

Report of

InnovationClub@IGNOU

(2017-2018)



**National Centre for Innovation in Distance Education
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068**

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Introduction

InnovationClub@IGNOU

Innovation is considered to be the key for growth and development of an institute. In order to promote the culture of innovation in the country, the Government of India has declared this decade as the innovation Decade. Moreover, recently the Hon'ble President of India as Visitor of Central Universities has also emphasized on the need of innovation in the education sector. Hon'ble President of India as well as the Hon'ble HRM has asked all the central Universities to constitute Innovation Clubs in the Universities. In view of this, the NCIDE also formulated an InnovationClub@IGNOU in April 2015. Though the NCIDE has already being promoting innovation in the university, the formation of InnovationClub@IGNOU will further strengthened the drive to create the culture of innovation in the University and monitor the faculty and students to do innovations.

Objectives of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

The basic objectives of the InnovationClub@IGNOU are as follows :

- to contribute creatively and actively in the innovation related activities of NCIDE,
- to generate awareness about creativity and innovations in the ODL System,
- to identify the grass-root level innovations by the faculty and the students of IGNOU as well as the ODL System, and
- to create a network of innovators and create a culture of innovation.

Proposed Activities of InnovationClub@IGNOU

In order to meet the objectives of the InnovationClub@IGNOU, a verity of activities are organized on regular basis. Some of such important activities initiated by the Club are as follows :

1. Organizing periodic meetings of the club members to generate new ideas and explore and identify innovations by students, faculty, and staff of IGNOU and the ODL System.
2. Invite students, teachers and staff members to share their innovative ideas and skills and showcase their innovative products and processes.
3. Organizing awareness campaign on Creativity and Innovations within IGNOU and across the ODL System in the country.
4. Organizing various competitions like quiz, debates, posters, etc. on innovation and creativity.

5. Provide a platform to the students, faculty and staff to be engaged in the activities and programmes related to NCIDE.
6. Contribution to the e-news letter/journal on innovation published by NCIDE.
7. To set up and coordinate the innovation club at Regional Centres/Study Centres of IGNOU.

Members of InnovationClub@IGNOU

Initially the following were the founder members of the proposed club :

1. Prof. S. V. S. Chaudhary, Professor, School of Education
2. Prof. Anu Aneja, Director, SOGDS
3. Prof. Madhu Parhar, Professor, STRIDE
4. Prof. M. K. Salooja, Professor, SOA
5. Dr. C. K. Ghosh, Regional Director, Dwarka
6. Dr. Shubha Gokhale, Associate Professor, SOS
7. Dr. Biplab Jamatia, Assistant Professor, SOHS
8. Ms. Neerja Sood, Assistant Professor, SOHS
9. Dr. Hemlata, Deputy Director, NCDS
10. Dr. Shubhangi Vaidya, Assistant Professor, SOITS
11. Ms. Jitender Jit Kour, Producer, EMPC
12. Dr. Mukesh Kumar, Assistant Professor, SOA
13. Dr. Nisha Singh, Deputy Director, IUC
14. Dr. Moumita Das, Assistant Director, NCIDE
15. Ms. Sujata Santosh, Assistant Director, NCIDE
16. Dr. Jyotsna Dikshit, Deputy, NCIDE
17. Dr. O. P. Sharma, Director, NCIDE

However, the club aims towards engaging as many students, faculty and staff as possible in the innovative activities of the university.

Report of the 1st Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Discussion on “UGC Prohibitive Stand on Offering Lab Intensive Programmes through ODL and Its Innovative Solutions

The 1st Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU was held on September 06, 2017 at 11.30 AM at Baba Saheb Ambedkar Convention Centre, IGNOU. Total 35 members were present in the Meeting.

At the outset Dr. Moumita Das, the Coordinator InnovationClub@IGNOU welcomed all the Directors and members of the InnovationClub@NCIDE. She informed that this meeting was specially organized to hold a discussion in the light of the new UGC Regulations for the ODL system that came into effect on 23rd June 2017. There has been a lot of speculation among the IGNOU fraternity regarding the position of the practical-based Programmes being offered by IGNOU and this deliberation was aimed at obtaining a clear understanding to pave the way ahead. The invited discussants belonged to those schools, which are offering practical based Programmes. She informed that the discussion will be conducted by Ms. Sujata Santosh, Assistant Director, NCIDE and Dr. Neerja Sood, Assistant Professor, SOHS, and Dr. Leena Singh, Assistant Professor, SOMS were requested to be the rapporteurs.

