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Now NET scores will be valid for PhD admissions

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NEW DELHI: The University Grants Commission has announced that National Eligibility Test (NET) scores will be valid for PhD admissions from 2024-25 onwards, thus eliminating the need for multiple entrance exams. The decision was taken at the 578th UGC meeting based on expert committee recommendations.

Candidates qualifying under different categories will have their NET scores contribute significantly to their admissions, with scores remaining valid for one year. The exam is conducted twice a year – June and December and the scores are at present used for Junior Research Fellowship (JRF) and as eligibility for appointment as assistant professor.

According to UGC officials, the commission had constituted an expert committee to review the provisions of the exam and based on the recommendations it has been decided that from the academic session 2024-25, the score can be used for admission to PhD programmes.

“Starting from the academic session 2024-2025, universities nationwide will have the opportunity to utilize NET scores for admissions to PhD programmes, replacing the need for separate entrance tests conducted by individual universities and higher education institutions (HEIs). This marks an important step in streamlining the admissions process and enhancing accessibility for aspiring doctoral candidates.

“By leveraging the NET, HEIs can offer greater flexibility to students, allowing them to utilize their scores to apply

for PhD programmes across various institutions,” said M Jagadesh Kumar, chairperson, UGC.

“It eliminates the need for students to prepare and appear for multiple entrance tests conducted by different universities. Additionally, the biannual administration of the NET provides students with increased opportunities to secure admission to their desired PhD programmes.

“We encourage all HEIs to adopt NET exam scores for PhD admissions starting from the 2024-2025 academic session,” added Kumar.

The UGC in its official notification stated that from June 2024 onwards, the NET candidates will be declared eligible in three categories – eligible for admission to PhD with JRF and appointment as Assistant Professor; eligible for admission to PhD without JRF and appointment as Assistant Professor; eligible for admission to PhD programme only and not for the award of JRF or appointment as Assistant Professor.

“Result of UGC NET would be declared in percentile along with the marks obtained by a candidate to utilise the marks for admission to PhD. The JRF-qualified students are admitted into the PhD programme based on an interview as per the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedures for Award of PhD Degree) Regulations, 2022.

“For students who qualify in Categories 2 and 3, 70% weightage will be given for test scores and 30% for the interview for admission to PhD programmes. The PhD admission will be based on the combined merit of NET

marks and the marks obtained in the interview or viva voce," the notification said.