

JNU TEACHERS CALL FOR THE UNIVERSITY'S WITHDRAWAL FROM UGC-NTA COMMON ENTRANCES (CUET) FOR ALL PROGRAMMES OF STUDY

JNU stares at the loss of a full semester!

CUET 22 replicates the pandemic

The Monsoon semester 2022-23 is wasted since no admissions have taken place so far. This means **truncated semesters** for all the academic programmes resulting in a drastic fall in the quality of teaching. This is true for all the universities across the country, which opted for the CUET.

Poor students lose

50% of the students studying in JNU come from **rural India** or hailing from families with **incomes less than Rs. 12000** a month. With them failing to get admissions, the country loses its youth dividend.

“One-size-fits-all” is a disaster

Our survey tells us that **no university** in the world conducts MCQ based exams for its research programmes.

Loss to the nation

Given the hierarchy in supervision rules of the UGC, and the lack of promotions in JNU, there is a **loss of 378 PhD** seats in 2021-22 alone.

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

The mess in JNU admissions

The JNUTA has called this press conference to draw attention to the crisis and the waste of resources created by the adoption of the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) at all levels of the university's entrance examinations. As of today (12 September 2022), admission to none of the university's programmes (UG/PG/PhD or even its part-time certificate and diploma courses) has taken place.

In the **three** programmes that JNU offers, facts are as follows:

UG programmes:

JNU offers only a few **UG programmes**—around 430 students are admitted to an integrated BA-MA degree in 10 centres (mostly foreign languages) in the School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies. The School of Sanskrit and Indic Studies admits around 20 students for an integrated UG/PG programme. Though the conduct of the examination is over, the CUET score card is still awaited. **It remains**



unclear as to when admissions to JNU will start and when classes for the UG programmes can begin. Such a time lag between students finishing their schooling and beginning their university learning on the national scale is simply inexcusable, as not only does it fritter away the intellectual energies and enthusiasm of eager young minds, it also creates uncertainty and despondency amongst them.

Postgraduate programmes:

The largest chunk of admissions, i.e. around 1500 seats, are for entry into the postgraduate programmes—MA, MCA, M.Tech, MPH. The timeline of CUET-PG examinations is running behind the UG schedule. The PG-CUET examinations were just held between 1 and 11 September 2022, but the calendar going forward has not been announced. **Again, there is no clarity on when the application process to JNU will commence.**

PhD programmes:

JNU's longest-duration admissions are at the research level and involve the lengthiest process. As late as in the third week of August 2022, **NTA reneged on its undertaking to 20 Central universities**, including JNU, that it would conduct a PhD-CUET, and has asked universities to make their own arrangements. As we have detailed in an earlier release, **JNU has not initiated any of the required statutory processes** to discuss and determine the modalities of securing its PhD admissions. The other route to PhD admission is through the UGC-JRF. While the UGC-CSIR exam for five science subjects has been conducted in Feb 2022, **the UGC—NET examination for over 80 subjects has not been held for close to 15 months** (it is now scheduled between 20-30 September 2022). In all likelihood, **none of the 83 PhD programmes in JNU will have students this year. 11 schools/special centres, which only have a PhD programme, will not get to teach this year at all!**

In all likelihood, **only about 450 new students (in undergraduate programmes)** are potentially going to be able to join classes in the calendar year 2022. **JNU thus stares at the loss of at least 4 to 6 months of teaching** for all of its programmes (as the first semester for new students in JNU would normally run from July to December), and this too at a time when the virulence of the pandemic has subsided across the country and the world.

How did we end up here?

The most immediate cause of this colossal waste of educational resources is the unthinking, chaotic, and irresponsible **'one nation, one exam' policy embodied by CUET**. As has been extensively reported, the delays in the completion of CUET have disrupted the academic calendar of all participating Central Universities, and thus far none of these universities has been able to initiate admissions to its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. But the problem goes far deeper than a shaky start occasioned by poor planning and execution by the UGC and NTA, as **the very idea of a "one-size-fits-all" entrance examination entails the erosion of university autonomy and an evisceration of the University Acts** under which public institutions like JNU were set up by the Indian Parliament. Although the JNU Act has conferred the power of making all decisions about admissions—such as the schedule, pattern and mode of entrance examinations—on its Academic Council alone, **the existence of CUET (as mandated by the New Education Policy) has ensured that no decision about admissions can be taken within the university anymore, thus effectively undoing the writ of Parliament.**

