

Vaishnavi Jawalkar, a student of Media Management from the University of Stirling, says she is worried about her future and is struggling to find a part-time job, let alone a full-time one. “The U.K. government and the universities made every effort to invite international students to pursue world-class education but have failed to abide by their initial promise of helping students get a job. Taking a loan of nearly ₹25 lakhs has compelled me to compromise on my career and rely on part-time jobs for daily expenses,” she says. “When I arrived in the U.K., nearly 34 renowned universities across

the country launched a strike due to issues related to pay and working conditions. Our academics, which we considered our priority, suffered.”

Usually students complete their dissertation in August-September and work part-time until they receive their graduation certificates, when they start looking for full-time work. Nikita Shibhate, a student in a London-based university, points out, “It isn't practically possible for us to visit India from September to January and then return to apply for post-study work visas. There is no clarity on what needs to be done after submitting our dissertation. After carefully reviewing the situation, I have decided to return to India and drop my plan to work in the U.K, as the cost of living is rising.” She also mentions that many scammers are using the students' desperation to find a job to cheat them of money.

Other aspects

Ashutosh Ghorpade, a student from Cardiff University, raises another aspect of the problems students are facing. Students are charged for healthcare facilities “but many international students go back to India to seek medical treat-

ment because in order to get a medical appointment in the NHS-run hospitals, we have to wait for six months, suggesting a collapse of the U.K.'s health industry.”

Saumitra Kokane, another student from the same university, says that international students are not give a comprehensive understanding of the U.K.'s job market. “Our job application is rejected even before it is considered for a screening round. Recession has just made things worse in a job market where international students are already struggling to find a place.”

Reports also suggest that a section of students who have got a job have scrapped the idea of accepting sponsorship, due to the rising cost of living and increasing work pressure. Mihica Bakre, who has been working for two years, isn't keen to extend her visa through sponsorship. “There are multiple things I may miss in India but taking decisions by considering the future of the U.K. is crucial. The job insecurity is constantly hovering around international residents.”

The writer completed his M.A. in International Journalism from Cardiff University recently.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

**Kotak Suraksha Scholarship Programme**

An initiative from Kotak Securities Limited (KSL) to support students. **Eligibility:** Open to PwD applicants from Classes 9 to 12 or pursuing general/professional graduation in India who have secured at least 55% marks in their previous academic year. Annual family income must not exceed ₹3.2 lakhs **Rewards:** Up to ₹1 lakh a year **Deadline:** April 30 **Application:** Online [www.b4s.in/edge/KSSPI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/KSSPI)

**University of Bath GREAT Scholarship, India 2024**

An opportunity offered by the University of Bath in collaboration with the British Council's Study UK campaign. **Eligibility:** Open to Indian students with a valid passport who hold an offer from the University of Bath to

pursue a full-time, Postgraduate taught Master's course starting in 2024 and are classified as international students for tuition fee purposes. **Rewards:** £10,000 for one year **Application:** Online **Deadline:** May 20 [www.b4s.in/edge/UBGOI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/UBGOI)

**UCL-GREAT Scholarship**

A joint initiative of University College London (UCL), the British Council, and the GREAT Britain Campaign. **Eligibility:** Open to Indian nationals who have applied to study for a full-time Master's degree at UCL in 2024/25 and have received an offer for a place by the closing date. **Rewards:** £10,000 for one year **Deadline:** **Application:** Online **Deadline:** May 7 [www.b4s.in/edge/GUCI](http://www.b4s.in/edge/GUCI)

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

### SAVE THE DATE

**SBI Youth for India Fellowship**

The SBI Foundation invites applications for the 13-month programme, which aims to empower youth to create transformative change in rural communities. **Themes:** Health, Rural Livelihood, Food Security, Environmental Protection, Education, Water, Technology, Women's Empowerment, Self-Governance, Social Entrepreneurship, Traditional Craft and Alternate Energy. **Eligibility:** Those between 21 and 32 years who are either Indian citizens or hold an OCI card or are citizens of Nepal or Bhutan and are committed to advancing sustainable development objectives in rural areas. <https://bitly.ws/3gcbR>

**James Dyson Award**

The James Dyson Foundation, invites entries of novel inventions that tackle a pressing real-world problem.

