IISER graduates to get formal degrees

NIT Amended Act Declares All 5 Institutions, Including The One In Pune, As Autonomous

Swati Shinde Gole | TNN

Pune: Students of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) will now get formal degree certificates. The first batch of the integrated five-year BS-MS dual degree programme passed out this year, but with provisional degree certificates in hand.

On Friday, the Lok Sabha passed the National Institute of Technology (NIT) Amendment Act, 2010, to include all five IISERs, including the one in Pune, under its ambit as an autonomous institution of national importance. The first

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batch graduates feared that provisional certificates would not be recognised by universities abroad, but now they are relieved. The decision was pending in Parliament for the past two years.

This year, 42 students from IISER Pune and 38 from IISER Kolkata graduated in the integrated five-year master's programme with a BS-MS dual degree in Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. The students had enrolled in 2006. Besides Kolkata and Pune, three more IISERs at Mohali, Thiruvananthapuram and Bhopal are awaiting Parliament nod.

Since IISERs are national institutes like the IITs, Parliament first needs to pass an act to enable them to award degrees to students. In case of state universities, the state assembly has to pass an act.

"Now, we can formally give degrees to students. Since April 2010, the decision was being delayed for various reasons. But, this year we put pressure on the Union Ministry of human resource and development to get the nod from Parliament, since the first batch had already passed out and the students were being given provisional certificates. Now, they can be assured of their degree," said K N Ganesh, director, IISER, Pune.

Getting the nod from the Lok Sabha was most important. Now the bill is likely to sail through Rajya Sabha and after final consent from the President of India, the act will come into being.

Ganesh said, "Each IISER will now be autonomous and each one of them will have the liberty to design its course and curriculum. Except for few administrative rules, for instance, transfer of a student from one IISER to another, all academic rules will be framed by the respective IISER." He said that unlike the Indian Institute of Technology Act, that does not allow any other institution to come under its ambit, the NIT Act permits inclusion of new institutions. The other option for IISER was to go in for a deemed university status under the University Grants Commission (UGC). "However, we did not want to go under the UGC as we would have had to follow their rules," Ganesh said.