



2026:AHC-LKO:70265

**HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT ALLAHABAD  
LUCKNOW**

**WRIT - C No. - 6814 of 2026**

Aakash Narayan

.....Petitioner(s)

Versus

Dr. Shakuntala Misra National Rehabilitation  
Univerversity Lko. Thru. Registrar Vice Chancellor

.....Respondent(s)

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|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| Counsel for Petitioner(s) | : | In Person          |
| Counsel for Respondent(s) | : | Atul Kumar Dwivedi |

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**Reserved on : 15.09.2026**

**Delivered on : 01.10.2026**

**Court No. - 8**

**HON'BLE JASPREET SINGH, J.**

1. The petitioner Aakash Narayan appeared in person and filed the instant petition under Article 226 of the Constitution of India seeking a direction for the respondent to initiate PhD Interview for the petitioner. He also prayed that a compensation of 1 lakh minimum along with the litigation fee must also be awarded to the petitioner on account of illegal act of the respondent depriving the petitioner of his chance to appear in the interview for the PhD programme and has further prayed for such other relief as the Court may deem just and proper, may also be awarded in favour of the petitioner.

2. The case of the petitioner was that he had completed his MSc. in Astronomy from Osmania University Hyderabad in the academic year 2016-2018. The petitioner had applied for a PhD programme in Dr. Shakuntala Misra National Rehabilitation University Lucknow for the Session 2025-26. The petitioner had obtained a score from Joint Entrance Screening Test (JEST). He had mentioned the same in the admission form and though JEST is a national level examination and is an equivalent examination which enables a person to seek admission in PhD, in various universities but the respondent university did not call the petitioner for the Interview for the PhD Physics admission and rather it was disclosed that the petitioner was not eligible as he had not provided the NET Score.

3. The thrust of the submission was that the respondent university was not justified in insisting the petitioner to give NET Score as the petitioner already had a JEST Score which was indicated and JEST being a national level exam which was equivalent to NET, hence the JEST Score should have been accepted and the petitioner could not have been ignored from being called for the interview. It is, in these circumstances, that the petitioner prayed that appropriate direction be issued to the university to initiate interview programme for the petitioner as well as sought compensation for playing with the career of the students such as the petitioner.

4. Shri Atul Dwivedi, learned counsel for the respondent university filed his short counter-affidavit and contested the submission of the petitioner. It was stated that the respondent university had passed a resolution dated 26.10.2024 wherein it had resolved that it would subscribe to the UGC NET Score and the same was also published in the brochure for the academic year 2025-26. Despite there being a clear stipulation in this regard, it cannot be said that the university committed any error in not calling the petitioner for the interview since the petitioner admittedly does not possess the NET Score for the relevant year.

5. It was further submitted that the respondent university does not recognize the JEST Score and neither the university can be compelled to accept such a score. It was also submitted that from the year 2022 the process for admission for PhD programme were changed with the advent University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of PhD Decree) Regulations, 2022.

6. It was urged that the aforesaid Regulation of the UGC was binding on all universities including the respondent. The said Regulations of 2022 provided the eligibility criteria for admission to PhD programme and also made clear reference to the procedure for admission in Regulation-5.

7. It was pointed out that as per the aforesaid Regulations of 2022, any higher education institute may admit students who qualify for fellowship/Scholarship in UGC-NET/UGC-CSIR, NET/GATE/CEED and similar national level test based on an interview. The universities and

higher educational institutes who were eligible to conduct PhD programme was required to notify in its prospectus as well as on their website the number of seats, subject/disciplinary-wise distribution of available seats and criteria for admission, procedure for admission and other relevant information for the candidates.

8. It was urged that thereafter UGC issued a public notice on 27.03.2024 wherein it was indicated that the UGC conducts a National Eligibility Test (NET), which is conducted twice a year, in June and December. Many universities who conduct their own entrance test for admission to their PhD programmes, resulted in multiple exams which were to be written by the students seeking admission in PhD and accordingly on the basis of Experts Committee recommendations and in pursuance thereof UGC NET Score for the academic year 2024-25 NET could be used for admission in PhD programmes, in place of entrance test conducted by different universities and higher education institutes.

9. It was, thus, urged that as far as the respondent university is concerned, it had published the aforesaid information on their website as well as in their prospectus and despite the same the petitioner filled the form knowing well that he did not possess the UGC NET Score and that the respondent university did not accept the JEST Score, hence no direction can be issued to the respondent that the petitioner's interview be initiated for the PhD programme for the Session 2025-26. It was urged that for the aforesaid reasons, the petition deserves to be dismissed.

10. The Court had heard the petitioner in person and the counsel for the university and also perused the material on record.

11. At the outset, it may be noticed that JEST is national level examination which is conducted annually in Physics and Theoretical Computer Science. There are participating institute which accept JEST Score as an eligibility criteria to shortlist candidates for PhD, Integrated PhD and MSc Programmes in Physics and Theoretical Computer Science and Computational Biology. Amongst the participating institutes, the Anusandhan National Research Foundation (ANRF), previously known as the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) which was

constituted under the Act of the Parliament, recognizes JEST as a National Eligibility Test.

12. From the above, it would reveal that JEST Score is recognized by participating institutes including ANRF. However, this does not lead to an inference that any person who has JEST Score would be entitled to be considered eligible for PhD programme across all universities and higher education institutes. There is no material to suggest that it is necessary or compulsory for all universities and higher education institutes to accept JEST Score.

