

Digital divide surfaces as univs weigh UG admission test option

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: The online-offline debate has again surfaced, this time for undergraduate admissions.

With the state board, CBSE and CISCE cancelling the Class XII board exams as a precaution against the novel coronavirus, several universities are exploring the option of holding entrance tests. Some private universities and institutions are thinking of online entrance exams, while others, mostly state-run universities, say they may hold physical exams, considering the digital divide among students.

"Entrance tests could not be held at Jadavpur University last year due to the pandemic. Online admission tests were ruled out as many applicants would not have had access to high-speed internet. In 2019, the arts faculty admitted students based on admission test marks and Plus-II scores. This formula is

The university always admitted students on Plus-II marks but there will be deviation this year. Admission tests will show a candidate's potential to study a programme he or she intends to. It will give a level playing field to all applicants

Fr Felix Raj | V-C, ST XAVIER'S UNIVERSITY, KOLKATA

Presidency tests are unlikely to be online as candidates may find it hard to access internet

Official of WBJEE that will conduct Presl entrance test

UG admissions to business faculty & others will be online. It is a good way to judge students' abilities—Taranjit Singh | CHANCELLOR, JIS UNIVERSITY

likely to be reintroduced as the admissions begin in July," said an arts faculty teacher. A meeting of the UG admissions committee or individual faculties will be convened after the state council announces the Plus-II marking formula. "Some science departments are keen on entrance exams. But that will depend on the logistics and feasibility in August," said a science faculty teacher, adding a final call would be taken after the

marking formula was framed.

Calcutta University has adopted a wait-and-watch policy. "A decision will be taken in the syndicate meeting," said a CU official. Presidency University has, however, scheduled its UG admission tests in August, to be conducted by West Bengal Joint Entrance Examination Board. "Till now, the plan holds," said a WBJEE official. The official said, "The entrance test is unlikely to be moved onli-

ne as candidates may find it difficult to access internet."

But St Xavier's University, Kolkata, will hold online entrance tests this year. Vice-chancellor Father Felix Raj said so far, the university admitted UG students based on their Plus-II scores. But there will be a deviation this year and admissions will entirely be based on entrance test scores. The online admission tests will be held between July 10 and 12. A set of mock tests will also be conducted on July 8 and 9. The online submission of application forms and fees started from June 14 and will continue till July 3. "The entrance tests will examine candidates' proficiency in English and reasoning skills. It will give a level playing field to all applicants," Fr Felix Raj said.

MAKAUT will continue to hold online exams for vocational programmes, including BBA and BCA. "Our applicants have access to internet," said vice-chancellor, Saikat Maitra.