

UGC Guidelines for Establishment of Education Departments in Multidisciplinary Institutions

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ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Accepted: 01 April 2023

Published: 09 April 2023

Publication Issue

Volume 7, Issue 2

March-April-2023

Page Number

04-12

ABSTRACT

The NEP 2020, has suggested several policy directions for offering multidisciplinary education, as well as to establish Department of Education in such institutions. This Holistic and Multidisciplinary Education underlines pulling of courses and resources from a variety of disciplines and helping in the holistic individual development including social and life skills. The purpose of this type of Education according to NEP policy is to link the teaching-learning process with life, community and the world of work including the environment across all disciplines/fields of study as well as STEM education. The 'Education Departments' are visualized as instruments towards contributing to multidisciplinary teaching-learning (curriculum, pedagogy, technology-enabled blended learning, assessment and evaluation, etc.) as visualized in the NEP 2020 and develop specialized expert in these areas. The present article has described in detail the entire procedure of establishing the 'Department of Education' in Multidisciplinary Institutions in terms of present and proposed Structural Arrangement; Functions and Programmes; Linkage to HEI's as well as the operationalization of the NEP 2020 policies in this regard. Thus, the Education Departments of universities and colleges need to comprehensively focus on this task of merging. The UGC Guidelines for Transforming HEI's into Multidisciplinary Institutions concluded with a statement that the micro-details/functions during the process of implementation may be worked out subsequently.

Keywords: NEP 2020, Education Departments, Multidisciplinary Institutions, Structural Arrangements, Functions and Programmes, Linkage to HEI's, Modus Operandi, UGC Guidelines

I. INTRODUCTION

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.

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.

II. NEP 2020: POLICY INITIATIVES

The National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020), suggests several policy directions for offering multidisciplinary education. Further, the vision of NEP 2020 Policy regarding the teacher education as well as the establishment of Department of Education in multidisciplinary institutions are stated in the Clauses 15.1, 15.4, 15.5, 15.6, 15.8 and 15.9 as follows:

Teacher education is vital in creating a pool of schoolteachers that will shape the next generation. Teacher preparation is an activity that requires multidisciplinary perspectives and knowledge, formation of dispositions and values, and development of practice under the best mentors. Teachers must be grounded in Indian values, languages, knowledge, ethos, and traditions including tribal traditions, while also being well-versed in the latest advances in education and pedagogy.

As teacher education requires multidisciplinary inputs, and education in high-quality content as well as pedagogy, all teacher education programmes must be

conducted within composite multidisciplinary institutions. To this end, all multidisciplinary universities and colleges - will aim to establish, education departments which, besides carrying out cutting-edge research in various aspects of education, will also run B.Ed. programmes, in collaboration with other departments such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, Indian languages, arts, music, history, literature, physical education, science and mathematics. Moreover, all stand-alone TEIs will be required to convert to multidisciplinary institutions by 2030, since they will have to offer the 4-year integrated teacher preparation programme.

The 4-year integrated B.Ed. offered by such multidisciplinary HEIs will, by 2030, become the minimal degree qualification for school teachers. The 4-year integrated B.Ed. will be a dual-major holistic Bachelor's degree, in Education as well as a specialized subject such as a language, history, music, mathematics, computer science, chemistry, economics, art, physical education, etc. Beyond the teaching of cutting-edge pedagogy, the teacher education will include grounding in sociology, history, science, psychology, early childhood care and education, foundational literacy and numeracy, knowledge of India and its values/ethos/art/traditions, and more. The HEI offering the 4-year integrated B.Ed. may also run a 2-year B.Ed., for students who have already received a Bachelor's degree in a specialized subject. A 1-year B.Ed. may also be offered for candidates who have received a 4-year undergraduate degree in a specialized subject. Scholarships for meritorious students will be established for the purpose of attracting outstanding candidates to the 4-year, 2-year, and 1-year B.Ed. programmes.

HEIs offering teacher education programmes will ensure the availability of a range of experts in education and related disciplines as well as specialized subjects. Each higher education institution will have a

network of government and private schools to work closely with, where potential teachers will student-teach along with participating in other activities such as community service, adult and vocational education, etc.

