



सत्यमेव जयते



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

University Grants Commission

# Guidelines for Transforming Higher Education Institutions into Multidisciplinary Institutions



# **Guidelines for Transforming Higher Education Institutions into Multidisciplinary Institutions**



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**The University Grants Commission**  
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D-41/A, Opp. Metro Pillar No. 33, Vikas Marg,  
Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092  
Ph. : +91 9312550335, +91 7042732332  
E-mail : infodma07@gmail.com

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## Foreword

The quintessence of Higher Education Institution (HEI), as envisioned in the National Education Policy 2020, is one which builds vibrant communities of scholars and peers, break down harmful silos between disciplines and enable students to become well-rounded individuals. However, a substantial number of HEIs in the country are either single stream institutions or multidisciplinary institutions with rigid disciplinary boundaries. To transform the HEIs into multidisciplinary institutions within the timelines suggested by the NEP 2020, therefore, is a challenge.

In order to enable the transformation of HEIs into multidisciplinary institutions, the UGC constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. R. P. Tiwari. The Committee has suggested multiple ways such as collaboration, merging and clustering between institutions to achieve the characteristics of a multidisciplinary institution. I am happy to present the “Guidelines for Transforming Higher Educational Institutions in to Multidisciplinary Institutions” to the HEIs for consideration. Hope these guidelines help State Governments and Universities to frame appropriate rules/policies to transform HEIs into multidisciplinary institutions.

I take this opportunity to thank the Chairman of the Expert Committee Prof. R. P. Tiwari and members for drafting the guidelines. Thanks are also due to Prof. Nageshwar Rao and members for drafting guidelines for establishment of department of education in multidisciplinary institutions. I also thank Prof. Rajnish Jain, Secretary, UGC and all others for providing all possible support in bringing out these guidelines.

**Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar**

Chairman

University Grants Commission

New Delhi,  
September, 2022



# Guidelines for Transforming Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) into multidisciplinary institutions

## 1. Preamble

*Aano bhadra krtavo yantu vishwatah*  
**Let noble thoughts come from all directions**

This profound concept from the Rigveda illustrates the recognition of limitless learning in the Vedic Period. India has a rich tradition of the multidisciplinary approach since ages, as exemplified by the ancient institutions such as Nalanda and Takshashila. These higher learning centres of ancient India were known for teaching every branch of knowledge, such as singing, painting, chemistry, mathematics; vocational fields such as carpentry, clothes-making; professional fields such as medicine and engineering; and soft skills such as communication, discussion and debate. Over the centuries the broader learning opportunities got narrowed and gradually in recent years the focus moved to specialization in particular subjects resulting in the growth of single-stream institutions. The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), suggests several policy directions for offering multidisciplinary education.

The NEP 2020 aims to develop intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional, ethical and moral facets of an individual in an integrated manner, thereby contributing directly to transformation of the country and making India a global knowledge superpower. What constitutes an HEI, that is, a university or a college, is also defined in the NEP 2020. Large multidisciplinary HEIs to be established in or near every district by 2030 is one of the most significant recommendations in the NEP 2020. A multidisciplinary institution should not only have different departments, but also should have innovative programmes of a multi- and interdisciplinary nature to help widen learners' thinking and learning capability and train them to address emerging challenges.

India has domain specific stand-alone colleges and universities. Even in multidisciplinary HEIs the disciplinary boundaries are so rigid that the opportunities to learn and explore different disciplines are less explored. Internationally, the culture of establishing and sustaining a multidisciplinary university is increasing fast, thereby maximizing productivity with enhanced focus towards research and development, innovation and incubation. It is therefore, pertinent for higher educational system (HES) to phase out stand-alone, fragmented and domain-specific HEIs to create HEI clusters and multidisciplinary HEIs instead. Such institutions will impart education, with strong values and skill sets. The Higher Education System will further enhance the performance of Indian institutions in terms of teaching, learning and research to newer and greater heights.

The way proposed in the NEP 2020 to end fragmentation of higher education is by transforming HEIs into multidisciplinary universities, colleges and clusters and knowledge hubs. The types of HEIs envisaged are:

- a. Multidisciplinary research-intensive universities (RUs)
- b. Multidisciplinary teaching-intensive universities (TUs)
- c. Degree-awarding multi-disciplinary autonomous colleges (smaller than a university)



The multidisciplinary TUs and RUs will be universities with 3,000 or more students. Given that by 2035 all affiliated colleges should become degree-awarding multidisciplinary autonomous institutions, it is necessary to develop a road map to transform all affiliated colleges to attain the status, either alone or through collaboration with nearby institutions in the form of clusters or by becoming a constituent part of a university as envisioned in NEP 2020. The affiliated colleges need to achieve the degree-awarding status by becoming large multidisciplinary autonomous colleges or by becoming part of the cluster to become a large multi-disciplinary HEI.

The overall higher education sector will be an integrated higher education system, including professional and vocational education. The policy also suggests opening departments needed for multidisciplinary subjects, including: Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Translation and Interpretation.

## 2. Objectives

- Transform single-stream institutions into large multidisciplinary universities and autonomous degree-awarding HEIs.
- Strengthen institutional infrastructure necessary for multidisciplinary education and research.

