

Queues in Gujarat get longer for admission in PhD studies

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Institutes in A'bad have witnessed a windfall in number of applications for doctoral studies.



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A dwindling interest among students to pursue research remains a panacea for Indian academia, but recent spurt in number of PhD applications received by city-based institutes augurs well for doctoral studies.

Take, for instance, Gujarat Technological University. GTU has recently conducted an entrance examination for admission in PhD studies, and officials were quite surprised at the response the test garnered.

Officials at the tech-varsity say number of PhD applications has doubled from last year – from 600 to about 1,300 this year – with students applying for research in various streams of engineering, pharmacy & other professional courses. The scenario is similar in Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar (IITGn), which has received 8,160 applications for admissions to 60 PhD seats.

The competition is visibly tough, with 136 students in contention for every seat. This is a growth of 466% over last year where 1,754 students had applied.

Director of IITGn, Sudhir K Jain, attributes this renewed interest in research to students who have realised the value of knowledge.

“The world is slowly realising the importance of research...growth will only be attained by knowledge and not by machines and manufacturing,” said Jain. “Knowledge also means more wealth and it is reflected in students, who choose to study further – in master degree and even PhD,” he said.

Meanwhile, Anita Hiranandani – registrar of Cept University – said last year, 85 applications were received for PhD. This again is a healthy sign for doctoral studies, but comes with a rider. “The main reason (for pursuing PhD) however remains that being a doctorate is a primary criterion for promotions as an academician.

Because of the salary offered under Sixth Pay Commission, more candidates have been showing interest in PhD,” said Hiranandani. While an increased interest in PhD is good news, varsities like Gujarat University (GU) struggle to get quality mentors to guide PhD students. There are only 175 professors in GU for about 1,000 doctoral students. “Efforts are being made for getting more mentors.

Not many (PhD guides) have joined the varsity in the past few years, which thus forces students to compromise on choosing the field of their liking,” said a senior official at GU. The state’s largest varsity is expecting more than 1,400 PhD applications this year.