Prof. Manoj Kulshrestha, Director, NCIDE and Coordinator of the InnovationClub@NCIDE was requested to address the members. Prof. Kulshrestha welcomed all the members and emphasized that discussion on UGC Regulations 2017 will help the University and the Schools to conceptualize the issues and challenges in implementing the practical based programmes in the light of the new regulations. He said that the Minutes of this meeting will be sent to VC to be forwarded to the concerned authorities.

Prof. Manoj Kulshrestha, taking examples from the programmes of the School of Engineering and Technology, compared the process of conducting practicals in the conventional system vis-a-vis the ODL system. He explained that for the B. Tech programme, the AICTE stipulated 2 Credits of lab courses. A 2 Credit lab course has 30 hours in conventional system. In the conventional system one week of residential conduction of lab course is mandated. The same amount of time was given in ODL system as well in which 12-15 experiments were conducted. The theory and laboratory work is integrated and the practicals are guided. The practicals are conducted under the guidance of a laboratory assistant and verified by the faculty. Examination for the same is conducted through a lottery or chit system specifying the practical to be performed by each student and then evaluated by the examiner. In the ODL system there are both guided and unguided components; the theory is only guided up to 30%, and learners are evaluated by Academic Counsellor. The practicals are conducted in same manner as in the conventional system. So where is

the difference between two systems? The Study centre of IGNOU Engineering programmes were housed in AICTE approved College of Engineering. Thus, there is no difference between the quality of conducting practical-based teaching-learning and examination between the conventional and the ODL systems.

Mr. M. P. Mishra presented an overview of the BCA and MCA programmes of IGNOU, highlighting the practical component quality aspects. He highlighted that both the BCA and MCA Programmes provide extensive focus on the laboratory component. For the BCA programme, there is a total of 540 hours of practicals and for the MCA there are 510 hours of practicals. There are strict criteria for attendance for lab courses and 70% attendance is compulsory for all students. For 30 students, there is one counselor. He emphasized that these practical based programmes are well accepted and working well, giving the desired output. Therefore the university should appraise the UGC regarding these robust practical based programmes.

Dr. Neerja Sood, presented her views on the topic "UGC Regulations 2017 for Practical Based Programmes : An overview of Professional Courses". She interpreted some of the related terms used in the UGC (Open and Distance Learning) Regulations, 2017, highlighted the conditions to be fulfilled for Recognition of Higher Education Institutions offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning Modes, gave examples of some practical based vocational courses recognised by the UGC, and provided recommendations for future. Her views are presented below :

1. The UGC Regulations 2017 are the *minimum standards* of instruction, and any institution can have over and above the stipulated rules.
2. "*Programme*" means a course or programme of study leading to the award of a Degree at graduate and postgraduate levels in a higher educational institution including Certificate or Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma.
3. Education *beyond twelve years of schooling* leading to award of degree or certificate or diploma or post graduate diploma is part of higher education through distance education. Higher Education, as defined in the UGC regulations, is such education, imparted by means of conducting regular classes or through distance education systems, beyond twelve years of schooling leading to the award of a Degree or Certificate or Diploma or Postgraduate Diploma.
4. "*Professional programmes*" means a programme other than programmes in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, physiotherapy and programmes not permitted to be offered in distance mode by any Statutory Councils or Regulatory Authorities to be conducted by the Higher Educational Institutions under Open and Distance Learning mode or Distance Education mode for the purpose of these regulations, if any, *should be considered only if the same are approved by the respective Statutory Councils or Regulatory Authorities*. This means professional programmes need approval of councils or regulatory bodies for conducting programmes through distance education before starting the programme.

IGNOU can conduct all practical based programmes under the provision Section 8 (1) of UGC Regulations, 2017.