Furthermore, the disruptions caused by the failed CUET process come as the proverbial last straw for most universities, who have over the past six years, been on the receiving end of extreme neglect, particularly in terms of faculty hiring as well as promotions. Over the past six years or so, universities have been made the victims of policy decisions and governance styles (particularly in the form of UGC Regulations) that have undermined their academic autonomy and internal democracy, thereby significantly hobbling their ability to take decisions in the best interest of education as a whole. The imposition of the CUET thus exacerbates an already grave situation of crisis. Through this press conference, the JNUTA EC seek to apprise the press of **the extremely adverse impact of the CUET based system of admissions on JNU’s educational programmes: it is creating insurmountable losses in the field of teaching and learning for current and future generations, besides causing irreparable harm to democratic and participative governance in the university.** We will show that **opting out of the CUET for all programmes is the only way forward**, as the failures at the level of UGC will inevitably have a cascading effect—delays and opacity this year shall only lead to further delays and even more unaccountability in the years to come.

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

NEP/CUET have compelled JNU faculty to adopt academically invalid practices

JNU’s reputation, both nationally and internationally, have been built on the rigour of its student selection procedures as much as the research produced by its students and faculty. The exclusive use of MCQs for admissions is not an academically valid practice in JNU faculty’s estimation. It is also not an accepted practice internationally. Table 2 reports the results of a survey that JNU faculty did to examine the international acceptability of a **solely** MCQ based entrance procedure.

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

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

CUET has wrecked the academic calendar

Continuance in common admissions will lead to a complete disruption of JNU’s academic calendar, which already has a multiple entry system in SLLCS. The foreign language programmes are integrated BA (6 semesters) + MA programmes (4 semesters) of ten semesters duration. New entrants for an MA in a foreign language are taught together with the 7th semester students of the 5 year integrated programme. The delay in the admissions to the PG programmes of the school has resulted in a situation whereby SLLCS teachers have to teach the BA 7th semester twice—once beginning in September 2022, and once new MA students are admitted. Another way that the collapse of the academic calendar impacts the university is the loss of its multidisciplinary character of its programmes, which involve optional courses offered across semesters to all students of the university. **With unsynchronised semesters, students in two intersecting semesters cannot opt for the entire range of courses being offered in the university at the time! For programmes whose curriculum/syllabi crucially relies on the cross-listing of courses, this has proved disastrous.**

Who loses the most?

JNU is a university that caters to poor students—about half of our students are from rural India, hailing from families with incomes less than Rs. 12000 a month, and are women (table 3). 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. For those students amongst these who would be relying on university fellowships to sustain themselves and their families, the 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%

Loss to the Nation

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 country! Even in narrow budgetary sense, this is a gross underutilisation of funds!

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

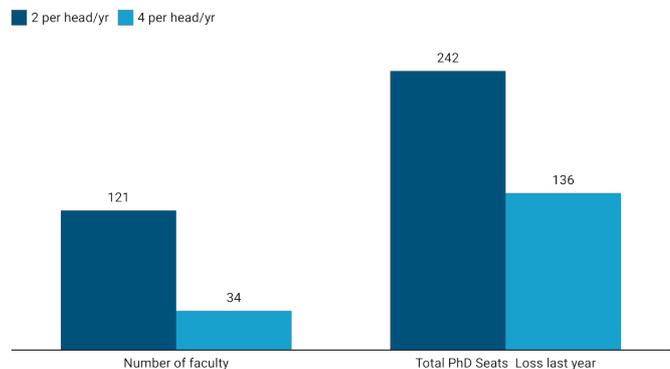


Chart: Created by JNUTA • Source: JNU Website • Created with Datawrapper

CUET 2022 has replicated the pandemic

In the past, the university’s solution to loss of teaching time due to the pandemic was to **truncate the semester, so as to complete the programme on schedule.** However, that emergent situation having passed, a new pandemic-like situation has been created by the CUET. With no signs of the new batch joining JNU any time soon and a loss of one full semester, these students will be completing their degrees in shorter semesters. As teachers at every level, we reject any move to truncate the semester, as this does not do justice to the syllabi of JNU’s innovative pedagogical programmes and only reduces the quality of learning.

The primary reason why JNU finds itself in such a disastrous situation is the **complete collapse of JNU’s statutory bodies, mainly due to the previous administration.** The systematic destruction of the powers of statutory bodies during this ‘proto-NEP’ period, the violation of the principles of seniority and rotation in the appointment of Chairs, the misrule by a small ideologically motivated coterie together with witch hunting and victimisation, suppression of dissent, as well as falsification of minutes has ensured that the AC has been reduced to a rubber stamp for decisions that only harm the institution.

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