



CHAPTER III HUMAN RESOURCES

3.1. Human Resources

University brought to the notice of the Government (May 2019), the acute shortage of teachers in the Departments. Shortage affected the quality of teaching and resulted in denial of funds by State/ Central agencies including Rashtriya Uchcharat Siksha Abhiyan funds³² (RUSA). The University had applied (December 2017) to UGC for declaring the University as an Institution of Eminence. The award of such a status would have made the University entitled to an amount of ₹1,000 crore or 50 to 75 *per cent* of requirement projected in the detailed plan submitted by the institution whichever is less. In October 2019, UGC informed that the University was not included in the list of institutions recommended for Institution of Eminence status. The University attributed shortage of faculty as a major reason for losing the UGC Institution of Eminence status.

3.1.1. Non-sanction of posts of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors

As per the UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualification for appointment of Teachers and other Academic staff in Universities and colleges and measures for the maintenance of standards in Higher Education, 2010, the teaching posts in the Universities may be created in a pyramidal order, for instance, for one post of Professor, there should be two posts of Associate Professors and four post of Assistant Professors per Department. Details of teaching staff in the University of Kerala is given in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Year-wise details of teaching staff in the University of Kerala

Year (as on March of the respective years)	Professor		Associate Professor		Assistant Professor			Total		Shortage of teaching staff (in <i>per cent</i>)
	Sanctioned	Men in Position	Sanctioned	Men in Position	Sanctioned	Regular	Contract	Sanctioned	Men in Position	
2017	35	7	55	25	201	160	41	291	233	19.93
2018	35	10	55	20	201	158	45	291	233	19.93
2019	36	8	57	24	205	160	56	298	248	16.78
2020	36	14	57	23	205	168	65	298	270	9.40
2021	36	15	57	26	205	169	70	298	280	6.04

(Source: Data obtained from the University of Kerala)

³² The pre-requisites for getting RUSA funds include financial contribution to higher education as percentage of GSDP, State funding-commitment and timelines, filling faculty position, academic and examination reforms etc.

Audit observed that notwithstanding the Regulation, posts of Professors were not sanctioned for nine academic departments³³ of Kerala University. Further, the posts of Associate Professor were not sanctioned for seven departments³⁴ and Assistant Professors for two departments³⁵. The Department of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology has been functioning since its establishment in 2016, without any posts of faculty having been sanctioned and relying entirely on the services rendered by contract lecturers. The absence of regular teachers in the departments would adversely affect the quality of education.

The Public Accounts Committee while discussing Performance Audit of 'Functioning of the University of Kerala' which featured in the Report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (Civil) for the year ended 31 March 2010 had stated that compromise in sanctioning posts of faculty is not advisable and whatever be the constraints, required number of post of teachers must be sanctioned.

While accepting the audit observation (December 2021), the Government added that the teaching posts in the University departments were created several years ago and hence creation of additional posts merely to meet the proposed structure was not practical as it involved financial implications. Proposals for creation of posts of Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors in certain Departments had already been taken up by the University.

3.1.2. Teachers appointed on contract basis/ without specified qualifications

- As per the UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualification for appointment of teachers and other academic staff in Universities and colleges and measures for the maintenance of standards in Higher Education, 2010, teachers should be appointed on contract basis only when it is absolutely necessary and when the student-teacher ratio does not satisfy the laid down norms and in any case the number of appointments should not exceed 10 *per cent* of the total number of faculty position of the College/University. Contrary to this condition, University had 70 teachers on contract basis in the 43 departments and School of Distance Education (SDE) which is more than 23 *per cent* of the total faculty strength. Audit also observed that the percentage of teachers appointed on contract basis had shown an increasing trend during the period of audit. Details are given in **Table 3.2**.