5. *"Open and Distance Learning" mode means a mode of providing flexible learning opportunities by overcoming separation of teacher and learner using a variety of media, including print, electronic, online and occasional interactive face-to-face meetings with the presence of an Higher Educational Institution or Learner Support Services to deliver teaching-learning experiences, including practical or work experiences. Thus, as per the UGC Regulations, 2017, online media can be used in distance education.*
6. *"Open University" means a University which imparts education through distance education or Open and Distance Learning mode using variety of Information and Communication Technology educational aids, i.e. online education in the form of Open Educational Resources (OERs) or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) etc. ICT includes OERs and MOOCs and as per policy, 20 per cent teaching can be through MOOCs.*
7. *Schools, for regular programmes, (other than the programmes which need approval from the councils/regulatory bodies as mentioned in above paragraph) need to take approvals from the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (as per guidelines) and from university statutory bodies, after which UGC approvals are required. But for programmes which require approval of councils/regulatory bodies, the Schools need to get approvals from the respective councils/regulatory bodies before starting the programme. The Higher Educational Institutions shall have to exhibit the copies of the approval letters duly obtained or received from the concerned statutory regulatory authority or council to run the professional courses or programmes on the Higher Educational Institutions website.*
8. *No Higher Educational Institution shall offer a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these regulations and for subsequent academic session and admit students thereto unless it has been granted recognition for the programme under clause (i) of sub-regulation (4). As per the letter dated 17-07-2017 from UGC, the UGC (Open and Distance Learning) Regulations, 2017 have been notified in the Gazette on 23.06.2017. The process for admission for the year 2017-18 by the Universities/Institutions is ongoing. Keeping in view the Para 3, Sub-para (1) of Part-II of the said Regulations, it has been decided that the UGC (Open and Distance learning) Regulations, 2017 will be operationalized from the year 2018-19.*
9. *A Higher Educational Institution intending to offer a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these regulations and for subsequent years ... shall make an on-line application in the format specified by the Commission, and upload the same on the specified portal. The letter dated 28-07-2017 of the UGC invites online applications in the prescribed format from all eligible Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) for offering ODL programmes from the academic session beginning in July, 2018. The*

*online portal for submitting applications shall be open from **07.08.2017 to 23.09.2017.***

10. Practical based B. Vocational Programmes have been approved by the UGC, which has provided detailed guidelines for B. Voc, and 103 programmes are approved under it. Even 89 programmes under Community Colleges; 79 programmes under Kaushal Kendra Schemes and various programmes under Health Sector Skill Council are approved by the UGC. These can be explored by the various Schools of IGNOU for implementing certificate and diploma programmes. The National Skill Qualification Framework also specifies the level versus credits of programmes.
11. She also recommended that :
 - a. NCIDE should form a working group to draft a white paper.
 - b. The university can also constitute a committee to deliberate on the issues for taking decisions on quality of the programmes.
 - c. The Internal Quality Assurance Cell should involve all the stakeholders, such as P&DD, ACD, RSD, STRIDE, NCIDE etc.
 - d. The Vice Chancellor and Registrar of IGNOU should take up the recognition issues with respective councils and regulatory bodies and with concerned Ministries at the university level.

After the above presentation sessions, the house was open for discussion.

Dr. Shubha Gokhale emphasized that all the programmes of School of Sciences (SOS) can be conducted through distance education in light of UGC Regulations, 2017 as SOS follow the norms of the university. She also emphasized that IGNOU should put up its stand with justification and defend the implementation of its practical based programmes.

Dr. Kamalika Baneerji informed that in IITs use blended approached for teaching the students, which IGNOU is already practicing.

Prof. M.S. Nathawat informed that Amity University was not able to get approvals but the Hon'ble Supreme Court took a decision that as a University, Amity University can conduct the programmes.

Prof. Subhasish Maji emphasized that certificate level skill programmes in the School of Engineering and Technology (SOET) can be conducted by the School as per various guidelines presented by Dr. Neerja Sood. He briefed the members that students face problems of recognition as the programmes are not recognized by the AICTE. Therefore the approval of regulatory bodies is essential. However, it needs to be considered that distance education programmes are different and their clientele is different than the conventional programmes offered by regular universities. In BITS Pilani, under the Distance Learning Programmes Unit (DLPU), in coordination with the corporate sector, various levels of programmes are being conducted with

approval of statutory bodies. Dr. Neerja Sood pointed out that regulation had the provision of involving industry as one of the responsibilities of Internal Quality cell is to encourage industrial involvement and industry-institution linkage for providing exposure to the learners.

Dr. Rakhi Sharma suggested that under the UGC recognized B. Vocation Programme scheme, various programmes can be conducted in the university.

Dr. Bijayalaxmi Mishra also emphasized that as per UGC Regulations, 2017, practical based programmes can be conducted by IGNOU. But there is a need for strengthening the monitoring mechanisms. She also informed that while drafting the UGC Regulations, 2017 for Distance Education, the IGNOU norms were considered as benchmarks in ODL and were taken into consideration. She said the matter can be taken up with UGC/AICTE for implementing the engineering programmes of the university.