## 3. Approaches Towards the Setting Up of Multidisciplinary HEIs

- Academic collaboration between institutions, through HEI clusters, leading to multidisciplinary education and research in different modes.
- Merger of single-stream institutions with other multidisciplinary institutions under the same management or different managements.
- Strengthening of institutions by adding departments in subjects such as: Languages, Literature, Music, Philosophy, Indology, Art, Dance, Theatre, Education, Mathematics, Statistics, Pure and Applied Sciences, Sociology, Economics, Sports, Translation and Interpretation and other subjects as needed for a multidisciplinary institution.

## 4. Requirements for a Multidisciplinary HEI

Multidisciplinary education will help students to shape their career options. To offer multidisciplinary programmes successfully, HEIs are expected to conduct student-induction programmes to create awareness among students about various learning pathways and career opportunities; to register in the Academic Bank of Credit (ABC); and adopt online courses, in addition to other collaboration with other HEIs, to offer the programmes with a strong interdisciplinary flavor.

- a) Orientation about new opportunities:** The University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated Student Induction Programme (SIP) with the purpose to help students acclimatize with the new surroundings, develop bonds with fellow students and teachers, sensitivity towards various issues of social relevance and imbibe values so as to become responsible citizens. With the NEP 2020 bringing in a series of reforms such as multidisciplinary education, multiple entry and exit, Academic Bank of Credits (ABC)

etc., students entering the portals of higher education need to be oriented about the available opportunities. Ensuring a well- designed induction programme with adequate exposure to all these reforms will help students to set the pace of their academic journey.

- b) **Credit mobility between institutions:** For credit mobility between partnering institutions, the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has developed the ABC platform under a Digilocker Framework. The ABC provides the facility and functionality for a student to open an academic account and to get eligible HEIs on board. The ABC digitally store the academic credits of the students earned from HEIs registered with the Bank and supply appropriate data for the HEIs to award degrees, diplomas/PG diplomas and certificates as merited by the students, over a period of time. The ABC also ensures opening, closing and validation of Academic Bank Accounts and Credit verification, credit accumulation and credit transfer or redemption for students. HEIs need to register in the ABC to enable credit mobility.
- c) **Online and ODL mode of education:** NEP 2020 has set the ambitious target of achieving 50 per cent GER by 2035. To achieve this target, higher education needs to be imparted in multiple ways. Online learning is one of the ways. Online education is gaining acceptance and popularity. Hundreds of online courses recognized by UGC including those available in the SWAYAM portal can provide an ideal platform to enable multidisciplinary education.

## 5. General Conditions

- The standards prescribed by the UGC or by the concerned Statutory or Regulatory bodies, such as: All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), National Medical Commission (NMC), Dental Council of India (DCI), National Council for Teachers Education (NCTE), Bar Council of India (BCI) and Indian Nursing Council (INC), etc. in terms of academic and physical infrastructure, qualification of teachers, duration of a programme, intake, eligibility, admission procedures, fees, curriculum and programme implementation, assessment and evaluation, among other conditions are applicable.
- The degrees to be offered as a result of collaboration between institutions must conform to the nomenclature and duration of the degrees as specified in section 22 (3) of the UGC Act, 1956 and shall also conform to the minimum eligibility and other norms and standards to offer such degree programmes. Multidisciplinary degree programmes punctuated with internship, community service and engagement and skill courses need substantial orientation for teachers. Capacity-building for faculty to teach, train and to do research in multidisciplinary academic programmes need adequate focus. Initiatives like Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT) need to be utilized for additional capacity-building.
- Institutional structures have to be expanded to strengthen capacity of faculty to use effective pedagogical approaches and design learning assessment methods and tools.

- The academic requirements and other details of the programme(s) of study to be offered under collaborative arrangements shall be displayed prominently on the collaborating institutions' website before the commencement of programmes.
- An appropriate mechanism has to be put in place to make available counselling services in all HEIs. Each HEI will encourage students through placement assistance and career guidance to help them decide their occupational choices, facilitate processes to identify employment opportunities and set up interactions with potential employers. An efficient mechanism for grievance-handling and or redressal will have to be created or upgraded.
- HEIs shall need appropriate educational infrastructure in terms of books, journals, study materials, audio-visual facilities, e-resources, virtual classrooms and studios and specifically, high bandwidth internet connectivity to deliver courses through various modes such as Open & Distance Learning (ODL), Online education and face to face.

## **6. Academic Collaboration between Institutions Leading to Multidisciplinary Education and Research.**

Colleges which are the bedrock of the Indian Higher Education System are connected with universities through an “Affiliating System”, where universities design the syllabi, conduct examination and award degrees, while teaching is done in colleges. The structure of this affiliating system has changed very little over the years thereby having a limiting effect on the evolution of research and innovation at both the university and college levels. UGC’s attempt to blur the traditional divide between universities and colleges was the scheme of “Autonomous Colleges”. However, the effort to bring more colleges into the fold of academic autonomy was only partly successful. With NEP 2020 recommending transformation of all HEIs into large multidisciplinary degree-awarding autonomous institutions, the challenge lies in bringing the affiliated colleges on to the track of progressive autonomy leading to a degree-awarding institution and finally into an university as envisioned in the NEP 2020. Consolidation of existing HEIs into multidisciplinary degree-granting autonomous colleges through cooperation and collaboration among institutions is outlined in these guidelines.