³³ 1. Biotechnology 2. Nanoscience and Nanotechnology 3. Philosophy 4. Russian 5. Environmental Science 6. Futures Studies 7. Geology 8. Statistics and 9. SDE

³⁴ 1. Nanoscience and Nanotechnology 2. German 3. Oriental Research Institute and Manuscript Library 4. Institute of Management in Kerala 5. Islamic History 6. Law and 7. SDE

³⁵ 1. Nanoscience and Nanotechnology and 2. Music

Table 3.2: Year-wise details of teachers appointed on contract basis

Year (as of March of the respective years)	Sanctioned	Men in position		
		Regular (percentage)	Contract (percentage)	Total
2017	291	192 (65.98)	41 (14.08)	233
2018	291	188 (64.60)	45 (15.46)	233
2019	298	192 (64.43)	56 (18.79)	248
2020	298	205 (68.79)	65 (21.81)	270
2021	298	210 (70.47)	70 (23.49)	280

(Source: Data obtained from the University of Kerala)

The University is running 34 University Institutes of Technology (UIT), 10 Kerala University Colleges of Teacher Education (KUCTE) and seven University Institutes of Management (UIM) and one University College of Engineering on self-financing mode. Audit noticed that there were 335 teaching faculties in these 52 institutions³⁶ and all of them were contract appointments. As per UGC Regulations, the fixed emolument paid to such contract teachers should not be less than the monthly gross salary of a regularly appointed Assistant Professor. Audit noticed that the monthly emoluments paid to the contract staff was less than the monthly gross salary of the regular appointed Assistant Professor. The monthly emoluments paid to the contract staff who are eligible for the pay of Assistant Professor ranged from ₹19,500 to ₹37,500. Whereas, entry pay of Assistant Professor as per Seventh Pay Commission is ₹57,700. Audit observed many of these faculties did not have the prescribed qualifications as detailed in the next bullet point. The University did not furnish any documents to show that institutions in self-financing mode do not need to comply with the UGC Regulations relating to minimum qualification for appointment of teachers and other academic staff.

- Similarly, as per Clause 3.3.0 of the UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualification for appointment of Teachers and other Academic staff in Universities and colleges and measures for the maintenance of standards in Higher Education, 2010, the minimum qualification for appointment as an Assistant Professor is Master's Degree with 55 *per cent* marks in a concerned relevant/ allied subject and the candidate must have cleared National Eligibility Test (NET) or an accredited test (State Level Eligibility Test – SLET/SET) provided however, that the candidates who are or have been awarded a Ph.D shall be exempted from the requirement of minimum eligibility condition of NET/SLET/SET. The qualification and selection procedure for appointment of teachers on contract basis should be same as those applicable to a regularly appointed teacher. The University is running 34 University Institutes of Technology (UITs) for imparting Undergraduate courses and Post-graduate courses in self-financing mode. All the Assistant Professors in

³⁶ University College of Engineering (1): 46 faculties, UITs (34): 174 faculties, KUCTE (10): 91 faculties and UIM (7): 24 faculties

the UITs were appointed on contract basis. Audit also observed that out of 174 teachers, 108 teachers were appointed without NET/SET/Ph.D qualification as of March 2021. Details are given in **Table 3.3**.

Table 3.3: Year-wise details of teachers appointed without qualification in UITs

Year (as on March of the respective years)	Total number of UITs	Total number of teachers	No. of teachers with NET/SET/Ph.D qualification	No. of teachers without NET/SET/Ph.D qualification
2017	17	177	64	113
2018	28	174	60	114
2019	34	177	70	107
2020	34	181	69	112
2021	34	174	66	108

(Source: Data obtained from the University of Kerala)

Appointment of teachers without qualification as prescribed by the UGC will adversely affect the quality of teaching and thereby affect the future of the students studying in these institutions.

Government replied (December 2021) that UITs were extension centres directly run by the University of Kerala on 'no profit no loss' basis. Since these Institutions were started to fulfil social obligation and to provide education at affordable cost in the remote and rural areas, the fees of students could not be increased. If the increase of wages of staff at UITs was implemented, it may cause additional financial liability to the University. Government also stated that the Syndicate has resolved to engage teaching staff ensuring qualification as prescribed by the UGC, henceforth.

The reply is not tenable as the UITs are institutions run by the University and are bound to comply with the UGC Regulations regarding salary to teachers appointed on contract basis.

