

# DU Vice-Chancellor: 'Fourth year a good step for growth of students... will shape them into bright citizens'

If teachers take up extra courses, they will be paid an additional Rs 50,000. Many teachers will be happy with this, says the VC

Delhi University Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Singh defends the flexibility provided by the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework (UGCF) 2022 under which the four-year undergraduate degree is being rolled out this year, outlines the rationale behind its design, and explains how the varsity plans to address concerns being raised across campuses.

DU is moving into the fourth year of undergraduate education for the first time. What is the strategy?

Our strategy is to ensure maximum students join the fourth-year programme. We were giving three tracks for Honours students, but now we have introduced an additional track for Programme students in which the student can complete the fourth year only by studying coursework, without taking on projects. This will be particularly beneficial for students of SOL (School of Open Learning) and NCWEB (Non-Collegiate Women's Education Board), but all three other tracks are also available to them. So, it is up to the student.

The implementation of UGCF is part of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 rollout. How do you see this benefiting students in the long run?

The four-year degree has come from NEP 2020. Fourth year is essential and it's a good step for the growth of students... shaping them into the bright citizens of our country. But if someone wants to pursue research, they can pursue a PhD too. But if one wants to pursue post-graduation (PG), a one-year PG will also be available for students. It's a student-centric choice-based system, and students don't have to run around unnecessarily. The fourth year will be a terminal degree, and it is a flexible system.

The UGC has directed institutions to adopt an '8 to 8' teaching schedule to accommodate academic load. How is DU responding to this?

Worldwide, universities run for longer periods in a day... (having classes) 8 am to 8 pm is a good concept. Infrastructure will improve in colleges... already (infrastructure) is improving based on the need and capacity demanded by students. Confusion on campus is natural, as this is being implemented for the first time. But this will stabilise as we go forward.

Research is now central to undergraduate education. Are DU colleges and faculty prepared for this shift?

Research is very important for higher education institutions. Worldwide, if you look at big universities, they are all research-oriented... This is definitely going to be a shift for our teachers. Colleges are already submitting requests to the UGC for additional postings.

For the fourth year to begin smoothly, we've made arrangements for guest faculty and teachers would be paid and given incentives for putting in extra hours. If teachers take up extra courses, they will be paid an additional Rs 50,000. Many teachers will be happy with this."

A concern raised by faculty and students is that BA Programme students are being denied 'Honours with Research' tag, even after completing the 4th year. Is this justified?

We don't think it's unfair. The students have been admitted into the BA Programme and not under Honours and will be leaving with an Honours degree at the end of four years. This is because the focus of BA Programme students is not on a particular discipline. After the third year, they will focus on the main discipline and will be awarded an Honours.

For Science students, research requires lab space and specialised equipment. How will DU address these needs?

Requirements and expansion of labs will be decided based on how many students will join the fourth year. We will get a clear idea of the total number of students in August. If there are challenges, we will create additional infrastructure. We can also think about permitting students to use labs in various departments, depending on availability.