which are not in the libraries, and yet the UGC counts books in the library to measure the standard. Is this fair?

A minimum standard for hiring faculty members is an important criterion for maintaining quality of education. This should be strictly monitored, and it should be done for all institutions providing higher education. It is easy to show that many colleges which offer Bachelor's and Master's degree programs do not meet this standard. Yet many guardians are totally unaware of this. In fact, it is also possible to show that quite a few private universities maintain a higher standard than prescribed by the UGC.

The minimum standard for admission of students to the universities is controlled by the UGC. A good university should accept the challenge of transforming weak students into scholars. In fact, under the equality of opportunity principle, it is often argued that weak groups should be given access to better educational facilities. This is based on the assumption that a better academic environment can transform students.

A **uniform grading scheme** has been pushed by the UGC in recent times as a measure of the quality of education. A uniform system means that all universities use: a) First/Second/Third class grading scale, or b) A, B, C and D scale. For many years, Rajshahi University used a different scale for its second-class graduates, and yet we did not say that it was bad or good. In fact, no conclusive evidence could be established against, or for, this principle adopted by RU. A grading scheme using A, B, C and D is used in a credit-hour based education system, where both the class contact time and the quality of performance are integrated to form a scale for performance and to measure grade point average.

In the US, professors are free to choose their own scale in giving A, B, C or D in their classes. They never fix marks for grading. As a result, As are different in different universities. Eventually, an annual rating of universities is made to provide a comparison of the degrees of the universities by discipline. This system guarantees a healthy competition among competing institutions. It keeps the system flexible, and once Harvard understands that Boston, for example, is close to it in terms of standard of education, it can raise its standard for As. As a result, Harvard remains Harvard. This was not the point when the UGC made its ruling on a uniform grading system. In fact, with this new system, the UGC is now asking IBA of DU (also many private universities) to lower its scale and declare the previously declared Bs as As! What a clever idea to improve the quality of education in Bangladesh!

The **curriculum** is an important yardstick of the quality of education. It is a dynamic system, so universities are allowed to change the curriculum through the Curriculum Committee and the Academic Council. This makes the curriculum flexible, and competing universities remain alert to make changes when required. The beauty of the system is that it automatically forces universities to improve their curriculum. On the other hand, a uniform curriculum for all is like "one size fits all." It is inflexible, backward, and forces the fossilisation of the system. Many countries have adopted an open system of evaluation of the curriculum, where experts and faculty members discuss how to improve the curriculum (rather than saying change this, change that, etc.).



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Unfortunately, in our case the system is hidden behind a curtain. No one knows who evaluated the curriculum presented by a university, and the UGC believes that only the experts know better than others. The UGC should respect the wisdom of faculty members (who are equally qualified), and let them face the experts to justify the curriculum. Here, it is important to realise that all BBAs, for example, are not the same, so their curricula need not be exactly same. By dittoing a curriculum from an established university one does not make a program the best.

Finally, **ownership of land** is unnecessary. It is not linked with the quality of education. However, it is important that universities have their own campuses.