Entrance Test for Central Universities

Why in news?

The UGC has announced the introduction of Central University Entrance Test (CUET), which is now mandatory for undergraduate admission at any of the 45 central universities in the country.

What is CUET?

- CUET had been launched as the Central Universities Common Entrance Test (CUCET) in 2010.
- But it had failed to gather steam since only 14 central universities had adopted it until last year.
- CUET is a revamped version of CUCET and it's now compulsory for all 45 central universities to adopt it.
- The National Testing Agency (NTA) will conduct CUET for all central universities in the first week of July.
- It is a computer-based test that will be held in two shifts and can be taken in 13 languages.
- But unlike JEE (Main), there will be no common counselling for admission to central universities based on the CUET score.
- Each university is free to define its admission process based on the merit list prepared by the NTA.
- At this moment, CUET is compulsory for central universities but the government is open to other institutions, including private universities.
- Conducting admissions to postgraduate programmes through CUET is not compulsory for central universities and are free to adopt CUET for PG admissions or stick to their own admission process for now.

National Testing Agency (NTA) was established as a Society under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860. It is responsible for conducting competitive entrance exams like NEET, JEE, CTET, GATE, GPAT, GMAT, CAT, UGC NET, etc.

What is the need for a common entrance test?

- The main aim behind a common entrance test is to reduce the burden on higher education aspirants.
- It will provide equal opportunities to students from across boards, especially to those from the northeast and rural areas.
- The CUET is also expected to reduce financial burden on parents and students, as candidates will only have to write one exam.

What will CUET test a candidate on?

- The entrance test will have multiple choice questions based on the content of NCERT

textbooks.

- CUET will essentially have three parts.
- **Testing the language**- This will consist reading comprehension, questions on vocabulary, synonyms and antonyms, besides other things.
- There will be a choice of 13 languages.
- Apart from compulsorily appearing for one language test (out of 13 languages), a candidate will also have the option of taking another test in an additional language from a basket of 19 languages.
- **Testing domain-specific knowledge**- This section offers a total of 27 domains, and a candidate can choose to have her knowledge tested in at least one and a maximum of six domains.
- Each central university will specify which domain-specific test a candidate has to take for which programme.
- **General test**- It will have questions on general knowledge, current affairs, general mental ability, numerical ability, quantitative reasoning, logical and analytical reasoning.
- A candidate will appear for the general test only if it's desired by the programme and university of choice.

What does this mean for UG admissions at central university?

- **Admissions-** A student's Board marks will have no role in determining her admission to a college or a programme and will be based only on CUET score.
- Colleges affiliated to Delhi University or any central university may use Board marks as the minimum eligibility criteria for admission.
- **Skill-based courses**- For skill-based courses that have major practical components, such as music, painting, sculpture and theatre, universities will be allowed to conduct practical exams or interviews along with CUET.
- **Professional programmes**- For professional programmes such as engineering and MBBS, central universities will admit through the entrance exams JEE (Main) and NEET respectively.

References

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