

# Public univs losing foreign students

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COUNTRY'S public universities are lagging far behind private universities in terms of attracting foreign students for lack of promotional activities and various facilities.

The overseas students are now choosing private universities over public ones as they offer many opportunities, including scholarship, for them.

There are 37 public and 95 private universities in the country where many foreign students are now studying.

A few years ago, a large number of foreign students used to get admitted to public universities than private ones to pursue their higher education, but the situation is quite different now.

According to the last annual report of the University Grants Commission, only 355 foreign students enrolled in 19 public universities in 2016 while the number of overseas students getting admitted to private universities was 1,927.

The report said 359 for-

foreign students got admitted to public universities in 2010 while 210 in 2011, 525 in 2012, 326 in 2013, 432 in 2014, 593 in 2015 and 355 in 2016.

As per the statistics, the number dropped by four times from the figure of 2010 in 2016.

On the other hand, 1,548 foreign students enrolled in private universities in 2015, while the number increased by 379 to 1,927 in 2016.

UGC chairman Professor Abdul Mannan attributed the decline in the number of foreign students in public universities to the lack of publicity and promotion. 'Most public universities don't update their websites. They don't provide any information about foreign student admissions on their websites and don't take any step to promote their university internationally,' he said.

But, private universities conduct strong campaigns, and offer scholarships and many facilities for attracting the foreign students, he said.

Mentioning that many countries are now focusing more on vocational and

job-oriented education, the UGC chairman said this also discourages students of those countries to pursue higher education here.

In 2017-18 session, only two foreign students got admitted to Dhaka University, while a few years ago, a significant number used to enrol in the country's leading university.

According to sources at the university, 16 foreign students enrolled in the DU in 2016-17 academic session while four in 2015-16, eight in 2014-15 and 11 in 2013-14 academic calendar for higher study.

Dhaka University vice-chancellor Professor Md Akhtaruzzaman said, 'We've some limitations that don't encourage foreigners to enrol here. We can't provide scholarship for them like other countries or universities.'

Mentioning that there had been no separate desk for foreigner student admission for long, he said they are trying to change the situation. 'We've created a dedicated desk for the foreign students so that they can easily apply to the Dhaka University for higher study,' he added.