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## **AICTE shuts door on part-time MBA courses**

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It's curtains for part-time management courses in business schools approved by the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The country's technical education regulator has said it will "not permit any technical education programme to be run as either evening or part-time programme in any technical institution".

According to a senior AICTE official, this means the council will not approve new part-time MBA programmes or allow fresh admissions in existing ones from the next academic year. B-schools have to apply to AICTE every year for renewing their part-time programmes.

"Many B-schools are misusing the facility and running other programmes on the pretext of a part-time MBA programme. They are not working within the regulated framework, which prompted us to take this step," said a senior AICTE official.

Experts from the sector said the move could affect around 400 colleges and 20,000 students. These figures could not be verified with AICTE. Several calls to AICTE Chairman S S Mantha went unanswered.

There are around 2,500 AICTE-approved management schools.

The B-schools concerned are unhappy. "Experienced people learn management much better than freshers. We have around 240 students for masters courses in management, finance, human resource and information management. We have already requested the vice-chancellor of the University of Mumbai to take up the matter with AICTE," said Suresh Ghai, director, K J Somaiya Institute of Management and Research.

A clutch of management institutes in Mumbai are planning to file a public interest suit in the Bombay High Court.

"AICTE, in a bid to clean the mess in management education, is penalising good institutes as well. We know that part-time MBA programmes are meant for experienced professionals and many institutes are admitting fresh graduates instead to make money. But AICTE could have clamped down on such institutes. With this move, genuine students will suffer," said Premchand Palety, the chief executive of Centre for Forecasting and Research, an organisation that does annual ranking of B-schools.

The directors of three B-schools said this would make higher education unaffordable and prevent growth and development of many working professionals.

Internationally, such courses are conducted after office hours.

According to a human resource director of a textile company, part-time management programmes allow employees to add knowledge.

“These courses have not only helped them update knowledge but also made them eligible for more responsibilities in the organisation,” he said.

Part-time MBA programmes are cheaper than regular MBAs. For instance, B-schools in Mumbai charge Rs 30,000-40,000 per year. This means for a three-year management programme, a student will have to shell out around Rs 1.2 lakh. For a full time two-year management programme, a student has to pay Rs 4-5 lakh.

AICTE is already slugging it out with management institutes in the high courts of Delhi, Mumbai and Orissa, where cases challenging its guidelines on fees, admissions and course curriculum of B-schools have been filed.

Last month, the Bombay High Court offered an interim relief to a group of 52 B-schools and allowed them to go ahead with admissions.