

YEAR 2015-2020

# BEST PRACTICES

SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED BY THE UNIVERSITY



**CENTRE FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY  
NEW DELHI: 110068**

# **BEST PRACTICES SUCCESSFULLY IMPLEMENTED BY THE UNIVERSITY**

## **A) Responsiveness towards learners:**

### **I) The institution has a dedicated online/offline helpdesk/toll-free no:**

- IGNOU has a dedicated Student Services Centre (SSC) at its Headquarters for online and offline resolution of learners' problems communicated in person or through email, phone and letters, etc. It has staff strength of 17 persons and an annual budget of Rs. 671000 for regular activities.
- Learners have access to the Programme Coordinators, Course Coordinator and faculty for academic consultation about the information on the programme and courses and grievances.
- Student Zone provides information related to learners in one place.
- Student Information Desk at Regional Centre (RC).
- Dedicated websites at all RCs provide region-specific information related to learners to facilitate them.
- The Regional Services Division (RSD) uses 14 MeLT vans to generate awareness about IGNOU programmes in remote areas.
- Academic Counselors at LSCs conduct induction workshops and provide academic counselling, psychological support and personal guidance to learners. LSCs also serve as information centres.
- RCs send SMS alerts regarding induction programmes, counselling sessions, re-registration, registration for Laboratory courses, etc. and motivate them to maintain their schedule of study. In the last year ending September 2019, the RCs have sent 14,91,991 SMSs, an amount of Rs. 20,51,35,037 have been spent towards RC activities.
- IGNOU is a subscriber to Sugamya Pustakalaya, a repository of over 3.45 lakh books and journals accessible to blind and print-disabled learners. Information Brochure in Sign Language benefits students with hearing impairment. IGNOU also has a National Centre for Disability Studies.
- Telephone numbers and email ids of all RCs and the officials handling student queries at Headquarters are on IGNOU website and in Prospectus.
- RCs organized 69 special drive awareness meets for SC/ST, Transgender, weaver and other underprivileged groups.

Responsiveness towards Student is reflected in practices of Pre-admission counselling, conducting Induction Programmes, distribution of print and online SLMs (IGNOU e-content App), e-Gyankosh, use of social media like Facebook (Facebook(@OfficialPageIGNOU), Twitter (@OfficialIGNOU), Instagram (@officialpageignou), etc., providing academic counselling supplemented with audio-video programmes at LSCs, broadcasting video programmes, teleconferencing, webcasting, etc, allowing easy change of courses, language, Study Centre, Regional Centre, etc., Examination Centres; Placement services at the University Headquarters and in some RCs.

## **II) Grievance redressal mechanism is in place**

- An automated IT solution, IGNOU Grievance Redress and Management (iGRAM) is in place to reduce response turnaround time to student grievances. The SSC answers queries and redresses student grievances that are received either in person or via fax, regular post, e-mails/ SMS, WhatsApp, telephone calls and online portals. Recently the student grievances have been linked to iGRAM portal of MHRD, Government of India, to redress their grievances more transparently and efficiently. Students are advised to submit their query/ grievance on iGRAM at <http://igram.ignou.ac.in> for quick response and redressal. The SSC, through iGRAM, forwards queries and grievances to Sub-nodal officers, categorizes the grievances, follows up with the division/unit/cell/regional centre concerned and monitors information and notification alerts on iGRAM on regular basis. Divisions like MPDD, RSD, SED, SRD, Centres and School of Studies including the VCO can be directly accessed on iGRAM. In the period between January and December 2019, the University has addressed a total of 3,31,902 student grievances received through several portals and resolved them. The student service-related division like RSD, SED, SRD, MPDD, ID, CD, CBRC, DU, RU and Library altogether received 55792 complaints of which 55667 are resolved. The School of Studies received 2890 complaints of which 2864 are resolved.
- The Right to Information Act, 2005, implemented in IGNOU, provides yet another channel for information for the resolution of information-based grievances of all stakeholders. All faculty members, officials and staff of the university at HQs, and RCs are charged with the responsibility of time-bound resolution of learner grievances and problems.

- The facilities for re-evaluation of answer scripts, getting photocopies of evaluated answer scripts, and early declaration of results on special requests from learners are also provided by the University.
- Training and orientation programmes are organized for sensitizing the staff and their needs including learners with special needs, building their capacity to address the learners' grievances with empathy to their satisfaction and going an extra mile for helping them. Teamwork is encouraged for prompt resolution of learner queries and problems.