Prof. T. K. Jena requested to clarify that if medical and nursing programmes can be conducted through distance education if approvals are granted through respective councils. He also said the term "occasional interactive face to face meetings" in the definition on Open and Distance Learning in the UGC Regulations, 2017, needs modification as, in IGNOU, specified percentage of hours of theory is mandatory. There is need for a dialogue with UGC. There are MOOCs, projects involving use of ICT-intervention, and Pan Africa project offering programmes through virtual mode only.

Dr. Silima Nanda informed that the International Division was conducting various practical based programmes with partner institutions but suddenly all programmes were stopped. Therefore there is an urgent need for dialogue with the UGC.

Dr. Sudhansh Sharma emphasized that IITs and Engineering colleges are using blended approach for teaching students in conventional system.

Dr. O. P. Sharma suggested that a one-day seminar may be conducted where working groups can work on the UGC Regulations, 2017, and present the issues and concerns to experts from UGC and the concerned regulatory bodies and councils.

After the discussion session Prof. Manoj Kulshrestha summarized the issues and suggested the following road map for future :

1. Apparently there is no prohibition of practical-based programmes offered through the ODL mode by the UGC, provided appropriate approvals are taken from the statutory councils/regulatory bodies. This needs to be further understood and guidelines framed. One more meeting will be organized next month with the stakeholders to discuss the issues in detail.
2. All the related documents, along with the minutes of the meeting, will be circulated by NCIDE to all the members/faculty of Schools and Divisions for reference and discussion in next meeting.

3. A detailed recommendation paper will be drafted based on the meeting and will be sent to Vice Chancellor for discussion and reference.
4. A one-day seminar may be organized by NCIDE, and members from UGC and statutory councils/regulatory bodies may be invited to participate.

Report of the 2nd Meeting of the InnovationClub@IGNOU

Recommendations of

**One-Day Seminar on Innovative Ways of Offering
Lab Based, Skill Development and Technical
Programmes in Context of the recent UGC
Regulations on ODL 2017**

In the 20th Meeting of InnovationClub@IGNOU held on September 06, 2017 on the University Grants Commission (*UGC*)'s prohibitive stand on offering lab intensive programmes through ODL and its innovative solutions, it was decided that keeping in view the importance/relevance of the issue, a one-day Seminar should be organized to discuss various aspects of recognition/regulations of the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes. Accordingly, a one-day Seminar on ***Innovative Ways of Offering Lab-based, Skill development and Technical Programmes in the context of the UGC Regulations on ODL 2017*** was organized on December 12, 2017 by the InnovationClub@IGNOU.

The Seminar aimed at obtaining a clear understanding to pave the way ahead.

In the Seminar, the issue of lab based programmes and the broader issue of recognition of ODL programmes was deliberated upon to clearly understand it to be taken up to the policy makers. Further, in the Seminar, deliberations were held on new and emerging practical-intensive programmes being offered by the ODL System. The recommendations that emerged from the Seminar deliberations is presented below.

Recommendations

The deliberations in the seminar resulted in the emergence of the following main recommendations :

1. IGNOU needs get the approval of the existing programmes from the UGC. Since time is less, decisions need to be taken promptly by the IGNOU administration.
2. Legal opinion may be sought, if required, for recognition of the programmes as the UGC portal is closed.
3. IGNOU needs to have the same nomenclature of programmes as provided in the UGC list so that the IGNOU programmes are recognized and accepted.
4. IGNOU needs to decide which programme is non-technical and which is technical. Professional programmes need to be identified by IGNOU.

5. IGNOU should form a committee with members from Schools and Operational or Services Divisions to have meetings with AICTE and sort out the matter of recognition of the engineering degrees.
6. A Programme Project Report (PPR) needs to be submitted by each school for every programme.
7. IGNOU should constitute three to four committees for working out the modalities of the Programme Project Report (PPR), such as one advisory committee and one school level committee for PPR.
8. IGNOU should constitute committees involving the Service Divisions level to devise Standard Operational Procedures on the basis of guidelines provided. The Standard Operational Procedures will have to be developed on the basis of the guidelines provided by UGC in the regulations.
9. IGNOU should explore innovative interventions for practical based programmes. The university should facilitate the development of innovative solutions through a well-equipped incubation centre, such as the NCIDE.