3.1.3. Shortage of teaching staff in University Departments

As per the UGC Regulations on Minimum Qualification for appointment of Teachers and other Academic staff in universities and colleges and measures for the maintenance of standards in Higher Education, 2010 and 2018, all the sanctioned/ approved posts in the University system should be filled on an urgent basis. Peer team Report (2015) on Institutional Accreditation (Second Cycle) of the University recognised, as an institutional weakness, the large number of guest/ contract teaching and non-teaching staff. Many departments were functioning without Professors and a couple of departments were functioning with a single faculty. It recommended taking steps to fill up the vacancies. Audit examined the shortage of teaching faculties in University Departments and the results are detailed below.

- As shown in **Table 3.1**, against 298 regular teaching staff sanctioned for 43 academic departments and School of Distance Education, only 210 regular teachers (70.47 per cent) were available as of March 2021. Even after considering the 70 contract teachers, the total staff strength was 93.96 per cent of the sanctioned strength. There were vacancies in 21

posts of Professor against the 36 sanctioned posts and in the case of Associate Professors, out of 57 sanctioned posts, there were vacancies in 31 posts. Similarly, in the case of Assistant Professors, 36 posts were vacant out of 205 sanctioned posts.

- The vacancies of teachers have continued for periods ranging between four months and 37 years as of October 2021 as detailed in **Appendix 3.1**.

As persisting vacancies in faculty posts coupled with over-reliance on contract teachers adversely affects the quality of teaching and the academic output, it is essential that the Government and University work out sustainable solutions (keeping in view the financial constraints), that will ensure that academic standards do not deteriorate owing to shortage in qualified faculty in sufficient numbers.

3.1.4. Appointment of excess number of academic faculties in KUCTEs

The University started³⁷ 10 Kerala University Colleges of Teacher Education (KUCTE) under its direct control in self-financing mode. The Principal and other teaching staff of these KUCTEs were appointed on contract basis. As per National Council for Teacher Education (Recognition Norms and Procedure) Regulations, 2014, as regards Bachelor of Education programme leading to Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) Degree, if the total student strength is 200, there shall be 16 full-time faculty members and if the student strength for two years is 100 only, the number of faculty shall be reduced to eight. All these KUCTEs have one batch each with 50 students per year. Since the programme has a duration of two years, the total student strength in these KUCTEs is 100 each. Hence, the number of faculty in these KUCTEs should be only eight. Audit noticed that eight out of 10 KUCTEs had more than eight academic faculties during the period 2020-21. Against 80 faculties in these 10 institutions, there were 91 faculties resulting in excess expenditure of ₹23.64 lakh per annum.

Government replied (13 December 2021) that the academic faculty mentioned as excess in the audit report were taken by counting the language and science subjects as single units whereas KUCTEs were offering more than one language and more than one science subjects as optional. Since a specialised faculty for each subject had to be assigned for taking the classes, it may not be considered as excess academic faculty.

The KUCTE is not adhering to National Council for Teacher Education Guidelines where it was clearly stipulated that for 100 students for two years, the faculty strength shall be reduced to eight. Eight out of 10 KUCTEs have staff strength more than eight.

³⁷ During the period 1990 to 1998

3.2. Internship/Consultancy/Start-up activities in the University

Internships are designated activities that involve working in an organisation under the guidance of an identified mentor. The aim is to make the students capable of applying their knowledge and skills in different settings and inculcating professional dispositions and ethics.

This is also one of the key indicators used by NAAC during the assessment and accreditation process of Higher Education Institutions (HEI).

The details of number of students who availed internships during the period 2016-21 is stated in **Table 3.4** below:

Table 3.4: Details of number of students who availed internships during the period 2016 to 2021

Year	Students enrolled for PG in the University	No. of Departments which offered internship	Number of students taken internship	Percentage
2016-17	652	1	14	2.14
2017-18	628	1	11	1.75
2018-19	621	2	21	3.38
2019-20	733	5	41	5.59
2020-21	874	3	17	1.94
Total	3508		104	2.96

(Source: Data furnished by the University)

As seen from the table above, out of the total number of 3,508 students enrolled in the University, only 2.96 per cent undertook internships. Also, it was noticed that the students who undertook internships during 2016-21, belonged to only five departments³⁸ of the University.

A Consultancy cell was constituted in the University in 2001. Similarly, an Industry Incubation Centre i.e., Kerala University Technology and Business Start-up Centre was functioning in the University since 2006. Audit noticed that both these cells were having only Directors and were functioning without any supporting staffs. University informed (September 2021) Audit that ₹90.73 lakh was generated through consultancy works provided to 24 clients and seven Memorandum of Understandings signed between start-up companies and the University during the period of Audit.