13. With the advent of the UGC Regulations of 2022, it made the Regulations of 2022 binding on all universities as per Regulations-1(2). Another public notice issued by UGC dated 27.03.2024 made NET Score as an eligibility criteria for universities for accepting admissions to PhD Programme.

14. In this backdrop, the respondent university accepted the same and in its prospectus it clearly indicated that the basis of admission for the PhD Course would be in light of the guidelines issued by UGC from time to time. The relevant portion which is part of the procedure for admission available in the prospectus of the respondent university clause 5.3 is being noted hereinafter for ease of reference:-

"5.3 The admission shall be based on the criteria notified by the University, keeping in view the guidelines/ norms issued by the UGC from time to time and taking into account the reservation policy of the State Governments/ University subject/discipline-wise.

Hence in the pursuance of the Public Notice no. F.4-1(UGC-NET Review Committee)/2024(NET)/140648 dated 28th March, 2024/8 चैत्र, 1946. mentioning the sub: National Eligibility Test (NET) as an Entrance for admission to Ph.D. wherein Higher Education Institutional (HEIs) have been requested to utilize the NET score for admission to Ph.D. programmes instead of conducting their entrance test from the forthcoming academic session 2024-2025 in order to overcome the multiple entrance tests and to help the students with one national entrance test for admission to Ph.D. as a part of the implementation of National

Education Policy (NEP)-2020.

The following categories of NET qualified candidates have been laid down with the provision that the result of the NET would be declared in percentile along with the marks obtained by the candidate.

Category-1: Eligible for (i) admission to Ph.D. with JRF and (ii) appointment as Assistant Professor.

Category-2: Eligible for (i) admission to Ph.D. without JRF and (ii) appointment as Assistant Professor. Category-3: Eligible for admission to Ph.D. programme only and not for the award of JRF or appointment as Assistant Professor.

Hence, the marks obtained by the candidate shall be utilized as the marks for admission to Ph.D. programme. However, the marks obtained in the NET by the candidate in categories 2 and 3 would be valid for a period of 01 (one) year for admission to Ph.D. as per the provision of the aforesaid public notice of UGC.

A weightage of 70% marks obtained in NET result and 30% of the performance in the interview/viva- voce shall be given.

**The criteria for the weightage of 70% of marks obtained in NET result shall be: Entrance Test component (70 marks) = % marks obtained in NET result x 70/100**

Candidate shall be called for interview in a ratio of 1:5 with respect to the notified vacant seats"

15. From the aforesaid, it would reveal that UGC guidelines and Regulations of 2022 was binding on the respondent university and the respondent university has categorically provided the basis, eligibility and the procedure for admission in their prospectus as well as on their website for the candidates to know the criteria for seeking admission in the PhD Course.

16. The petitioner after having filled form for admission and when he was not called for the interview, he then filed the instant petition.

However, he has not challenged any order of the university by which the petitioner was not called for the admission on the ground that he did not disclosed his NET Score.

17. Be that as it may, from the conjoint reading of UGC Regulations of 2022 alongwith the public notice dated 27.03.2024 which was applied by the university for the Session 2025-26 leaves no manner of doubt that the university had given a clear criteria for inviting applications for admission. If the university has accepted the UGC criteria as eligibility it cannot be said that the same is arbitrary or violative of any Rule or Regulations. The petitioner cannot insist that a particular university must accept JEST Score despite the fact that it may be a national level examination. JEST Score can be additional Score which may be acceptable to any university or higher education institute but it cannot be said that a JEST Score must be accepted in all institutes and universities.

18. As noted above, UGC guidelines and Regulations of 2022 are binding on all the universities, therefore, if any guidelines have been issued for eligibility criteria which includes NET Score that for the university and higher education institute is to be accepted as an eligibility criteria. However, in addition, an institute may or may not recognize or take JEST Score and no specific directions can be given to any such institute to accept JEST Score as a mandatory condition.

19. JEST Score may be acceptable to the participating university/education institutes, however, the respondent university is not one of those, who accepts JEST Score and yet it refused to consider it in the case of petitioner. There is no material which indicates that the university or the UGC treats JEST equivalent to NET Score after the Regulations of 2022 and the public notice dated 27.03.2024 and it would be mandatory for the respondent university to accept it.

20. The petitioner has also not indicated that the JEST Score is valid for how many years. It has also not been brought on record that when did the petitioner got his last JEST Score. The Score card which has been filed by the petitioner is at running page 19 which indicates that the petitioner had a JEST Score was back in the year 2009. In absence of any material to

indicate the validity of the JEST Score, the insistence of the petitioner to treat his JEST Score of the year 2009 for the academic year 2025-26 is not acceptable nor on the said basis any direction can be issued to the respondent university.

21. There is no dispute to the fact that the petitioner applied for the PhD Course in respondent university without NET Score. It is also not disputed that there is no material on record brought by the petitioner to indicate that his JEST Score obtained in the year 2009 is as effective and can be made as a mandatory ground for eligibility criteria in the year 2025-26. It is also not disputed that JEST Score at best can be considered as a National Level Examination for such universities or institutes who may be accepting the same but it cannot be said that the same should be made binding in all including the respondent university. In such circumstances, the contention of the petitioner cannot be accepted especially in absence of any binding rule and the fact that the JEST Score obtained by the petitioner in the year 2009 was valid in the year 2024-25.

22. For the aforesaid reasons, the petition has no merit and is, accordingly, **dismissed**. In the facts and circumstances, there shall be no order as to costs.

**(Jaspreet Singh,J.)**

**October 1, 2026**

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