Many industries now look for graduates with sound knowledge of different disciplines. In sync with the market demand, majority of students aspire to acquire multiple skills. Although there are many single-stream institutions in subjects such as Education, Engineering, Management and Law exist in close proximity, rigid disciplinary boundaries and lack of collaboration between institutions deprive students the opportunities of multidisciplinary learning. It is, therefore, essential to capitalize on the proximity of HEIs in offering multidisciplinary programmes. Collaboration and cooperation in offering degree programmes in innovative ways is in the larger interests of aspiring students, parents, industry, government and the nation.

### **1. Institutional collaboration leading to the award of dual-major degrees**

#### **a) Eligibility criteria**

Under the collaborative arrangement, single-stream institutions can integrate their programmes with those of nearby multidisciplinary institutions to enhance

their programmes. The multidisciplinary HEIs may also seek collaboration in case they are willing to expand further by adding more programmes. Such a new and novel educational architecture will help and strengthen the structure of multidisciplinary education and achieve what has been envisioned in the NEP 2020. As an example, a B.Ed. programme with a B.A leads to the award of dual major degree B.A. B.Ed. (Integrated Teacher Education Programme, ITEP)

**b) Approval process**

The approval process and degree-awarding will be under the purview of the affiliating universities. The colleges and universities must get the concerned Professional Council(s) to start the degree programmes, either in discipline-specific degree or dual major degree programmes.

HEIs should submit proposals to offer a four-year dual-major bachelor's programme to the regulatory body concerned for recognition. Following the selection procedure, the concerned regulatory bodies will recognize institutions to offer the integrated dual major programmes.

**c) Operational requirements**

The physical proximity of the institutions should be such that they can share physical and human resources and ensure easier student and faculty mobility. Collaborative dual-major degree programmes, wherever possible and required, should be offered with the idea of bringing flexibility and interdisciplinarity for the students. The collaborative dual-major degree programme should be naturally feasible and should open new career and employment opportunities for the students. The institution will have to enter into a written Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its partner institution(s) for collaboration. The MoU must include the purposes and related provisions of collaboration, nature and extent of partnership among partnering institutions and the modalities for the functioning of the institutions in offering dual major programmes. The partnership plan for awarding dual major degree and/or collaborative programmes must include planning the expansion in the infrastructure, number of students, departments involved, administration, academic functions and research activities. The student's tuition fee may be charged only for the residential period in the concerned HEIs. The universities will issue the degrees with the transcript or degree indicating the courses the student has taken at the partner institution.

**2. Collaboration between two institutions for the award of dual degree**

Collaboration between two institutions for the award of dual degree facilitates students enrolled in an HEI to take up the first degree at the host institution and the second degree at the partnering institution.

An MoU may be signed between the partnering institutions to offer the dual degree with the approval of the university, the State government and/ or the regulatory bodies, covering all aspects such as the number of seats, modalities of transition from one institution to

another and awarding the degree. In accordance to the norms of regulatory bodies, the Central and/ or State governments, should manage and regulate the joint seat allocation for dual degree programmes. Eligibility to the dual degree programme will be as per the eligibility criteria in terms of qualifying examinations, minimum marks and any other factors as set for the programme by the partnering institutions. Once admitted, the students will be able to complete the first degree at the host institution and the second degree at the partnering institution, without going through the admission process again. Fees will be applicable as per the host institute for the first degree; and for the second degree the fee structure of the partnering institution will be applicable. Partnering institutions will provide hostel facilities, wherever possible, for students while they are pursuing degrees in the particular institution. Students who complete the programme successfully will be awarded the dual degree jointly by the partnering HEIs in the case of universities. In case of collaboration between two colleges of the same university, the affiliating university will award the degree. The students of the dual degree programmes will take up courses as approved by the Academic Council of the HEIs. A certain percentage of seats may be earmarked by the partnering institutions for the dual degree programme. Admission over and above the sanctioned intake is feasible only with the prior approval of the university, the State government and/or the regulatory bodies concerned.

### **3. Cluster of colleges**

Single-stream institutions and multidisciplinary institutions with poor enrollment, due to lack of employment-oriented, innovative multidisciplinary courses and lack of financial resources to maintain and manage the institutions can improve enrolment by becoming members of cluster and by offering multidisciplinary programmes. The clustering of colleges may help in securing good grades in NAAC accreditation.

Transforming all HEIs into large multidisciplinary institutions, the existing colleges operating in the same campus or in close proximity can form a cluster. This will ensure that colleges with poor enrolment and fewer resources can offer multidisciplinary programmes and can have access to better facilities for the benefit of all. The cluster colleges shall aim at making the courses more dynamic through collaboration with other universities, prestigious government institutions and reputed industrial houses and also avail of the courses offered in the online and ODL mode. In the case of private colleges forming a cluster, the trust, or society, or company which runs the college must be charitable and not-for-profit bodies.

The cluster colleges will have the following characteristics:

- Students can take up the study programme partly in the parent institution and partly in the partnering institution(s) in the cluster.
- There shall be an Academic Council and Finance Committee for the academic and finance related matters of the cluster colleges.
- The cluster colleges will continue to be affiliated to the university concerned. Admission, examination, result and degree will be awarded as per the rules and regulations of the affiliating university.

