

*JNUTA Office, Sept 11, 2022*

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# Press Conference

JNUTA



# 1. The Mess in JNU Admissions

*No sign of admissions this year!*

## JNU stares at the loss of a full semester!

- *UG Programmes:*
  - around 430 students are admitted.
  - CUET score still awaited. **No admissions so far**
- *PG Programmes*
  - around 1500 seats in MA, MCA, M.Tech, MPH
  - **no clarity on exam or results.**
- *PhD Programmes*
  - **NTA reneged on its undertaking** to conduct PhD admissions!
  - **none of the 83 PhD programmes will have students** this year. 11 schools/special centres, which only have a PhD programme, will not get to teach this year at all!

Table 1: Hours lost as a result of delayed admissions

	Minimum teaching per week (as per credit requirements)	Hours lost as on 12th September (i.e 7 weeks)	Hours that will be lost in 12 weeks
UG	24 hours	168	288
PG	16 hours	112	192
PhD	16 hours	112	192

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# How did we end up here?

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- ❖ The most immediate cause is ‘**one nation, one exam**’ policy embodied by CUET 2022
- ❖ The very idea of a “**one-size-fits-all**” entrance examination entails the **erosion** of university autonomy and an evisceration of the University Acts
- ❖ The extremely **adverse** impact of the CUET based system of admissions:
  - ❖ it is creating insurmountable **losses** in the field of teaching and learning for current and future generations
  - ❖ causing irreparable **harm** to democratic governance in the university.
- ❖ **Opting out of the CUET** for all programmes is the only way forward,

## 2. Why CUET hasn't worked?

# Why “one-size-fits-all” CUET won’t work?

- ❖ The **exclusive** use of MCQs for admissions is not an academically valid practice in JNU faculty’s estimation.
- ❖ Even for **screening** purposes, MCQs have not really stood the test of fairness, whether natural sciences or other streams.
- ❖ Of the **67 universities surveyed internationally** (table 2), **none** employs solely an MCQ testing for admissions in PhD programmes.

Table 2: How many international universities solely employ MCQ in PhD Admissions?

Universities surveyed in	Number of universities	Sole MCQ testing
USA	21	0
Europe	34	0
Others (Asia incl. India, Australia, South Africa (1),	11	0
Total	67	0

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# Why MCQ is not a good idea?

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- ❖ The MCQs are totally unsuitable for PhD admission which is supposed to test conceptual thinking and research aptitude. It is said in favour of MCQs that they are an objective and fool proof method of assessment. This is not true
  - ❖ In the social sciences, MCQs are only based on names of books, authors and dates of events and do not test conceptual understanding.
  - ❖ MCQs can include highly subjective, erroneous, biased and ridiculous questions and answers choices – some examples
  - ❖ MCQs will be based on selective texts in the curriculum and not the others. This will eliminate those students from other universities whose curriculum did not include those particular texts
  - ❖ The wording of the questions could be ambiguous and misleading and subject to multiple interpretations eliminating students who were right.
  - ❖ One MCQ question can offer the cue or answer for another question
  - ❖ The number of best MCQ questions are limited and if we standardize the curriculum, they will have a pattern and become repetitive, which the coaching classes will make the students memorize.
- ❖ We are not saying no change is required; we are prepared to rethink admission modalities and arrive at the optimal solution which includes short questions, MCQs based on given passages for comprehension and a few essay questions.

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# Sciences and MCQ

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- ❖ Myth: Science is objective, a well posed question has a single answer. Therefore, MCQ is adequate.
- ❖ Fact: Assessment of the path to the solution is more important than the solution itself.
- ❖ MCQ exams evolve into increasingly specialized test of the more obscure facets of a subject. This spawns coaching factories, which are also naturally discriminatory and exclusive.
- ❖ Compulsion and lack of manpower to handle large numbers have lead to the adoption of MCQ. It is not ideal. Even as a first cut-off, it has been found to be flawed. (Results of the cut-off MCQ and subsequent evaluation do not necessarily match.)

# CUET has wrecked the academic calendar

	Usual Semesters in JNU	Now (tentatively)
Monsoon	18 weeks (July 23 - Dec 5)	10/12 weeks
Winter	18 weeks (Jan 5 - May 18)	6-12 weeks

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# CUET and the Undergraduate/SLL&CS calendar

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- ❖ Two Academic calendars, one for continuing students (B.A-2, 3; M.A-1,2) and one for new entrants (B.A.1 and M.A.1 and Ph.D.) in the SLL&CS has created havoc for learning and teaching.
- ❖ Because the new students have to complete the academic year along with the continuing students, their semesters are badly truncated.
- ❖ The new MA-1 students are expected to do compulsory non-credit courses of B.A.3. However, because of the different academic calendars, they are able to attend only two or three classes as the B.A. 3 semester is drawing to an end when the M.A. 1 new students start their semester. This is a mockery of learning and teaching.