Audit findings highlight the fact that the University had not made serious efforts to expose their students to practical learning through internships and also to strengthen consultancy and start up activities affecting the achievement of the desired outcome of employability of students.

Government stated (13 December 2021) that the University does expose their students to practical learning, field projects and summer internship. In fact, it is mandatory for all Master's programme to have them at least in one semester.

³⁸ 1. Optoelectronics, 2. Environmental Science, 3. Geology, 4. Zoology and 5. Aquatic Biology and Fisheries

Government further stated that the figures given in table appears to be not correct as almost all students take up internship/ field visit.

Since figures included in **Table 3.4** was provided by the University, Audit sought clarification (13 January 2022) from University on the reply of Government. University informed (25 January 2022) Audit that the figures given in the table pertained only to internship and did not include field projects and specific projects. It was further stated that internship was only mandatory in three departments and University was pursuing a policy on extending internship to other departments.

The clarification of University substantiates the Audit finding that the number of students exposed to internship by the University was meagre.

3.3. Functioning of Placement Cell

During accreditation of an institution, NAAC considers the average percentage of placement of outgoing students from the institution during the last five years as one of the factors while grading the HEIs.

The University approved (November 2012) to constitute 'Permanent Placement Cell' for managing and supervising the campus recruitment. It was also approved to arrange permanent placement office for Placement Cell in old building of Institute of Management in Kerala at Senate House campus and to authorise the Director, University Computer Centre, to develop software for online registration of students for campus recruitment. But this has not materialised. A placement cell is functioning in the University without any staff and an office. Associate Professor, Department of Economics was the Convener of the Placement Cell. There was no process/ calendar followed by the Cell for carrying out placement activities. During the years 2016-21, the number of Postgraduate students who attended interview and were placed in jobs through Placement Cell was as depicted in the **Table 3.5** below:

Table 3.5: Details of number of Postgraduate students who attended interview and were placed in jobs through Placement Cell

Year	No. of students admitted to PG courses in University Departments	No. of students registered for placement	No. of students placed	Remarks
2016-17	652	25	5	Placement of less than one per cent
2017-18	628	26	3	
2018-19	621	25	0	No placements
2019-20	733	0	0	
2020-21	874	0	0	

(Source: Information furnished by the Placement Cell, University of Kerala)

Thus, even after existence of a Placement Cell in University, only eight students could be placed through the Placement Cell during the last five years.

As per the National Education Policy 2020, the HEIs should take steps to increase employability potential of higher education programmes. But the University is yet to have an effective Placement Cell.

Government replied (13 December 2021) that many departments of the University had taken initiatives to place their students in private companies. The employability of the programmes offered by teaching departments in the University of Kerala was quite high and the students found jobs as soon as they completed their programmes. It was further stated that a significant number of students did not take the service of the Placement Cell as they manage to get placements even without the support of the Cell. Moreover, the Cell with a Placement Officer was not continuously active throughout the last five years. The University in its Teaching Departments offer only Master's Programme where students have a common career path of research and teaching for which they need to move in to higher studies for M.Phil and Ph.D, thus mobility to higher learning is very high when compared to placements.

The reply is silent about the non-constitution of an effective Placement Cell and the meagre track record of the existing Placement Cell in procuring placements for the students.

3.4. Research

3.4.1. Selection of candidates for Ph.D programme

University Grants Commission (UGC) introduced (amendment on 16 October 2018) weightage of 70 *per cent* to entrance test and 30 *per cent* to the performance in the interview/ viva-voce for selection of candidates for M.Phil/Ph.D in the UGC (Minimum Standards and Procedures for award of Ph.D/M.Phil) Regulations, 2016.

Audit observed that the University was yet to implement the above UGC directions (August 2021). During the period 2019-21, 1,029 scholars were selected for Ph.D and 677 students were admitted to M.Phil without observing UGC Regulation as amended in 2018. The University is still following the UGC Regulation 2016 and candidates of the Ph.D programme are granted registration through a two-stage process - an entrance test conducted by the University, followed by an interview conducted by the Departmental Doctoral Committee. The procedure does not specify the weightages attached to the two stages. The University is not preparing a rank list for the selection of candidates. In the absence of a rank list for selection, the transparency of the selection process could not be ascertained.