- Financial resources will be pooled to ensure that money is utilized for the holistic growth of students.
- All facilities under the colleges, such as housekeeping, security services, library, sports, laboratories, parking, ground and classes will come under the umbrella of a common pool, which will again benefit all students on the campus.
- Facilities in individual colleges can be put to optimum utilization for the overall benefit of students in the cluster. This will also ensure that the expenditure on separate resources is curtailed and a common pool can benefit all the students.
- Through the clusters, restructured degree programmes with skill courses, internships and community service, among others, will become easier and will increase the students' job-oriented skills.
- The existing colleges will continue to function as per prevailing norms.
- There will be no change in the recruitment, appointment, allowances, service rules and pension schemes of the teaching and non-teaching staff of the colleges.
- The State governments will continue to provide the same funds to government- aided colleges as they had been doing before the cluster formation.

For the smooth functioning of cluster colleges there shall be a Board of Directors as per the following composition:

**i) For cluster of government colleges:**

1	Highly reputed persons from government, academic, industry or public administration. (nominated by the State government)	Chairperson
2	Commissioner or director of HE or his or her nominee	Director
3	Vice-Chancellor of the affiliating university or nominee	Director
4	Principals from the cluster of colleges (Two)	Directors
5	Academicians as external experts, as nominated by the Board (Two)	Directors
6	One expert from the Industry, as nominated by the Board	Director
7	One principal from the cluster of colleges, as nominated by the government	Director and Head of Cluster college

**Term:** The Board of Directors shall be reconstituted every three years.

**i. For cluster of private colleges:**

1	One representative from the management	Chairperson
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2	Highly reputed person from government, academic, industry or public administration (nominated by the management)	Director
3	Three representatives from the management	Director
4	Nominee of the State government	Director
5	Vice-Chancellor of the affiliating university or nominee	Director
6	Principals from the cluster of colleges (Two)	Director
7	Academicians as external experts, as nominated by the Board (Two)	Director
8	One expert from the industry, as nominated by the Board	Director
9	One principal from the cluster of colleges, as nominated by the government	Director and Head of Cluster college

**Term:** The Board of Directors shall be reconstituted every three years.

#### **Composition of the Academic Council:**

1. The Director nominated at no. 7 (Govt. Colleges) and 9 (Pvt. Colleges) above will be the Chairperson
2. Principals of all the colleges in the cluster
3. Heads of departments - 5
4. Senior faculty members – 3 (one to be nominated as Member Secretary by the Director and Head of Cluster College)
5. Not less than four experts and/or academicians from outside the cluster of colleges representing such areas as Industry, Commerce, Law, Education, Medicine, Engineering, Sciences as nominated by the Board of Directors.

#### **Composition of the Finance Committee:**

1. The Director nominated at no. 7(Govt. Colleges) and 9 (Pvt. Colleges) above will be the Chairperson
2. Nominee of the Board of Directors
3. Finance officer of the affiliating university
4. The senior-most teacher of the college (nominated by the Director).

The Board of Directors provides overall direction and coordination of the cluster of colleges. The Academic Council works closely with the departments to develop new programmes and a research agenda and review the progress of research.

**a) Approval process**

The norms and standards set by the concerned regulatory bodies as applicable are: the duration of the programme, intake, eligibility, admission procedure, fees, curricula and programme implementation; assessment and evaluation; staff and faculty, qualification, infrastructural facilities and instructional facilities.

Proposals by institutions to offer the multidisciplinary programme in a cluster mode are to be approved by the statutory bodies of a university in accordance with the regulations and/or guidelines set by the regulatory bodies concerned.

***Consolidation of cluster of colleges***

The member colleges in a cluster will continue to function as affiliated colleges under the university in the initial phase with the Board of Directors, Academic Council, Finance Committee and Curriculum Development Committee governing the academic, financial and administrative matters. During this phase, the member colleges may share their resources to offer multidisciplinary programmes and guide student research projects. After the initial years, the affiliating university may affiliate the cluster of colleges as a single unit. During this transformation phase, the cluster may pass through graded autonomy before developing into an autonomous degree-granting cluster of college. With appropriate accreditations, autonomous degree-granting colleges can further evolve into RUs or TUs university, if they so aspire.

**b) Operational requirements**

- The institution shall have to enter into a written MoU with its partner institution(s) for collaboration. The MoU must categorically include the purposes and related provisions of collaboration, nature and extent of relationship among partnering institutions and the modalities for the functioning of the cluster.
- To avoid scheduling clashes, the timetable must be set in consultation with partner institutions in a manner that students associated with different programmes can easily register for courses without having to deal with any timetable clashes for the semesters they are attending.
- An action plan is needed to upgrade academic facilities and infrastructures, including technology-enabled and assisted learning ecosystem, in each identified HEI, which will include: video-based classes, infrastructure for blended and online learning modes; other academic infrastructure such as library and laboratories; infrastructure for the differently-abled students; facilities and infrastructure for faculty; facilities and infrastructure for promoting sports and wellness and the arts.
- The information related to collaborative programmes to be disclosed in the mandatory public disclosure and it has to be part of the Institutional Development Plan (IDP) of the collaborating institutions.



- The academic requirements and other details of the programme(s) of study offered under the collaborative arrangements shall be made public by displaying prominently on the collaborating institutions' websites before such programmes are scheduled to commence.
- Curriculum Development Committee needs to be constituted with its members having a blend of experience in industry, academia and professional associations, to revise and review curricula within the broad framework for course components as suggested by the UGC and the concerned Statutory Councils.
- The course tuition fee charged to the students should only pertain to the courses taught by the HEI.