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# CUET and Special Programmes in JNU

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- ❖ JNU is unique in having Centres that are interdisciplinary where students from diverse disciplines are admitted.
- ❖ As an example, the Centre of Social Medicine and Community Health that offers a Masters in Public Health is unique because it is located in the School of Social Sciences unlike similar programmes that are associated with medical colleges.
- ❖ The Masters Programme is open to medical, nursing, AYUSH and a range of allied disciplines.
- ❖ The diversity of disciplinary backgrounds requires intensive teaching to build the core concepts in the basics of biology, epidemiology, biostatistics and social sciences. The pedagogy covers classroom teaching, tutorials and discussions.
- ❖ The online, truncated semesters have severely compromised the academic content despite the best efforts of the teachers.
- ❖ The MCQ format of entrance exams for the Masters and direct PhD programmes for Centre's like ours, restricts our ability to assess domain knowledge that includes many disciplines, knowledge based on practice experience, ability to reason and write.

3. Who loses the most?

Poor students lose the most!

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## Youth Dividend Lost!

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- ❖ For at least the majority in these demographics of students, **seeking admissions in private universities is not an option.**
- ❖ The delay in admissions in universities participating in the CUET has effectively caused a break in these students education.
- ❖ Lack of admissions may, in all likelihood, push them out of the education system altogether. With one stroke, **the youth dividend, we often taken pride in, goes to waste.**

Table 3: Regional, Income and Gender Profile of JNU students

% of students joining JNU	2019-20
of rural provenance	50%
with incomes below Rs 12000 p.m.	47%
women students	45%

*PhD seats lost due to new UGC rules*

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## Loss to the Nation

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- ❖ Unlike earlier, the current UGC rules have created a hierarchy in supervision with Assistant Professors being eligible to supervise 4, Associate Professors 6 and Professors 8 PhD students.
- ❖ The lack of promotions, for eg., **has resulted in a loss of 378 PhD seats in 2021-22 alone.**
- ❖ This is a huge loss to higher education and to the nation! Even in narrow budgetary sense, this is a gross underutilisation of funds!

### Lack of Promotions = Loss of 378 PhD Seats in 2021-22

■ 2 per head/yr ■ 4 per head/yr

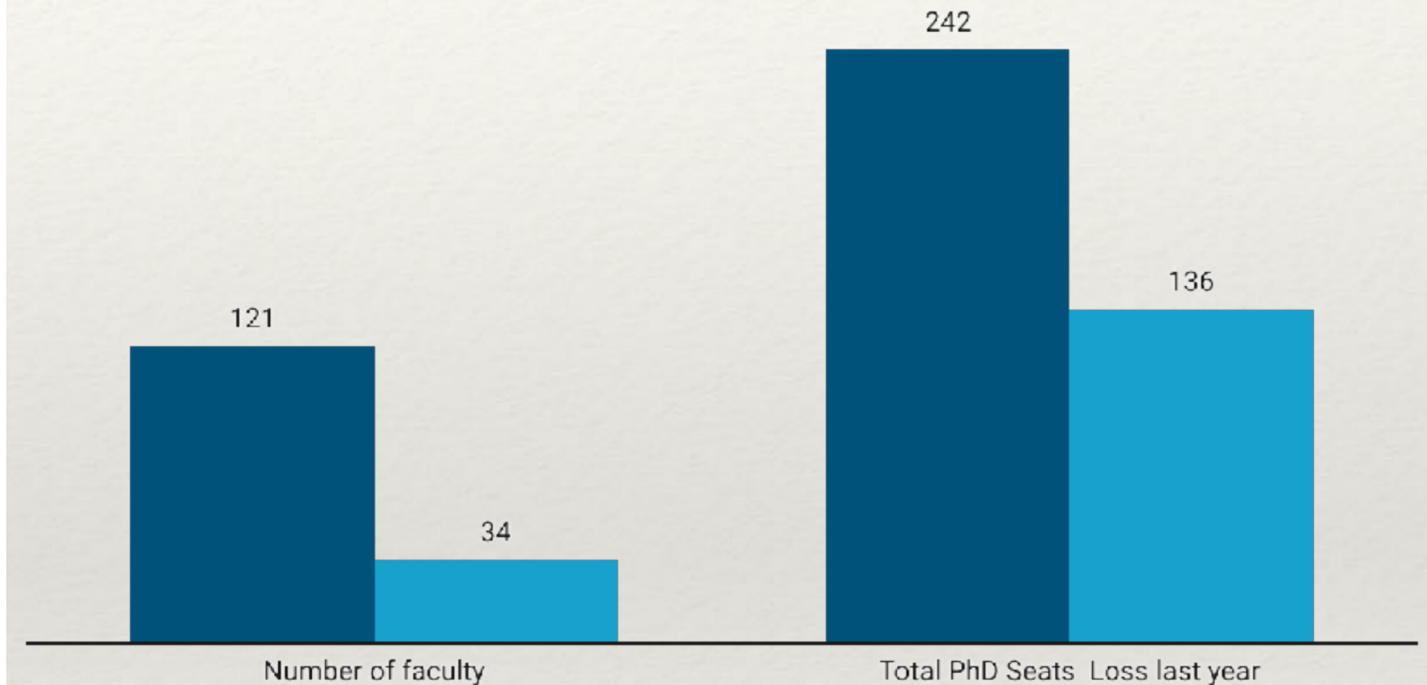


Chart: Created by JNUTA • Source: JNU Website • Created with Datawrapper