

National Conference on Flexible Academic Program

Consolidated recommendations of Panel-5

This panel-5 of the national conference on Flexible Academic Program was desired to discuss on entire FAP spectrum taking into account the discussions held in the previous four panels on various aspects of FAP as outlined hereunder:

Panel 1: Entry-Exit Norms, offered specializations, and Curriculum under FAP

Panel 2: Comprehensive Academic norms and Rule book for students enrolled under FAP

Panel 3: The governing principles of the FAP consortium

Panel 4: Non-Technical Courses in FAP

*(The Panel wise discussions are attached herewith as **Annexure-1**)*

At the outset, the moderator of the panel-5, Prof. Pritish Varadwaj briefly described the outcome of various panels to all panelists of this panel number 5 and then the floor was opened for discussions. In general, all esteemed panelists, praised the efforts made by IIT-Allahabad, Prayagraj for taking up the lead in the right directions towards implementation of NEP2020 through FAP. Furthermore, approaching to other institutes and academicians across the country for obtaining their opinions was also loudly applauded by the esteemed panel members.

The comprehensive views of all panelists are separately placed in the proceedings, whereas the consolidated recommendations are summarized hereunder:

1. At the onset of the meeting, while discussing the suggestions given by the said above four panels, the members of Panel 5 have opinioned about renaming the theme of **Panel 4**, as 'Human Engineering and Social Sciences (HESS),' as the word 'non-technical courses' may not give a clear distinction and emphasis intended. Further, the panel has suggested the implication of the said HESS coursework for the holistic development of the students and has stressed that the said coursework will be crucial in life-skill development and making one educated in a true sense.

2. The panel agreed to the argument that students are the central entity of all such education systems/schemes so their views must be invited and suitably incorporated in the FAP pilot run. Hence, the panel has suggested that students should be motivated to create an appropriate forum for discussing and disseminating the implementation plan of FAP.

3. IITA or some other institute/organization should arrange at least one workshop for another important prime-stake holder, the employers, i.e. the PSUs, Industries, private/public ltd companies, etc. As the outgoing students will be hired by these industries as the prospective employers, their involvement at this planning level will give a finishing touch for the FAP.

4. Being the supreme academic body of autonomous institutions (universities), the Senate (Academic Council) should deliberate upon FAP. IITA should communicate this request while giving a comprehensive FAP proposal to the respective head of the institutions. The resolutions made in respective Senate/Academic Council should be communicated back to the coordinating institute/organization for working on the feasibility of implementing the FAP Scheme.

5. During the deliberations, it was also suggested that each of the institute should decide when and how to implement FAP in their own institute. Furthermore, it was suggested that the group of institute with similar function and autonomy like all IITs, all centrally funded IIITs, all PPP IIITs, all NITs, all colleges of respective state technical universities, etc. may try to constitute inter-institutes/college FAP implementation within the respective group, which may be referred as IIT/NIT/IIIT(CFTI)/IIIT(PPP)/GTU(etc.) FAP Consortium. One of the respective category institutes may undertake the coordination responsibility among members of consortium.

6. The panel has emphasized the necessity to understand flexibility in Academy Structure as expected by NEP and have suggested following modalities to be taken up at three levels

1. Level 1: Within an Institution (within the scope of Institute)
2. Level 2: Across Institute through MoU between the Institutions (within the joint scope of participating Institution)
3. Level 3: Flexible Academic mobility amongst the Institutions of homogeneity (similar autonomy) such as
 - a) Homogeneous IIT group
 - b) Homogeneous NIT group
 - c) Homogeneous IIIT (CFTIs)
 - d) Homogeneous IIIT (PPPs)
 - e) Homogeneous ISER

The FAP running at the participating institutions may be governed by creating suitable group wise consortia or an Institution with an overall virtual structure called Virtual Institute (VI).

It is really useful if a Virtual Institute concept is evolved through an Act of Parliament and this Virtual Institute (VI) by itself will be a Virtual Institute of National importance, catering the needs of Flexible Academic administration.

The virtual Institute will have a Director, Registrar and other minimal administration setup, but will not have any academic infrastructure, since the participating Institutions enable virtual academic infrastructure for the VI.

To begin with VI will create four or five homogeneous bubbles as indicated as Level 3 and above. Each Institution in every bubble will indicate the courses going to be shared by each of them in every semester. The other supporting infrastructure like hostel etc. could be shared by the participating Institutions towards students who are admitted exclusively under Flexible Mobile Academic Structure.

The VI will enroll the candidates under Flexible mobile Academic pattern. It will take care of the mobility of the candidates, tracking of the credits earned by the learner. It is also expected that, the VI will take care of the academic growth, co-curricular growth and placement and training components for the students admitted under the scheme.

The mobility of the students and the assignment of learning courses to the students at the different Institutions, receiving the details of grades earned and credits completed, following up the courses required will be monitored for within each bubble by the VI. This can be implemented by the VI through the ABC (Academic Bank of Credits) as conceived in NEP.

7. It has also been suggested that, while implementing the FAP scheme, the same category inter-institution consortiums may be a better starting point. However, each consortium will later come up with their own criteria for smooth inter-consortium movement for the students enrolled.

8. It has been observed that, in recent past MOE communicated a suggestion to IITs to effectively engage with near-by institution for knowledge dissemination and mentoring them. Another alternate way of building heterogeneous FAP consortiums at local levels may be that such institutes/colleges headed by respective IIT. The MOE may choose 4-5 older IITs located in different geographical regions to create such heterogeneous consortiums and offer FAP therein.

9. The members have also opined that full implementation of the FAP needs mutual cooperation between these consortiums, and hence, a nodal agency (VI) over and above these consortiums should be created by a competent body e.g. Ministry of Education (MOE) GOI.

10. On the pretext, the members have suggested that IITA should apprise the MOE about FAP requesting it for devising and fine-tuning the norms, rules and modus operandi for the said nodal agency (VI) in order to have trans-consortium coverage for smooth transition and implementation.

11. All developments towards implementation of FAP should be properly monitored and recorded by the nodal agency (VI) during the pilot run and afterwards. MOE should accordingly make some funding to the nodal agency, as well as to all those institutes which agrees to head various consortiums as stated above.