

In a first, Rs 4 lakh penalty on St Joseph's University

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“In general, private universities are inspected once in three years. But if they want to increase their seats or introduce new courses, they must apply for permission. Following the application, the Higher Education Council will constitute an expert committee, which will in turn visit the university and submit a report,” explained a

senior official of the Higher Education Council.

However, in St Joseph's case, though the periodic inspection is due in September 2025, the committee was constituted as the university had applied for permission to commence a few new programmes, including a PhD for the 2025-26 academic year. The violations came to light during the committee's visit.

“The committee was shocked to find the violations and submitted a detailed report to the government recommending a hefty penalty and even denied permission for PhD, M.Sc and other new programmes,” said the official.

Documents accessed by *DH* show that the committee had highlighted the lack of infrastructure. It also said that running the university

in three shifts is an indication of an infrastructure shortage and a violation of the University Grants Commission (UGC) norms.

The committee also recommended a reduction in intake equal to the excess admissions made for the next two years, besides barring sanction to any new programmes.

The university houses over 10,000 students. “According

to the act, they must share 60% of the seats with the government, which was also not followed,” the official mentioned.

Confirming this to *DH*, Higher Education Minister Dr M C Sudhakar said, “Considering the interest of the students who have already been admitted, we regularised the seats but imposed a penalty of Rs 4 lakh.”