## 7. Merger of HEIs

### a) Merger of institutions under the same management

Institutions functioning under same managements may merge to put the academic and physical resources to optimal use and to offer multidisciplinary education.

The managing trust or society of the institutions should submit an undertaking to the effect that the institutions under its management will merge in accordance to the rules of the State government, affiliating university and/or the regulatory body.

### b) Merger of institutions run by different managements

A private institution desirous of merging with a single stream institution / multidisciplinary institution of another registered society or trust, may apply, with the approval of the affiliating university, to the society or trust of the institution to be merged with and become a part of it as per the procedure of the Societies Registration Act or Trust Act, as the case may be.

## 8. Adding New Departments

The Policy on 'Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education' underlines pulling of courses and resources from a variety of disciplines and providing flexibility to students to choose courses and pathways such that holistic individual development takes place in intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional and moral dimensions and that 21st century skills/ competencies (including social and life skills) of critical thinking, problem solving, communication, leadership, team work, mastery of curricula across fields, increase in social and moral awareness and creativity and innovation are fully developed and put to practice. The teaching-learning has to be linked to life, community and the world of work, including the environment across all disciplines/ fields of study, including STEM education.

## 9. Establishment of Department of Education in Multidisciplinary Institutions

The NEP 2020 visualizes establishment of one Education Department in colleges/ universities/ HEIs to contribute to multidisciplinary and holistic education and to contribute to research and development in these areas.

Section 15 of NEP 2020 underlines three purposes:

- i. to conduct cutting-edge research in various aspects of education,
- ii. to support the actualization of all teacher education in multidisciplinary institutions and
- iii. to contribute to multidisciplinary and holistic higher education across disciplines.

Section 15.6 of NEP 2020 talks of Education Departments developing a range of experts in education (including subject areas); and Section 15.9 stipulates that all PhD scholars across disciplines shall have to take up courses from Education Departments relating to curriculum design, pedagogy, education areas, communication and writing so that they develop competencies relating to these areas too, as also that they may take up teaching as a career in the future.

The 'Education Departments' (or Departments of Education/ Schools of Education) are visualized as instruments toward:

- i. contributing to multidisciplinary across disciplines of study in a HEI;
- ii. benefitting from the multidiscipline environment of the HEI for its own programmes; and
- iii. contributing to multidisciplinary teaching-learning (curriculum, pedagogy, technology-enabled blended learning, assessment and evaluation etc.) as visualized in the NEP 2020 and develop specialized experts in these areas.

At present, there are three structural arrangements and areas of work that Education Departments in universities and/ or colleges serve:

- i. One, offer of 'Education' programmes (MA Education and PhD) as broad discipline and research-oriented programme, with wide coverage of educational planning and organisation in the country and to address education as a distinct (but multidisciplinary) area of study.
- ii. Two, offer of teacher education programmes (M.Ed., B.Ed., Diploma in Elementary Education, Art Education, Physical Education, Pre-School Education, Integrated Teacher Education and Ph.D.) for pre-service and in-service 'training/ professional development' of teachers and teacher educators.
- iii. Three, besides the above, there are Education Departments in various undergraduate colleges (eg in states of Odisha, Jammu, Kashmir, north-east states, West Bengal, some colleges in the University of Delhi, etc) which offer general and honours programmes in the discipline of 'Education', combining largely various interdisciplinary areas relating to education, education as a distinct field of study and in some cases some school practice teaching. The visualization of 'Multidisciplinary' in higher education under NEP 2020 is concerned with improving the 'pedagogy' of teaching-learning, 'research' in the pedagogy of teaching-learning and development of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding of students and graduates (by pulling courses from other disciplines). The same objective is also largely addressed by the Teaching-Learning Centres (TLCs) and Centres for Excellence in Curriculum and Pedagogy under the same PMMMNMTT scheme. The Inter-University Centres for Teacher Education (IUCTE) under PMMMNMTT caters to research and development (R&D) needs of teacher education in the country.

**a) In stand-alone Teacher Education Institutes (TEIs):**

All existing stand-alone TEIs must aim to become multidisciplinary HEIs. This will bring about a major transformation in the preparation of appropriately qualified teachers by ensuring high-quality training and exposure to teacher trainees for multidisciplinary education. Because teacher education requires multidisciplinary inputs, all programmes for the initial preparation of professionally trained teachers will be moved into multidisciplinary HEIs in a phased manner. Currently, most TEIs are stand-alone institutions. This has led to the intellectual and professional isolation of teacher education and their faculty from the rest of the disciplines.

**b) Education Departments in Multidisciplinary HEIs**

Multidisciplinary universities and multidisciplinary colleges must also aim to establish departments in education, which aside from carrying out teaching and research, can also offer four-year integrated programmes, in collaboration with other departments such as Psychology, Philosophy, Sociology, Neuroscience, Indian languages, Arts, History, Literature, Science and Mathematics.

