

Varsities to guarantee graduates a set of skills

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Each varsity will prepare Graduate Attributes, which are qualities students will acquire after a course

The higher education sector in Kerala has taken its first step towards outcome-based education, which will make the graduates competent enough to meet social expectations.

The Kerala State Higher Education Council (KSHEC) has set in motion a process to assist State universities in adopting the mechanism. The universities will identify their Graduate Attributes, which indicate skills and qualities that graduates will develop, in addition to knowledge in their core subjects, while doing a course. At a recent meeting of its governing body, Education Minister C. Ravindranath directed the Vice Chancellors to entrust the faculty deans with the task.

The council has already commenced workshops for finalising the skills for various courses, the basic requirement for the task.

Workshops, led by N.J. Rao of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru, were recently conducted for the chairpersons and members of the Board of Studies of the University of Kerala and the Mahatma Gandhi University. The next workshop will be organised for the faculty of the Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat) in February.

Council vice-chairman Rajan Gurukkal said no university in the country had prepared Graduate Attributes which, he pointed out, comprised of competencies guaranteed to graduates. The learning outcome or competencies each university promises will vary, while certain fundamental attributes of international validity will be common to all, he said.

“Development of competencies such as higher cognitive ability, sharper analytical faculty, better language power to communicate the fundamentals of the discipline, and application of knowledge, besides basics of computational skill, interdisciplinary learning under ICT environment will be the common elements in the Graduate Attributes of the universities in Kerala,” Prof. Gurukkal added.

KSHEC Member Secretary Rajan Varughese said that declaration of Graduate Attributes would bring many advantages. These included high academic quality and a student-centric approach. “Prior statement of attributes will ensure clarity in the objective of teaching and help students in self-evaluation. It will democratise and make transparent the processes of teaching and evaluation.”