Sunday, Jul 19,2026

NEWAGE

UGC to manage all grants now on, govt unifies research funding

Shahin Akhter **18 July, 2026, 00:51**

The government has decided to merge the two research funding allocations – one for the University Grants Commission and the other for the public universities – with all grants henceforth to be channelled directly through the commission in a move aimed at preventing alleged duplication and improving transparency.

The finance division formally notified the UGC in writing on April 8 regarding the decision to consolidate the two separate funding sectors under the commission.

Until now, public universities and the UGC received separate research allocations. Under the new arrangement, the two funding streams have been merged, with the UGC managing and coordinating research grants for all public universities.

‘Our primary goal is to act as a coordinator between the government – which demands transparency and optimum utilisation of funds – and the universities, which want to protect their academic and research freedom,’ UGC chairman Professor Mamun Ahmed told New Age.

The allocation for public universities stands at Tk 200 crore in the current fiscal year, up 3.6 per cent from Tk 193 crore last year, while UGC got Tk 26 crore allocation, up from Tk 25 crore in the previous fiscal year.

After receiving the finance division’s letter, the UGC began preparations to implement the new system, and on June 15 it officially informed the universities that the research funding sectors had been merged.

Of all the public universities, only the authorities of the University of Dhaka replied, expressing its dissatisfaction with the initiative.

The finance ministry move came following a tripartite meeting held on April 4 among the ministries of finance, education and the UGC.

The UGC chairman said that the official justification for the fund unification was to avoid duplication, or ‹overlapping› of research.

Previously, different universities could receive funding independently for similar types of research, while other important or overlooked areas remained unfunded. By unifying the budget, authorities aim to coordinate research more effectively and direct funds towards priority areas that were previously neglected, he added.

Professor Mamun said the UGC also decided to formulate research budget management guidelines in consultation with university representatives, so that their concerns would be addressed.

He said the commission would review project proposals within 15 days, and that it had requested the vice-chancellors to nominate five members to sit with the commission to help finalise the guidelines for the new system.

He, however, clarified that universities would continue to call for project proposals and review them from undergraduate, master›s, MPhil and PhD students, as well as teachers, as usual.

‘Once the UGC receives lists of project proposals from all universities, we will simply check if there is any overlapping project,’ the UGC chairman said, adding, ‘whenever any evaluation takes place, the UGC will conduct it using the university teachers themselves; not by anyone from the outside.’

On July 2, the UGC requested all public universities to submit their research plans and budget estimates to facilitate quick disbursement of funds.

The following day, the commission issued a clarification stating that funding procedures had been simplified to be more researcher-friendly, without compromising academic freedom or research diversity.

However, teachers at public universities expressed dissatisfaction with the decision, alleging that the new system would curtail the autonomy of the universities and the academic freedom of teachers, and would increase bureaucratic complexities.

Professor SM Abdur Razzak, vice-chancellor of Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology and president of the Bangladesh Biswabidyalay Parishad – a body of vice-chancellors of the country's 59 public universities, told New Age on July 9 that they had met the UGC chairman regarding the new decision, but would discuss the issue further before any new system was introduced.

'We are not sure about the new system,' he said, adding that they had doubts about whether the commission had the capacity to control research.

UGC chairman Professor Mamun, however, said the July 9 meeting with the biswabidyalay parishad was fruitful, and that apprehensions about the new system affecting the academic freedom of the universities were not rational.

He also said preparations for the new system began on December 21, 2025, when, at a meeting with the education ministry, the UGC had requested a revenue budget of Tk 1,034.50 crore, specifically seeking Tk 350 crore for university research and Tk 30 crore for the commission›s own research purposes.

On January 1 this year, the ministry cut the total budget request to Tk 7,200 crore, and the total research allocation to Tk 226 crore for the UGC and public universities.

Under the earlier arrangement, the UGC invited research project proposals from all universities using its own research budget.

The projects were reviewed by university teachers on the basis of merit, and the best-quality projects were funded.

While the UGC coordinated and reviewed the projects, the money was ultimately sent to the respective university for distribution among the winning researchers.

Related News

UGC initiates national research repository to boost ecosystem

Tags #UGC #University

Editor: Nurul Kabir, Published by the Chairman, Editorial Board ASM Shahidullah Khan on behalf of Media New Age Ltd.

Hamid Plaza (4th floor), 300/5/A/1, Bir Uttam CR Datta Road, Hatirpool, Dhaka-1205
PABX: +8802 41062247-50, Fax: +8802-41062245

newage.editorial@gmail.com