

This year, IISER opens its doors to HSC toppers

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FROM this year, for the first time, the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research will take in the top one per cent students from state boards.

The IISER will follow the guidelines of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for the cut off marks for these admissions. The move will enable Class 12 students who score well in board exams to pursue pure sciences from all the five institutes of IISER — Pune, Mohali, Kolkata, Bhopal and Thiruvananthapuram.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh will lay the foundation stone for Pune IISER's new campus in Pashan on Thursday. The PM will be in the city for the diamond jubilee celebrations of National Chemical Laboratory (NCL).

"We will be taking in HSC board students as per the cut-off percentage given by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) for our Pune IISER this year," said Dr KN Ganesh, director of IISER, Pune. Pune will take 100 students, of which 50 per cent will be from Kishore Vaigyanik Protsahan Yojana (KVPY) and the remaining 50 per cent from IIT-JEE and 12th boards. This will give us a good mix of talent, Ganesh said.

Class 12 students keen to pursue science has welcomed the move as one that will open up new avenues for them. "It is no longer the conventional engineering and medicine. Pure science stream is definitely of interest to me," said Vaishali Londhe, a class 12 student who is looking forward to entering the IISER. Rahul Garde, another Class 12 student and a topper, said, "this field will definitely help us pursue our interests in pure science.

"IISER at present has 360 students from the four years. The institute is ready to take on 100 students every year. With this new rule, we are hoping to get more students in our institute," said Dr AE Natarajan, head of the admission wing of Pune IISER. The current students strength is: 45 students in first year, 44 in second year, 65 in third year and the 112 fourth year students will pass out in 2011. A total of 500 students will be admitted this year in all the five institutes, Natarajan said.

The new campus is set to come up on the 100 acres of land given on a 99-year lease by NCL and has 34,000 sq metres academic space and 82,000 sq ft built-up residential area. The total cost of the construction of the campus is about Rs 420 crores and is expected to be completed in 2.5 to 3 years.

The IISERs were established in 2006 by central government under the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in pursuance of the recommendations of the Scientific Advisory Committee to Prime Minister (SAC-PM).