The faculty profile in Departments of Education will necessarily aim to be diverse and but teaching/field/research experience will be highly valued. Faculty with training in areas of social sciences that are directly relevant to school education e.g., psychology, child development, linguistics, sociology, philosophy, economics, and political science as well as from science education, mathematics education, social science education, and language education programmes will be attracted and retained in teacher education institutions, to strengthen multidisciplinary education of teachers and provide rigour in conceptual development.

All fresh Ph.D. entrants, irrespective of discipline, will be required to take credit-based courses in teaching/education/pedagogy/writing related to their chosen Ph.D. subject during their doctoral training period. Exposure to pedagogical practices, designing curriculum, credible evaluation systems, communication, and so on will be ensured since many research scholars will go on to become faculty or public representatives/communicators of their chosen disciplines. Ph.D. students will also have a minimum number of hours of actual teaching experience gathered through teaching assistantships and other means. Ph.D. programmes at universities around the country will be re-oriented for this purpose.

The Section 15 of NEP 2020 on Teacher Education underlines the following three purposes:

- to conduct cutting-edge research in various aspects of education,

- to support the actualization of all teacher education in multidisciplinary institutions and
- to contribute to multidisciplinary and holistic higher education across disciplines.

Further, the Section 15.6 of NEP 2020 focus on Education Departments developing a range of experts in education (including subject areas); and the Section 15.9 stipulates that all Ph.D. 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

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.

III. PRESENT STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS AND FUTURE VISION

The guidelines on Multidisciplinary Institutions highlights that, at present, there are three structural arrangements and areas of work that Education Departments in universities and/ or colleges serve:

- i. 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. 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. Besides the above, there are Education Departments in various undergraduate colleges (For example, 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.

IV. ESTABLISHMENT OF EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

The NEP 2020, suggests the following two alternative strategies regarding the introduction of Department of Education in Multidisciplinary Institutions.

I. 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 multi-disciplinary 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.

II. 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. The structural arrangement for such multidisciplinary departments
- ii. Programmes and functions that department will undertake
- iii. Linkages will they have within the HEI, across HEIs and across all 'Education/ Teacher Education' institutions/ departments/ schools in the country.
- iv. The ways in which these Education Departments can 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

V. STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENT

The UGC guidelines suggest that, due to 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. As per the guidelines 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 as per the guidelines. More stress should be given to linkage of their courses and programmes to the job market, national and regional development needs, as well as needs of life and the community.

VI. FUNCTIONS AND PROGRAMMES

The UGC guidelines proposes the following functions and programmes for the Education Department. 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 re-examined so as to revamp their functions and programmes as 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 as per the guidelines.

- 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, Yoga studies, 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, as per the guidelines 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.

- It is recommended to 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, Open Educational Resources (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 Transitional Learning Centres (TLCs) and CECs under PMMMNMTT 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 Integrated Teacher Education (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 guidelines suggest that, 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. In order to offer 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.

VII. LINKAGE TO HEIs

The UGC guidelines suggest that 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 operationalization 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 profound knowledge of teaching and learning as well as 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.
- 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-moulded, 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 Vocational Education and Training (VET) and establishment of linkage with industry and employers and in equivalence with National Higher Education

VIII. MODUS OPERANDI

The 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 UGC guidelines suggest that, 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 micro-details/ functions that may be worked out subsequently by them.

- Role of Policy in Higher Education - features and foundational principles of NEP 2020.

Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) and National Skills Qualification Framework (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, Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and credit transfer, Technology Enabled Learning (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 refinement 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.

IX. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, the UGC guidelines suggest that, 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. Accordingly, Institutional Structures have

to be expanded 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. 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. 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. As per the UGC guidelines, the standards prescribed by the UGC or by the concerned statutory or Regulatory bodies, especially National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) 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. As per the guidelines, the Multidisciplinary degree programmes punctuated with internship, community service and engagement and skill courses need substantial orientation for teachers. The guidelines emphasize that the capacity building for faculty to teach, train and to do research in multidisciplinary academic programmes need adequate focus.

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Cite this article as :

H M Naveen, "UGC Guidelines for Establishment of Education Departments in Multidisciplinary Institutions", International Journal of Scientific Research in Mechanical and Materials Engineering (IJSRMME), ISSN : 2457-0435, Volume 7 Issue 2, pp. 04-12, March-April 2023.

URL : <https://ijsrmme.com/IJSRMME23724>

doi : <https://ijsrmme.com/10.32628/IJSRMME23724>