

Bill Summary

The University Laws (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill, 2022

- The University Laws (Amendment) (No.2) Bill, 2022 was introduced in the Kerala Legislative Assembly on December 3, 2022. The Bill amends eight Acts that each establish a university in the state. These are: (i) the Kerala Agricultural University Act, 1971, (ii) the Kerala University Act, 1974, (iii) the Calicut University Act, 1975, (iv) the Mahatma Gandhi University Act, 1985, (v) the Sree Sankaracharya University of Sanskrit Act, 1994, (vi) the Kannur University Act, 1996, (vii) the Kerala Veterinary and Animal Sciences University Act, 2010, and (viii) the Kerala University of Health Sciences Act, 2010.
- **Chancellor to be appointed by the state government:** Under all eight Acts, the Governor is the ex-officio Chancellor of each university. The Bill removes this provision, and empowers the state government to appoint the Chancellor of each university. The Bill also specifies certain qualifications for the Chancellor. These include being an academican of high repute or a person of eminence in science (including agriculture and veterinary science), technology, medicine, social science, art, law, humanities, literature, culture, or public administration. The Chancellor is the head of the University. The Chancellor presides over meetings of the University's governing bodies and can issue directions to the other authorities of the university.
- **Discharge of Vice-Chancellor's duties during vacancy or temporary absence:** The eight parent Acts have certain provisions to address vacancy in the office of the Vice-Chancellor (VC). Some Acts such as the Kerala University Act, 1974, and the Calicut University Act, 1975 empower the Chancellor to make necessary arrangements for discharging the VC's duties. Some Acts such as the Kannur University Act, 1996, and the Mahatma Gandhi University Act, 1985 authorise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to take up the responsibilities of the VC.
- The Bill amends these sections to provide that for all eight universities, the Chancellor will authorise the Pro-Vice-Chancellor to carry out the functions of the VC. In the absence of both the VC and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, the Bill empowers the Chancellor to appoint the VC of any other university. Such appointments must be made with the approval of the other university's Chancellor.

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