

— ONE DEGREE. ZERO DISTINCTIONS.

# How to verify a university before you enrol.

24+

Fake universities listed by UGC (2024)

260+

Universities entitled for online programmes

5

Checks needed to confirm legitimacy

A legitimate UGC-approved online degree carries the same legal validity as any campus degree. But India has over 20 institutions operating without recognition — and dozens more obscuring expired approvals. This guide tells you exactly what to check, where to check it, and what a fraudulent entity looks like. The portals, the red flags, the tactics scammers use — all in one place.

## THE 5-STEP VERIFICATION CHECKLIST

01

### Check UGC's Online Entitled Institutions List

DO THIS FIRST

There is a fundamental difference between a university being on the **general UGC list** and being **entitled to offer online programmes**. Many universities are UGC-recognised for campus education but have never applied for — or been denied — DEB entitlement for online. A university that runs online programmes without this entitlement is operating illegally, and any degree it issues will not be recognised. Go to the UGC DEB portal and search for your specific university under "Universities Entitled to Offer Online Programmes." If it is not on that list, stop here.

→ [ugcmooportal.inflibnet.ac.in](https://ugcmooportal.inflibnet.ac.in) Look under: **Entitled Universities for Online Programmes**

02

### Verify the Specific Programme Is DEB-Approved

REQUIRED

UGC entitlement covers the institution, not every programme it chooses to offer. A university may be entitled to offer an online MBA but not an online BBA — or may have discontinued a programme mid-cycle without public announcement. The DEB portal lists **approved programmes for each entitled university**. Confirm your exact programme name, specialisation, and duration are listed. If the portal shows the institution but not the programme, the degree will be unrecognised.

→ [ugcmooportal.inflibnet.ac.in](https://ugcmooportal.inflibnet.ac.in) → **Approved Programmes** Match: **Programme name + duration + intake year**

03

### Confirm NAAC Accreditation Grade & Validity Date

REQUIRED

UGC requires universities offering online programmes to maintain a **minimum NAAC grade of B+**. This is not optional — a university that loses accreditation or lets it expire automatically loses DEB entitlement. Two things to check on [naac.gov.in](https://naac.gov.in): the **grade** (must be B+ or A or A+) and the **validity period** (must cover your entire enrolment duration). NAAC cycles last 5 years. An A grade from 2018 may have expired in 2023, making the university ineligible today. Always verify the current cycle end date, not just the grade.

→ [naac.gov.in](https://naac.gov.in) → **Accredited Institutions** Check: **Grade + Cycle Number + Valid Until date**

04

### Check UGC's Official Fake University List

REQUIRED

UGC publishes and updates a list of institutions declared as "**fake universities**" — institutions that operate and issue degrees without any UGC charter, recognition, or entitlement. These are not low-quality institutions; they are fraudulent entities. As of 2024, there are 24+ such institutions, predominantly concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, and West Bengal. Common tactic: they adopt names that closely mimic legitimate central universities (e.g., "Indian Institute of Alternative Medicine" or "United Nations University"). Always cross-check your university name against this list.

→ [ugc.gov.in](https://ugc.gov.in) → **Students** → **Beware of Fake Universities** Updated regularly — check the **current year's list**, not cached versions

05

### Verify the Degree on National Academic Depository (NAD)

POST-ADMISSION

After completing your programme, your degree should be digitally verifiable on the **National Academic Depository** (powered by DigiLocker) and linkable to your **ABC ID (Academic Bank of Credits)**. Legitimate universities are mandated to upload academic records to NAD. Before enrolling, ask the university: "*Is this programme registered with NAD and will my degree be available on DigiLocker?*" A genuine institution will confirm this directly. A fraudulent or non-compliant one will deflect, deny, or offer alternatives that don't involve government verification portals.

→ [nad.digilocker.gov.in](https://nad.digilocker.gov.in) Ask for: **AISHE code** of the university as a secondary check

8 RED FLAGS THAT SIGNAL A FRAUDULENT ENTITY

**⚠ Not on UGC's DEB Entitlement List**  
The university is on the general UGC list but **absent from the entitled institutions for online programmes**. This is the single most definitive fraud indicator. No entitlement = no legal basis to offer online degrees.

**⚠ Expired or Below-Minimum NAAC Accreditation**  
A NAAC grade below B+, or a valid-until date that has passed, disqualifies the university from legally running online programmes. **Grade alone is not enough — always verify the cycle end date** on [naac.gov.in](http://naac.gov.in) directly.

