



Moving towards Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) in Higher Education

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Abstract:

The education plays enormously significant role in building of a nation .The CBCS provides an opportunity for the students to choose courses from the prescribed courses comprising core, elective/minor or skill based courses. The courses can be evaluated following the grading system, which is considered to be better than the conventional marks system. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce uniform grading system in the entire higher education in India. This will benefit the students to move across institutions within India to begin with and across countries.

Key words: conventional education, skill based courses, HRD,

Introduction

The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD), Govt. of India, has already initiated the process for developing New Education Policy (NEP) in our country to bring out reforms in Indian education system. For this the UGC has already initiated several steps to bring equity, efficiency and academic excellence in National Higher Education System. The important ones include innovation and improvement in course - curricula, introduction of paradigm shift in learning and teaching pedagogy, examination and education system.

The education plays enormously significant role in building of a nation. However, our present education system produces young minds lacking knowledge, confidence, values and skills. It could be because of complete lack of relationship between education, employment and skill development in conventional education system. The present alarming situation necessitates transformation and/or redesigning of education system, not only by introducing

innovations but developing "learner-centric approach in the entire education delivery mechanism and globally followed evaluation system as well.

To ensure quality, National Knowledge Commission has called for reform of existing universities to ensure frequent curricula revisions, introduction of course credit system, enhancing reliance on internal assessment, encouraging research and reforming governance of institutions. The Indian Higher Education Institutions have been moving from the conventional annual system to semester system. Currently many of the institutions have already introduced the choice based credit system. The semester system accelerates the teaching- learning process and enables vertical and horizontal mobility in learning. The credit based semester system provides flexibility in designing curriculum and assigning credits based on the course content and hours of teaching.



What is lacking in the Present System?

- Teacher centric approach
- Teacher never asks, "why am I teaching this, what will students do after this exposure?"
- What are the kinds of activities student should be engaged to having "learning opportunities"?
- Lacks context based approach
- There are no opportunities for – Group work; Individual work; Data collection; Field work; Quizzes; Class tests and Community involvement.
- No inter-disciplinary mobility possible
- Lack of multi-disciplinarily, closed isolated environment
- Lack of choices for the student
- No opportunity to the learner to walk out and walk in to earn a certification
- No scope to introduce latest knowledge in the curriculum
- Learning goals of the course and learning objectives of the units/submits never enunciated

Conventional Food vs Cafeteria

- Present system is like food served in a jail.
- Menu is decided by someone and you follow and serve same to all in fixed quantity.
- CBCS is like food available in Cafeteria. It is like, a coupon is given and you can buy as you want within the limit of the coupon.
- It is like, some students go out and join extra course or join coaching centre for preparing for future employment • CBCS can give all these.
- There are no or little opportunities for – Group work – Individual work – Data collection – Field work – Quizzes – Class tests – Community involvement.

Having thoroughly reviewed the existing system the following are the provisions in the Choice Based Credit System:

- Making the curriculum interdisciplinary.
- Making the program choice based by the learners.
- Interdisciplinary approach enables integration of concepts, theories, techniques, and perspectives from two or more disciplines to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline.

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS):

The CBCS provides an opportunity for the students to choose courses from the prescribed courses comprising core, elective/minor or skill based courses. The courses can be evaluated following the grading system, which is considered to be better than the conventional marks system. Therefore, it is necessary to introduce uniform grading system in the entire higher education in India. This will benefit the students to move across institutions within India to begin with and across countries. In order to bring uniformity in evaluation system and computation of the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) based on student's performance in examinations, the UGC has formulated the guidelines to be followed.

Why Choice Based Credit Based System?

- Learn at their own interest
- Choose electives from a wide range of courses
- Undergo additional courses and acquire more than required number of credits
- Adopt an interdisciplinary approach in learning



- Inter college/University transfer of Credits
- Enhance skill/employability by taking-up project work, entrepreneurship and vocational training.
- Acquire knowledge, skill and attitude of learning outcomes through participatory teaching and learning and continuous evaluation process.
- Carry on and transfer their credit
- Make best use of the expertise of available faculty.
- Bridges the gap between professional and liberal education.
- Greatly improves the employability of students.
- Promotes students' mobility – horizontal as well as vertical.
- Collaboration with industry and foreign partners to foster innovations possible.
- Semesterisation
- Credit system
- Comprehensive continuous assessment
- Grading

Semesterisation:

- It involves clear cut identification of duration of teacher learner engagement,
- Duration for conduct of assessment and term-end examination for evaluation and certification by declaration of grades.
- As per UGC regulations in a semester there has to be a minimum of 90 teaching days for learner teacher engagement.

What is a credit?

