



Centre for Educational and Social Studies

Report of Stakeholders Consultation



On Draft

*UGC - Establishment and Operationalization of
Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) Scheme in Higher
Education - Regulations, 2021*

Centre for Educational and
Social Studies

Bengaluru

www.cessed.org

080-23182947

2/5/2021

BACKGROUND

In pursuance of the National Education Policy 2020 recommendations, the University Grants Commission (UGC) constituted a Committee to develop a detailed scheme, including implementation strategy, for Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) with the objective of facilitating student's mobility across the system (higher education). The draft **UGC Establishment and Operationalization of Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) Scheme in Higher Education Regulation 2021** prepared by the said Committee was put on public domain seeking stakeholders suggestions. Centre for Educational and Social Studies (CESS) under its Policy Advocacy activities reached out to stakeholders to solicit their suggestions on the proposed draft resolution.

ABOUT CESS

Centre for Educational and Social Studies is a not-for-profit registered society headquartered in Bengaluru. CESS vision is to bring in 'social transformation through and with Education'. To accomplish our vision we engage in Research, Capacity Building and Policy Advocacy activities in the areas of education. Since its inception in 2006, CESS has engaged in stakeholders of education including the state government, higher education institutions, and domain experts in furthering the cause of education. Under the guidance of visionary leaders and philanthropists CESS has conducted over 100 stakeholders' consultations and webinars on National Education Policy 2020 alone since its announcement (draft and final). Currently CESS is actively reaching out to stakeholders to facilitate implementation of NEP. In this endeavor, CESS reached out to select stakeholders soliciting their views on the aforesaid draft resolution of the UGC on NEP's Academic Bank of Credit (ABC).

METHODOLOGY

After the release of the draft resolution by the UGC, CESS carried out an internal review of the draft resolution and decided to seek select few stakeholders feedback on the proposed draft. The selection of the stakeholders was not based on any criterion but care was taken to ensure

that it was representative of the sector. The Stakeholders approached by CESS represented the following sectors:

1. Heads of higher education institutions;
2. Domain experts/educationists;
3. Education practitioners;
4. People from Civil Society Organization/NGO;
5. Government Officials; and
6. Former heads of the University

An email to the individual stakeholder, along with the UGC draft resolution, was sent out with a request to share their comments/feedback within the stipulated time period. CESS subsequently followed up with stakeholders through telephonic request. Most of the stakeholders responded to our requests. Given below is the response/comments/feedback received from the stakeholders, which includes suggestions for consideration as well.

STAKEHOLDERS FEEDBACK

An overwhelming majority of the stakeholders have complemented the UGC Committee for coming up with excellent and well thought out details to implement the ABC recommendation.

- Setting the NAAC accreditation at A level as the criteria for HEIs for being part of ABC does act as "incentive" towards higher grade of accreditation and a common baseline for comparing institutions across the country. However, what happens to HEI's with lower NAAC grade. In effect the flexibility and portability of academic credits get limited to only few institutions. A cursory look at the accredited institutions showed that there are central universities which are not at the level A and secondly a large number of HEIs have no NAAC accreditation;
- Evaluation systems and requirements to be considered for valid credits need more elaboration. Punishment to HEIs is a post mortem. The scheme should include requirements for curriculum and nomenclature of the course. There should be a way to identify the source of credits for the degree if it's not from one institution. The process of including

in the curriculum, evaluation, and other aspects for grant of degree using partial ABC credits must be elaborated;

- With regard to credits, there is a need to define what work or requirement to be met to be counted as a credit . There is a need to define standard meaning of credit applicable across the country;
- If the student due to unavoidable circumstances use the exit options before completing a Degree or PG and has taken Diploma/PG diploma from the HEI and in case if wishes, to come back after a year or two (within the time frame of three years for Degree and two years for PG), and continue the studies. The diploma can be withdrawn and may be permitted, that would help them to complete their course. Though 6.6 deals with the same, 8.8 states that once credit used, cannot be redeemed. In case of women who marries while doing graduation/PG and takes exit option and then wish to come back within the stipulated time, it will be helpful to them. The NEP goal of life time learning of the concerned student will also be fulfilled;
- In case if a student during the period of course of three years, due to unavoidable reasons could not continue their studies for one year, the same can be considered as study holiday, if the HEI agrees based on the written requisition of the student. Then many students can continue their education in formal mode as credit will be continued. The same practice is followed for PhD program in case of Central Universities. This flexibility can increase the number as well as quality of HE;
- The fee to be charged by the students should be nominal, unlike in commercial banks for services delivered;
- Autonomous Colleges also to be included in addition to the universities;
- The ABC should cover credit transfers in the case of students of public HEIs taking courses in private HEIs and vice versa;

- For the proposed scheme to be successful, it is important to motivate and train faculty to encourage students to take courses outside their own universities/colleges to prevent HEIs from remaining islands of their own, thinking they are islands of excellence. Inter and intra institutional pursuit of courses by students needs to be encouraged;
- The scheme, mechanism and its implementation process outlined in the document clearly caters to the objectives listed at the beginning of the document but the challenge in its implementation will be with regard to 'creating of awareness among Universities and other HEIs, and among the student community';
- All other aspects in connection with the Scheme is clear and well explained. A little more clarity on 'how the degree will be granted' and 'what degree will be granted' for how many credits might be helpful;
- The proposed draft has not clearly stated whether the students will be provided access to the credit bank to track their credits. It would benefit students if the access is provided to them;
- The objectives of the scheme should also mention lifelong learning. The seven year cycle will be a limitation for lifelong learning. The credits after seven years (for some courses) can be transferred to a new ID and a new account may be opened with the older credits and criteria may to be set for such a transfer to the new ID;
- The draft scheme has not mentioned about the technology infrastructure/platform on which the ABC will be hosted/built and there is also no mention of whether it would be integrated with NSDL (National Academic Depository).

SUGGESTIONS - SUMMARY OF THE STAKEHOLDERS FEEDBACK

The stakeholders have largely appreciated the draft scheme. Also have expressed concerns over some provisions of the proposed draft scheme. Presented here is the summary of the stakeholders' feedback:

1. More clarity is needed with respect to 'Credit'. First, what activity/s amounts to or considered for granting credits; how much credit to be accumulated to obtain a particular award-certificate, diploma, degree etc.,; who should be the awarding institution in the context of multiple exit and entry;
2. Setting NAAC accredited with A as the criterion for empanelling to ABC granting institutions may be jeopardizing the very philosophy and vision of NEP. The scheme may start with NAAC accredited institutions but has to have a clear roadmap to bring in other rather large number of HEIs to ensure inclusiveness and equity;
3. As NEP promotes lifelong learning, it may be appropriate to consider keeping the credits earned by students for a longer period of time instead of 7 years as is proposed;
4. The overall scheme must ensure the access, equity, quality and affordability including appropriate technology platform.



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