**⚠ Name Resembles a Legitimate Central University**  
Fraud institutions deliberately choose names like "Indian Institute of Science and Technology (Unrecognised)" or "National Open University." **Do not trust the name**. Central universities are listed on [ugc.gov.in](http://ugc.gov.in). Cross-check the exact name.

**⚠ Admission Through Brokers or Agents**  
Genuine universities do not route admissions through third-party agents who promise seats, discounts, or guaranteed entry. **Agents who pressure you to decide "within 24 hours" or handle fee payments directly** are a reliable fraud signal.

**⚠ Accelerated Degree Duration**  
A 3-year online BBA offered in 1 year, or a 2-year MBA in 6 months, is not possible under UGC norms. **Minimum duration requirements are statutory** — any programme claiming faster completion is either fabricated or non-compliant.

**⚠ Cannot Provide a Valid AISHE Code**  
Every legitimate Indian university has an **AISHE code** (All India Survey on Higher Education), issued by the Ministry of Education. If a university cannot produce its AISHE code, or the code is not findable in the AISHE database, treat it as unrecognised.

**⚠ Degree Not Uploadable to DigiLocker / NAD**  
Universities are required to upload awarded degrees to the National Academic Depository. **If the institution deflects, says NAD is "optional," or offers a physical certificate as the only proof** — it is almost certainly operating outside the regulatory framework.

**⚠ Study Centre Claims Affiliation, University Has No Record**  
A common scam: a local "study centre" or "learning hub" claims to be an authorised partner of a recognised university. **Always call the university's official registrar's office** to confirm the centre is listed and that enrolment is recorded in the university's own system.

HOW FRAUDULENT INSTITUTIONS ACTUALLY OPERATE

**TACTIC 01**  
**The Expired Accreditation Display**  
The institution prominently displays a NAAC "A" grade on its website and brochures — but the accreditation expired years ago. They rely on the fact that **most students don't check the validity date**, only the grade. The university may have been legitimate once; it is not now.

**TACTIC 02**  
**The "Affiliated" Misrepresentation**  
A fraudulent entity claims to be "affiliated with" or "in partnership with" a UGC-recognised university. Affiliation is not entitlement. **Only the entitled university can issue the degree** — and if the affiliated body is what's enrolling you and issuing your certificate, it is operating illegally.

**TACTIC 03**  
**Phantom Programmes**  
The university holds valid DEB entitlement for some programmes but not the one being sold to you. **The brochure and the DEB approval list do not match**. Students discover this only after completing the degree — when it fails verification at an employer or postgraduate institution.

**TACTIC 04**  
**The Name-Clone University**  
Operating under a name nearly identical to a real institution — e.g., a state university in one state cloning the name of a central university. These entities may even have functioning websites, admission portals, and physical offices. **Always verify using the AISHE code and the UGC database**, not the name alone.

**TACTIC 05**  
**Unregistered Study Centres Collecting Fees**  
Local centres collect fees "on behalf of" a real university, promise enrolment, and either disappear or fail to actually register the student. **Fee payment should always go directly to the university's official bank account** — verify the account details through the university's official website, not the agent's instructions.

**TACTIC 06**  
**Fake UGC Approval Letters on WhatsApp**  
Fraudulent institutions circulate doctored letters and screenshots claiming UGC or NAAC approval. **Any approval letter must be independently verified** directly on [ugc.gov.in](http://ugc.gov.in) or by calling UGC's helpline (011-23604446). Do not accept PDFs or images as proof of recognition.

**📄 What the Law Says — UGC (ODL & Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020**  
A university must be **specifically entitled by UGC's Distance Education Bureau** to offer online programmes — general UGC recognition for campus programmes does not extend automatically to online. Degrees issued without DEB entitlement have **no legal standing** for employment, postgraduate admissions, or government services. No court order or university guarantee changes this — only DEB entitlement does. UGC helpline: **011-23604446**. Report suspected fraud to UGC at [helpline@ugc.gov.in](mailto:helpline@ugc.gov.in).

**PORTAL 01**  
**UGC DEB — Entitled Universities**  
[ugcmooportal.in/flibnet.ac.in](http://ugcmooportal.in/flibnet.ac.in)  
First check. Must be present here.

**PORTAL 02**  
**NAAC — Accredited Institutions**  
[naac.gov.in](http://naac.gov.in)  
Verify grade + valid-until date.

**PORTAL 03**  
**UGC Fake University List**  
[ugc.gov.in](http://ugc.gov.in) → *Beware of Fake Universities*  
24+ listed as of 2024.

**PORTAL 04**  
**NAD / DigiLocker Degree Check**  
[nad.digilocker.gov.in](http://nad.digilocker.gov.in)  
Post-enrolment degree verification.

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