**Eligibility:** Entrants must be, or have been within the last four years, enrolled for at least one semester in a UG or PG engineering/ design-related course at a university in a country or region chosen to participate in the James Dyson Award. **Last date:** July 17 <https://bitly.ws/3gcbL>

**M. Sc. Advanced Pharmaceutical Manufacturing**

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow, the U.K., invites applications for its one-year course starting in September 2024. **Eligibility:** Minimum second-class (2:2) Honours degree in Science or Engineering; two references (at least one academic). Minimum IELTS score of 6.0 (with no component below 5.5). <https://bitly.ws/3gcbA>

**MBA International Programme**

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU), Israel, invites applications for its one-year MBA International Programme at the Guilford Glazer Faculty of Business and Management. **Eligibility:** UG degree from

an accredited university with minimum GPA of 80 (according to the Israeli grading system); Minimum GMAT score of 580 and quantitative score of 40. Minimum TOEFL score of 80. **Last date:** October 15 <https://bitly.ws/3gi8H> PGDM at BSM Badruka School of Management (BSM), Hyderabad, invites applications for its two-year fully residential programme. **Eligibility:** Class 10 and 12 from a recognised board. UG or PG degree in any discipline from a recognised institution. Valid score in CAT, GMAT, XAT, TS ICET, ATMA or any other state level management entrance exam. <https://bitly.ws/3gice>

**PG programmes at UPES ON**

UPES ON, the digital education arm of UPES University, has partnered with L&T Edutech, to introduce two new PG Programmes in Industrial Safety and Renewable Energy, and a Bachelor of Computer Applications (BCA). **Last date:** June 15 <https://bitly.ws/3gcy9>

### Awards

Team Invictus from IIT Kharagpur was the winner of the student track of the third edition of TomorrowLAB, a business competition conducted by Tata Steel.

**The School of Law at Mahindra University**

concluded its first International Moot Court Competition, with participation from 24 law colleges. Hon'ble Justice R. Subhash Reddy, Former Supreme Court Judge, and Narsimha Reddy Anantha, Chairman of Telangana Bar Council, inaugurated the event. Ram Manohar Lohiya National Law University,

Lucknow, came first followed by Dharmashastra National Law University, Jabalpur.

The sixth edition of the **MCX-IPF COMQUEST 2024**, a national commodity market educational quiz for students, organised by the MCX Investor Protection Fund (MCX-IPF), saw participation from 5900 students from over 485 academic institutions. Ivan Mohanty of IIFT, Kolkata, was declared the winner.

Shuvankari Biswas, Tiyyasha Guha, Sohini Dey and Subhasree Roy, Class XI students from **Techno India Group Academia South Kolkata** won the second prize at the World Science Congress Poster Making

Competition. The students was mentored by Subhro Saha, assistant teacher at Techno India Group Academia.

Prof. Nilam Kaushik of the Strategy area of **IIM-Bangalore** has been conferred with the ‘Young Woman Researcher in Innovation Management’ award at the ninth Venus International Women Awards by the Venus International Foundation for her contribution and achievement in the discipline of Management.

MBA students from **CMR Institute of Technology (CMRIT)** took the top three ranks at the 23rd VTU Convocation for the

academic year 2022-23. Thanu G. took home four gold medals along with the first rank in MBA studies across Karnataka, followed by Aishwarya A in second place and Apoorva M.S. coming third.

KPIT Technologies announced the winners of **KPIT Sparkle 2024**, its mobility software design and development innovation contest. Team G-Rex from Kongu Engineering College, Perundurai, Tamil Nadu, won the Platinum Award and Team Krenoviantz from Sri Krishna College of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore, won the Gold Award.



