

# Is it the end of MPhil programme

**While NEP has specified discontinuation of MPhil degree, DU is allowing MPhil admissions for 2021-22, but few varsities are planning to do away with it**

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One of the major changes introduced by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 is the discontinuation of MPhil (Master's in Philosophy) programme. Instead, there is an emphasis upon a four-year bachelor's degree and a research intensive master's degree.

Despite the uncertainty, University of Delhi (DU) has received more than 12,500 applications for MPhil and PhD during the ongoing admission process.

Rajeev Gupta, chairperson (Admissions), shares, "A policy floated by the Centre applies to individual universities only when we receive instructions from our respective executive councils. Till then, it is not possible to scrap an entire course."

DU is planning on implementing changes mentioned in the NEP from next year (2022), which may include scrapping MPhil degree, adds Gupta. "For the time being, however, we are continuing with our MPhil course," he says.

Various other universities have done away with the MPhil course. Kanchan Mullick, spokesperson, University of Hyderabad (UoH), explains, "UoH set up a committee for implementation of NEP, which recommended that the varsity should discontinue the MPhil programme from 2021-22."

The committee placed its recommendations before the academic council (AC) held in March, 2021, she adds. "The recommendations were accepted by the AC. So, after adopting NEP last year, UoH has discontinued MPhil admissions from 2021-22," clarifies Mullick.

Abhay G Chebbi, prochancellor, Alliance University, Bengaluru, says that the varsity has never made an MPhil degree a compulsion for PhD candidates. "Graduates and postgraduates both can enrol in our PhD course. Thus, this NEP guideline has not affected us," he clarifies.

## Future of MPhil candidates

Gupta clarifies, "The duration of an MPhil course is around 18 months, including six months of thesis work. As per norms, all students who are applying for the MPhil course this year will be exempt from the initial coursework that they are required to do as PhD candidates in DU. Thus, MPhil candidates will not suffer in their academic pursuits in any way."

Mullick says that MPhil students admitted last year and those finishing their MPhil from previous years will be awarded the degree as per the eligibility criteria and the period duration at UoH, as prescribed by University Grants Commission (UGC). "The grace period that has been set by the UGC will be followed, and these degrees will be valid," she adds.

As per the grace period, which has been changed thrice since the announcement of NEP 2020, students who were scheduled to submit their MPhil thesis in June 2020, have been given extra three semesters, explains Mullick. “These candidates can now submit their thesis by December 2021,” she says.

### **Need seamless implementation**

Ujjwal Kumar Chaudhary, former pro vice-chancellor, Adamas University, Kolkata, shares that NEP is student-oriented, but unless its implementation is done seamlessly, confusion will prevail. “Speedy implementation of NEP is a must so that students’ confusion can be addressed at the earliest. The validity of an MPhil degree is one of the related issues,” he explains.