Accordingly, the following are to be considered further:

- i. What will be the structural arrangement for such multidisciplinary departments?
- ii. What programmes and functions will such departments undertake?
- iii. What linkages will they have within the HEI, across HEIs and across all 'Education/Teacher Education' institutions/ departments/ schools in the country?
- iv. In what way will these Education Departments contribute to the implementation of NEP- 2020, especially in respect of: curriculum and pedagogy (including multidisciplinary and holistic education), technology-enabled blended learning, skilling and employability, social and life and happiness skills, cutting-edge research in all areas of education, teacher and teacher educator professional development and strategic policy-organisation-management of the education system in the country

**I. Structural Arrangement**

Considering the large number of universities and colleges, it may not be feasible to open education departments in all institutions in one go. Therefore, an attempt should be made to open Education Departments in select multidisciplinary universities and colleges. Subsequently, other universities and colleges may be taken up in a phased manner for the purpose. Further, these, along with the existing Education Departments in universities and colleges, should be involved in the implementation of NEP 2020 — the already existing Education Departments may be upgraded to play a strategic role in the implementation of NEP 2020 and the planned Departments need to take initiative to supplement the national and institutional initiatives toward its implementation. The existing Education Departments may do hand-holding to guide the new Departments of Education. The norms and standards followed by UGC should be applicable to these selected institutions. The existing as well as planned Education Departments may preferably be named as 'School of Education' in universities and as

'Department of Education' in colleges. More stress should be given to linkage of their courses and programmes to the job market, national and regional development needs and needs of life and the community.

## II. Functions and Programmes

The Education Departments need to go beyond contributing to the value of design and delivery of 'education/teacher education' to include the strategic planning and organization and management of education. While the Education Department itself will be multidisciplinary, it will function in tandem with other disciplines contributing further toward multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity. There should be multi-units or centres or special groups in each Education Department, especially in areas of policy studies in education, educational studies (i.e. foundations of education), equity and inclusion, educational leadership and governance, special needs education, comparative and international education, interdisciplinary research, besides the areas which directly contribute to enriching the other disciplines, like curriculum and pedagogy (especially interdisciplinary pedagogy), teaching-learning including technology-enabled learning and blended learning, assessment and evaluation, language and education, etc. The existing Education Departments need to be relooked at/ re-examined so as to revamp their functions and programmes — they are supposed to take a lead role in the implementation of NEP 2020 (resource development, training and research). The Education Departments are to primarily offer the following programmes and undertake the following functions:

- Design, development and offer of certificates, diplomas, degrees and add-on/ skill-based courses relating to the area of study of 'Education' and in specialized areas of Curriculum and Pedagogy, Educational Technology/ Technology-Enabled Learning (TEL), Assessment and Evaluation, Special Needs Education, Educational Planning and Management and Leadership, Educational and Vocational Guidance and Counselling, Yog Skiksha, among others so as to develop specialized experts in these areas for operation of education structure and function in the country, as also developing experts in specialized areas for other departments/ disciplines. There could be 'general' areas as well as 'specific' areas of intervention. These could address a range of levels starting from pre-school education up to higher education. These areas of study should be linked to skilling and employability in respective sectors. While courses from these programmes (including online courses) can be taken up by other departments/ disciplines (under 'holistic and multidisciplinary education'), the programmes of Education Department can also take up courses from a variety of disciplines, including online courses. In addition, all departments, irrespective of disciplines, should ensure that the Ph.D. scholars take training in teaching/education/ pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D. subject during their doctoral period. Ph.D. scholars may also be assigned 4-6 hours per week of teaching/research assistantship for conducting tutorial or lab work and evaluations in order to gain additional experience along with their research work.
- Conduct cutting-edge research, develop digital and other professional development resources, collate best practices and undertake continuing professional development and scholarship of teaching and learning in above noted and emerging areas of higher

education, including MOOCs, OERs, micro-credentials, machine learning, blended learning, social technologies and teaching-learning-assessment, etc. They will promote team/ network of teaching and research, by borrowing expertise from other departments in the institution; and adopt a clearing house approach for implementing collaborative/ multidisciplinary research programmes. They will generate good practices in various areas of educational application and contribute to facilitate educational policy formulation and implementation. The activities and outputs of TLCs and CECPs under PMMMMNMTT should be taken into consideration so that linkage between Education Departments and these centres can be maintained.

- It will be left to the Education Departments to take a considered view and keeping in view the infrastructural and human resource positions, to offer both in-service programmes and pre-service ITE programmes as per laid down procedures and norms. There are two models which could be considered for this — one is the existing NCERT/ RIE model of integration and the other could be a collaborative (across disciplines with education as nodal) model of integration. The offer of teacher education programmes should be guided by the demand and supply studies conducted by any designated agency and/ or the regulator NCTE. For offer of integrated teacher education programmes (which need to be distinct for pre-school, elementary, secondary and senior secondary), structural and functional changes in the school sector as stipulated in NEP 2020 should be taken into account

### III. Linkage to HEIs

The Education Departments, while themselves function as ‘multidisciplinary’ by having multi-programmes within ‘education’ (and also be inter-disciplinary), shall relate to and contribute to other departments/ disciplines/ faculties in their university and college in respect of the following:

- Establish linkage in the study of ‘education’ as a multidisciplinary area, contributing to the discipline itself, as also to the broader education policy and organization in the country.
- Work in tandem with other cognate disciplines/ departments, especially in social sciences, sciences, humanities including art and culture, sports/ physical education, among others for cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourse, dialogue and research to enrich the knowledge base and operationalisation of both the disciplines.
- Work, in collaboration with other disciplines, to enrich curriculum design and development, pedagogy and teaching-learning, assessment and evaluation, use of technology for teaching-learning/ assessment/ organization and management of various disciplines and programmes of study.
- Undertake collaborative research in multi- and inter-disciplinary areas relating specifically to the fore-noted areas to strengthen the quality, employability and innovativeness of various programmes and courses. This relates more to the ‘pedagogy and employability of the discipline’ and ‘researching the pedagogy and employability of the discipline’.
- Undertake continuing professional development (relating to scholarship of teaching

and learning and continuing professional learning) on the above areas and especially in the areas of NEP 2020 for the faculty and staff of the entire university, college and constituent/ affiliated colleges.