- Term Credit has a connotation of achievement or earning
- It in the present context also implies successful completion of a course of

study measured in terms of class room instruction hours/week in the courses being studied in that semester

- It is also an identification of credits for a learning effort
- It also measures the volume of the content to be delivered in the course being studied
- Credits of a course also indicate the weightage of a course for calculating Grade Point Average

How is a Credit Measured?

- Every one hour of lecture session/week amounts to 1 credit per semester
- A minimum of two hour session of tutorial or practical/practice session/week amounts to 1 credit per semester
- A course of study may have only lecture component or only practical/practice component or combination of any two or all the three components
- The total credits earned by a student at the end of semester upon successfully completing the course is L+T+P credit patterns
- The credit pattern of the course is indicated as L:T:P format.

For a 4 credit course format could be:

4:0:0 1:2:1 1:1:2 1:0:3 1:3:0
 2:1:1 2:2:0 2:0:2 3:1:0 3:0:1
 0:2:2 0:4:0 0:0:4 0:1:3 0:3:1

- The concerned BOS will choose the convenient credit pattern for every course based on the requirement. However, generally a course shall be 3 or 4 credits

Relationship between number of credits and marks per paper



- Though credits are not directly related to marks, as thumb rule we may consider One credit = 25 marks
- A theory paper with 4 credits shall be assigned 100 marks
- A theory paper with 3 credits shall be assigned 75 marks.
- The concerned BOS will choose the convenient credit pattern and marks for every course based on the requirement. However, generally a course shall be 3 or 4 credits or 75 or 100 marks
- Theory paper or practical paper with 2 credits shall be assigned 50 marks.
- There could be some non-credit (NC) courses also, for which no credits are assigned (seminars, training and group discussions, independent study, projects, thesis, presentations). However, these activities are compulsory to be completed satisfactorily (Grade), unsatisfactory performance shall be assigned X grade.

Labeling of Courses, Distribution of Courses and Management of Courses:

1. Core Course: A course, which should compulsorily be studied by a candidate as a core requirement is termed as a Core course.

2. Elective Course: Generally a course which can be chosen from a pool of courses and which may be very specific or specialized or advanced or supportive to the discipline/subject of study or which provides an extended scope or which enables an exposure to some other discipline/subject/domain or nurtures the candidate's proficiency/skill is called an Elective Course.

2.1 Open Elective: An elective course chosen generally from an unrelated

discipline/subject, with an intention to seek exposure is called an open elective

2.2 Discipline Specific Elective (DSE): Elective courses may be offered by the main discipline/subject of study is referred to as Discipline Specific Elective. The University/Institute may also offer discipline related Elective courses of interdisciplinary nature (to be offered by main discipline/subject of study).

2.3 Generic Elective (GE): An elective course chosen generally from an unrelated discipline/subject, with an intention to seek exposure is called a Generic Elective.

P.S.: A core course offered in a discipline/subject may be treated as an elective by other discipline/subject and vice versa and such electives may also be referred to as Generic Elective.

2.4 Self Study Elective: An elective course designed to acquire a special/advanced knowledge, such as supplement study/support study to a project work, and a candidate studies such a course on his own with an advisory support by a teacher is called a self study elective. Labeling of Courses, Distribution of Courses and Management of Courses

3. Ability Enhancement Courses (AEC): The Ability Enhancement (AE) Courses may be of two kinds: Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses (AECC) and Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC). "AECC" courses are the courses based upon the content that leads to Knowledge enhancement; (i) Environmental Science, and (ii) English/MIL communication. These are mandatory for all disciplines. SEC courses are value-based and/or skill-based and are aimed at providing hands-on-training, competencies, skills, etc.



3.1 Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses (AECC): Environmental Science, English Communication/MIL Communication.

project work/ and may venture out to acquire extra knowledge/ proficiency through add - on facilities.

3.2 Skill Enhancement Courses (SEC): These courses may be chosen from a pool of courses designed to provide value-based and/or skill-based knowledge.

4. Audit Course: A student has an option of auditing some courses; grades obtained in such a course are not counted towards the calculation of grade point average. However, a Pass grade is essential for earning credits for an audit course.

5. Dissertation/Project: Project work/ Dissertation work is a special course involving application of knowledge in solving/analyzing/ exploring a real life situation/difficult problem.

- Minor Project work (6-8 credits)
- Major Project work (10-12 credits)

Course-wise Distribution of Credits

- This requires determining the amount of work to be completed (or credit points to be earned) by students
- Decision on the number of student-faculty contact hours during a semester in different programs and levels
- Decision on the time distribution on the class room work, tutorials, field work, laboratory work, other practices and /or other curricular work distribution will vary from subject to subject.

Conclusion:

A student can exercise the option to decide his/her own pace of learning - slow, normal or accelerated plan and sequence his/her choice of paper, learn to face challenges through term work/