

Long, complex procedure for curriculum approval decried

Shahin Akhter  14 March, 2026, 01:22



Representational image.

The procedures for revising and approving pre-university and university curriculums in the country's education system are lengthy and complex, affecting the quality of education, observed educationists and researchers.

The pre-university education consists of primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels.



Especially at the tertiary level, a curriculum remains at risk of being obsolete by the time it is approved due to lengthy procedures for the approval, they also said.

A proper focus should be given on a continuous modification and implementation of curriculums, teacher training, and improving the assessment of learning instead of a quick change to or overhauling of curriculums, they added.

Against this backdrop, the government is likely to start working on a refined pre-university curriculum from July this year — to be gradually launched from the academic year of 2028.

Following a recent directive of the education and primary and mass education minister, ANM Ehsanul Hoque Milon, National Curriculum and Textbook Board officials sent a proposal to the education ministry on Wednesday on the formation of a panel of experts to work on the proposed 2028 national curriculum from the pre-primary to the higher secondary levels.

For the coming academic year of 2027, NCTB officials added, they are scheduled to publish the free textbooks by reviewing the curriculum of 2012 by June this year.

After the July uprising, the education ministry in 2024 returned to the curriculum of 2012 by cancelling the 2022 one and made a decision to introduce a totally refined curriculum from 2026.

Later, the previous interim government announced the introduction of a new curriculum from 2027, which stands now ineffective.

The University Grants Commission of Bangladesh approves the curriculums of the public and private universities.

BRAC University professor emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said that the NCTB should continuously work on identifying textbook flaws, conducting trial, experiment, research, and the modification of curriculums instead of overhauling them in lengthy processes.

The NCTB manages everything from devising curriculums to syllabuses to designing textbooks, which raises the question if such a rigid and restrictive approach is necessary, he said.

Manzoor, who also served as the head of the two consultation committees formed by the previous interim government to submit recommendations on improving the quality of primary and secondary education, mentioned that in developed countries the school authorities got some responsibilities to prepare some syllabuses and textbooks following a basic framework.

Professor Imran Rahman, special adviser to the board of trustees at the University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh, said that he did not understand why the UGC of Bangladesh needed to review the curriculums of the private universities.

‘After all, by approving a private university, the UGC deems it to be qualified and competent to take independent decisions related to teaching and learning, including setting the curriculums,’ he said.

Referring to the University Grant Commission of India, he said that the Indian commission does not check and approve the universities’ curriculums, adding that it lets the universities formulate their own curriculums and courses, based on broad guidelines.

‘In Bangladesh, we need permission from the UGC to change a single line of the curriculum,’ he continued.

Imran, also a professor of the ULAB School of Business, said that the UGC took a long time -- a year or more -- to approve a curriculum for new degree programmes submitted by universities.

‘Due to such delays, a curriculum is at risk of being outdated by the time it is approved,’ he added.

Professor SM Abdur Razzak, vice-chancellor of the Rajshahi University of Engineering and Technology, said that they needed approval from the commission for appointing human resources and budgets when they intended to open an entirely new subject or department.

Because of these constraints, he continued, new departments or institutes that we intend to establish according to the university’s plan are often delayed by several years.

Abdur Razzak, also president of the Bangladesh Bishwabidyalay Parishad, an organisation of the vice-chancellors of the public universities, said that while a university created long-term development plans and organograms for new faculty and departments the UGC must approve these.

These approvals often do not come on time due to budgetary limitations, Abdur Razzak added.

‘We are now much more worried about writing a new curriculum or revising it, but we ignore how it is actually implemented in the classroom,’ professor emeritus Manzoor Ahmed said.

He suggested more research, significant emphasis on teacher training and improving assessment of student learning and staying away from the controversies regarding changes in textbooks for political or ideological reasons to avoid the unnecessary costs of reprinting books every year.

Earlier, education minister Ehsanul Hoque on March 1 said that a committee would be formed with selected members within this month to prepare a new national curriculum and emphasised starting the procedure from the next week.

NCTB secretary professor Md Shahtab Uddin said that the minister told them to publish free textbooks by reviewing the curriculum of 2012 by June this year.

‘From this July, we will start the review work for the 2028 curriculum,’ he added.

NCTB member (curriculum) professor AKM Masudul Hoq said that they had sent a proposal to the education ministry on Wednesday to form a panel to work on the proposed 2028 curriculum.

‘After the approval we will form the panel and start working,’ he added.

UGC chairman professor SMA Faiz said that both public and private universities require approval from the commission to change curriculums or introduce courses or programmes.

For giving approval, he continued, the commission considers facilities like laboratories and availability of teachers in the universities.

‘For public universities we also consider government funds,’ he mentioned.

SMA Faiz also mentioned that two departments had been created from the Sanskrit and Pali department and another two from the Arabic and Islamic Studies department at Dhaka University.

‘These new departments have been created to serve the interest of the teachers – so that they can only become chairpersons and professors of these departments -- which we also considered,’ he

said.

They, Professor Faiz added, are supporting all universities for delivering quality education.

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