#### **IV. Implementation of NEP 2020**

The National Education Policy-2020 (NEP 2020) has impressed upon a paradigm change in the visualization, operationalisation and quality of the entire education system in the country. All the levels of education in the country need to implement the new policy and in doing so will need facilitation mechanisms for its operationalisation. The Education Departments of universities and colleges (led by the existing Education Departments) need to comprehensively focus on the following areas, though there are many more micro-details/ functions that may be worked out subsequently by them.

- Role of Policy in Higher Education - contours and foundational principles of NEP 2020.
- Structural Changes from School to University and linkages in associated values and competencies across levels.
- GER, Access, Equity, Inclusion — increase in access to education through alternative pathways including distance and online learning and by extending classroom education through flexible and blended learning.
- Indian Knowledge System, Tradition, Culture and Values — combining indigenous knowledge and contemporary global developments, including research in science and technology.
- Curriculum and Pedagogy, especially the constructivist and connectivist pedagogies, critical pedagogies, contextual pedagogies and development of curriculum and learning resources which are culturally-wrought, grounded, practice- and employability-oriented and globally competitive; and which focus on discipline competencies, inter-disciplinary competencies, social and life skills/ happiness skills/ 21st century skills and vocational/ job/ professional skills.
- Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education and Multiple Entry-Exit -conceptualization, design, development and operationalisation and its effectiveness/ impact of students, graduates and employers (and also based on recent UGC regulations/ guidelines).
- Enabling Learning Environment (and Learner Support) for Optimal Learning, including mother tongue as medium of instruction, development of meta-cognitive and self-regulated learning skills and focusing on the uniqueness of each child/ individual.
- Vocational Education and Skilling and Employability - building employability into the curricular contents and transactional strategies (and with special focus on pedagogy of VET) and establishment of linkage with industry and employers and in equivalence with NHEQF and NSQF.
- Innovative Formative and Summative Assessment (and online assessment) -including cases, portfolios, internships, technology-enabled assessment and e-portfolios (and with specific reference to the UGC report on assessment and evaluation).
- Digital Education/ Technology-Enabled Learning - using technology and especially

social technologies and social networks and open source technologies for flipped classroom, use of MOOCs/ SWAYAM/online courses, conferencing and web technologies.

- Cross-border Education/ Internationalisation of Education, including cross-border credit transfer.
- Quality Academic Research - both disciplinary, pedagogy of disciplines and multi-and inter-disciplinary.
- Regulation and Quality Assurance including quality indicators, ranking indicators, evidence-based teaching-learning, among others.
- Role of Faculty - in all aspects of education, including curriculum design and development, pedagogy of discipline and interdisciplinary pedagogy, TEL, assessment and evaluation, leadership and professional development, among others.
- Governance and Leadership - revamping the educational leadership programmes and provisions, as also the administration and management of higher education institutions. The education Departments are visualized to take lead roles specifically in the following for the implementation of the NEP 2020:
- Collaborate/ join hands/ act as regional/ institutional nodal agency in NEP 2020 implementation, in collaboration with national and regional agencies/ organisations. This may also include development of specialized digital and otherwise modules/ resources, courses for PhD students of all disciplines and case studies of good practices. They should join hands and share the professional development modules of other designated institutions/ agencies on awareness development and capacity building on NEP 2020.
- Develop and show case innovations and best practices in indigenous knowledge system, curriculum design, pedagogy/ teaching-learning, graduate employability, RPL and credit transfer, TEL, assessment and evaluation, organization and management of higher education curriculum, resources, strategies and impacts.
- Train teachers and staff within the institution, across the constituent and affiliated colleges and even schools in their jurisdiction on various aspects and detailed nuances of NEP 2020 at institutional and contextual level.
- Develop 'training of trainers' groups in specific/ specialized areas of NEP 2020 who would continuously engage with faculty and staff and students (of Education Department as also all other departments/ disciplines) and continually update themselves on these areas; and also develop or join networks relating to areas of NEP 2020.
- Conduct collaborative research on the process and effectiveness/ impact of various areas in NEP 2020 and strategies of implementation and showcase/ publish/ disseminate to wider national and international communities.

If the Act, Regulations, MoA (in the case of deemed-to-be universities) do not permit adding departments in Education, the same needs to be amended. With the approval of the concerned regulatory body and Academic Council HEIs can establish departments in Education.

## 10. Constituent Colleges in Universities

NEP 2020 suggests a stage-wise mechanism for granting graded autonomy to colleges, through a transparent system of graded accreditation. Colleges will be encouraged, mentored, supported and incentivized to gradually attain the minimum benchmarks required for each level of accreditation. Over a period of time, it is envisaged that every college will either develop into an autonomous degree-granting college or become a constituent college of a university. In the latter case, it would be a part of the university in its entirety.