Government replied (13 December 2021) that selection of candidates at the time of Doctoral Committee meeting are based on the merits of the synopsis submitted by the candidates and assessment at the interview whether the candidate possess the competence for the research, research can be suitably undertaken in the research centre and the proposed research can contribute new/ additional knowledge.

The reply of the Government is not tenable as the UGC amendment clearly stated that the selection of candidates (M.Phil/Ph.D), a weightage of 70 *per cent* to the entrance test and 30 *per cent* to the performance in the interview/ viva-voce shall be given, which was not complied by the University.

3.4.2. Discontinuation of research work by research scholars

According to the University of Kerala First Statutes 1977, maximum time permitted to submit the thesis is five years and eight years for full-time research students and part time research students respectively. In exceptional cases, the above time limit can be extended by one year. According to the Kerala University First Ordinances, 1978, a research fellow should not resign his appointment during the tenure of his fellowship or discontinue research work without obtaining the permission of the Syndicate, or else, the holder would have to refund the whole amount of the fellowship received by him or any portion thereof or the Syndicate may waive the recovery of the amount in such cases.

On an analysis of the details of research scholars in 43 University Departments, it was observed that 110 research scholars discontinued the research work (22 research scholars) or did not submit the thesis in the prescribed time limit (88 research scholars) who had started their research during 2005 to 2014 period. Moreover, UGC Regulations, 2016 specifies the limit for research fellows that a research supervisors/co-supervisor could guide³⁹. The University had brought to notice of Government (May 2019) the issue of research output being adversely impacted due to shortage of faculty. Despite this shortage, the University failed to cancel the registration of such research scholars so that opportunity could be given to other eligible persons.

Government stated (13 December 2021) that the research scholars, who had been granted registration from 2009, faced many difficulties in their research work due to the implementation (February 2016) of UGC Regulations, 2009 with retrospective effect as the UGC directed to strictly adhere to the said Regulations. The University had granted grace time⁴⁰ for research scholars from time to time as a solution to the difficulties faced by the research scholars and considering the valuable research work done by them. It was also stated that most of the research scholars whose prescribed maximum research period had already expired, had successfully utilised the grace time granted by the University for submission of their thesis.

The reply is not tenable as the registration of 110 scholars who had discontinued their research/ not submitted the thesis within the prescribed time limit for

³⁹ A Professor, can guide upto a maximum of three M.Phil. and eight Ph.D scholars at a time, an Associate Professor can guide upto a maximum of two M.Phil. and six Ph.D scholars and an Assistant Professor as Research Supervisor can guide upto a maximum of one M.Phil. and four Ph.D scholars.

⁴⁰ Grace time from 2017 to 2019 in order to overcome the problems faced due to the re-allocation of scholars under regular research supervisors as per UGC Regulations, 2009. Extension of grace time for submission of thesis from 2020-21 was granted considering the COVID-19 pandemic.

various reasons such as getting job etc., had not been cancelled till date (December 2021).

3.5. Conclusion

Shortage of teaching staff/ faculties in the University is an institutional problem persisting over the years. Even though PAC had recommended that the required number of post of teachers must be sanctioned, several Departments continued to function without sanctioned posts of teachers. Number of faculties appointed on contract basis was higher than the prescribed limit. Peer team Report (2015) on Institutional Accreditation (Second Cycle) of the University had already recognised, as an institutional weakness, the large number of guest/ contract teaching and non-teaching staff. Many departments were functioning without Professors and a couple of departments were functioning with a single faculty. The job placement record of the Placement Cell was not very encouraging. Not many students could avail of internship opportunities through the facilitation of the University.

3.6. Recommendations

- **In order to provide high quality of education including higher numbers of research scholars, published papers and patents, Government may in consultation with the University ensure that services of adequate number of qualified faculties are available in its institutions.**

(Paragraph 3.1)

- **More emphasis needs to be given to improving performance of the University as regards internship opportunities for students and placements (for outgoing students).**

(Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3)