Colleges willing to become part of a university as a constituent college should submit a proposal to the concerned university giving reasons for joining. The necessary terms and conditions shall be decided mutually by both institutions in accordance with the provisions of the Act and or regulations governing the State university or Central University, or deemed-to-be university, or private university.

## 11. Multidisciplinary Research in HEI Clusters

Over the past decades there has been increased growth in Multidisciplinary Research in Higher Education. The high level of diversity, such as different disciplinary experts and the rapid sharing of information and resources involved in Multidisciplinary Research enables the synthesis of new knowledge, increased production of original, creative work, innovations and patents. Multidisciplinary Research, therefore, plays a crucial role in finding solutions to the challenges currently facing society. As the trend towards multidisciplinary-based research collaboration grows, it is imperative to train a new generation of teacher-researchers in the Multidisciplinary Research areas. Multidisciplinary Research also wrestles with several challenges due to the organizational, logistical and location diversity involved. For Multidisciplinary Research to thrive in HEI clusters, a Multidisciplinary Research Committee comprising members from collaborating institutions may be formed to: (a) share the scarce resource in an optimum way among collaborating institutions and (b) identify core learning and research activities in the collaborating HEIs and the development of multidisciplinary thinking approach

### 1. Capacity building in Multidisciplinary Research

The four-year undergraduate programme with the research component and different designs of the Master's programme, are likely to increase research activities, which calls for enhancing the research capacity in HEIs. Students and faculty should be encouraged to do research in areas that are locally, regionally and nationally relevant. To encourage high quality research in multidisciplinary areas in HEIs a research ecosystem is needed where ample opportunity on how to design research proposals, write research articles, publish and patent findings, are available for young scholars and faculty. These opportunities are likely to be high in HEI clusters with the availability of faculty with different disciplinary backgrounds, collective resources and a greater number of students engaging in research.

### 2. Collaboration between HEIs in student projects

NEP 2020 aims for holistic education to develop well-rounded individuals. The four-year undergraduate programme has been proposed for students to experience a holistic education, with the fourth year of the programme focusing on the research component.



Faculty with backgrounds of different disciplines will provide the perfect opportunity in guiding students pursuing UG (hons. with research) and Master's programmes. Multidisciplinary projects can provide students with the valuable training required to assume multidisciplinary roles.

Faculty from different institutions of a cluster can be encouraged to design multidisciplinary projects in areas of National priority and supervise students interested in multidisciplinary research. The institutions should work out the modalities of collaboration between them in enabling faculty members to supervise UG and PG students in research.

### **3. Collaboration of HEI clusters with industries and/or government and non-government organizations**

Most industries in the manufacturing sector in India are in the micro, small and medium category and they largely lack the capacity, in terms of R&D strengths, to face global challenges. It is important that graduates assume multidisciplinary roles. With their contribution in providing employment and to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) they form an important part of the National economy. However, the Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector, in general, is characterized by very low investment in R&D and as a consequence, the research activities in the sector are always low key. The huge pool of universities and colleges employing a large number of faculty members and enrolling the huge population of students in the country if collaborate with MSME, the huge potential therein can be productively used for running an effective education system and R&D for the industry. If industry can be made to see value in investing efforts in the university eco-system, the R&D potential therein can be used to serve the needs of the country and, a lot of gains can be achieved in bringing prosperity to the nation.

Similarly, students and faculty may be encouraged to undertake projects on issues that local communities face or for the welfare of local artisans and crafts persons.

## **12. Role of University and Government**

### **1. Role of the parent university**

To identify potentials of colleges and to encourage them by providing timely approval to their proposals and help to nominate representatives in various committees for the proper functioning of cluster colleges and enable collaboration between institutions.

### **2. Role of the State government**

Given the size of our Higher Education System and the variety of HEIs with many single-stream institutions, it may not be viable to introduce multidisciplinary education in all HEIs simultaneously. Therefore, for all HEIs to plan to become multidisciplinary institutions, a hub and spoke model where a certain number of HEIs will be identified as the hub institutions and transform them into multidisciplinary institutions. These 'hub' HEIs can, in turn, develop a specified number of 'spoke' institutions. Over some time, they will have a rapid multiplier effect so that by 2030 there will be at least one large multidisciplinary HEI in or near every district.

### 13. Grievance Redressal Mechanism Required for Collaborating HEIs

- Institutions entering into academic collaboration shall address matters relating to the grievances of students and legal matters relating to the collaboration.
- The Commission could, either suo moto or based on any complaint from any quarter may initiate an inquiry, including physical inspection, of the collaborative arrangements. After giving the opportunity of representation and hearing to the collaborating institutions and after being convinced that the collaborating institution(s) is/are not functioning according to the guidelines, the Commission may rescind the approval for collaboration. However, the students who have already enrolled for such courses or programmes will be permitted to continue till they acquire the requisite qualification.

#### References:

1. National Education Policy 2020
2. Note on Shri K.K. Shastri Government Colleges Confederation, Education Department, Govt. of Gujarat
3. Dual Degree Program in Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) – IIT Jammu & IIM Jammu

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**Prof Rajnish Jain**

Secretary

University Grants Commission

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**University Grants Commission**

Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002

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