## **B) Accountability:**

The University maintains its accountability under the direction of the following statutory bodies:

1. The Board of Management (BOM)
  2. The Academic Council (AC)
  3. The Planning Board (PB)
  4. Research Council (RC)
  5. The School Board (SB)
  6. The Finance Committee (FC) and other authorities as declared by the statutes of the University.
- **The Board of Management** which has five representatives nominated by the Visitor, two representatives from the Government of India out of a total of 15 members, oversees the accountability of the University to its learners, the nation, and other stakeholders on all academic, administrative, financial, and developmental matters. The BOM ensures accountability through its Standing Committees; namely, Finance Committee, Establishment Committee (EC), Student Services Committee, and Works Committee. All financial matters related to annual accounts, financial estimates, and the expenditure of the year, etc. are considered and deliberated upon by the Finance Committee before submission to the BOM. The EC supervises appointments and service-related matters, Student Service Committee is responsible for ensuring that student-related services are delivered effectively and the Works Committee is responsible for the development of the physical infrastructure and amenities in the campus both at Headquarters and RCs. (<http://ignou.ac.in/ignou/aboutignou/authority/council/5020>)

- **The Academic Council** is responsible for ensuring academic standards, methods of instruction, assessment and evaluation, flexibility of courses and credit system, use of ICT, and award of degrees, diplomas and certificates. It promotes linkages between academic programmes and employability.
- **The Planning Board** designs and formulates programmes and activities of the University and advises the BOM and AC on any matter deemed necessary to fulfill the objects of the University.
- **The Research Council** designs and formulates the overall research degree policy, and supervises the conduct of research degree programmes under the overall direction of the AC. The School of Studies functions under the guidance of the Board of the School of Studies, which approves programme and curriculum, pedagogy, instructional methods, media-mix and delivery mechanism, instructions for counselling, recommends course writers, examiners and Moderation Board members. It approves the expert committees for initiation of new programmes/courses and revision of the same; and reviews facilities at Study Centres (SC) and arrangements for laboratory/field work and pedagogical methodologies. Meetings of all statutory bodies and their Standing Committees are held regularly and the minutes of the meetings along with ATR are placed on the IGNOU website.
- Accountability is ensured through performance appraisals for teachers and other academics, and ACR for non-teaching staff. The overall administrative accountability in the University rests with the Directors of Schools/Centres, Heads of Divisions/Units/Cells who perform their functions as per the IGNOU Act, Statutes, Ordinances and decisions of the BOM.

## **II. The Academic Calendar is followed strictly in the University**

- University has prescribed a calendar of academic activities keeping in view two admission cycles (July and January). Advertisement for new academic sessions is done in May for admission in the July session and an advertisement for the January session takes place in the month of November every year (9). Term End Examinations (TEE) take place in the month of June and December every year and students are required to submit their assessments within the prescribed time schedule.
- Teachers follow the academic calendar while availing vacations (Summer 30 days in May and June (and Winter 30 days in November – December) by ensuring that at least 30% of teachers are available during vacation time.

- Programmes are offered through annual and semester modes. Learners taking admission in January Session are eligible for TEE at the end of the first semester in the month of June and at the end of the second semester in the month of December every year. The academic calendar is then monitored by the Regional Centres and the University Headquarters.

- **The academic activities for Annual Programmes are:**

1. Distribution of study materials – July to September for July admission cycle and January to February for the January cycle – can be tracked by the students.
2. Contact programmes (Theory counselling and practical work, etc.): August to May for the July admission cycle and February to November for the January cycle.
3. Submission and evaluation of Tutor Marked Assignments (TMA) – October to April; March to October.
4. Holding of TEE – 1 to 30 June; 1 to 31st December.
5. Declaration of results – August of the subsequent cycle; January of the subsequent cycle.

- **Academic Activities for the Semester Based Programmes are:**

1. Distribution of study materials – July and August (1st and 3rd semester); January and February (2nd and 4th semester).
2. Contact programmes (counselling and practicals etc.) – July to November (1st and 3rd Semester);
3. January to May (2nd and 4th semester).
4. Submission and evaluation of TMA– July to September (1st and 3rd semester); January to April (2nd and 4th semester).
5. Holding of TEE - 1 to 30 June; 1 to 31 December.
6. Declaration of results - February; August. The University has a policy of declaring the term-end results within 45 days of the conduct of examinations.



## C) Transparency

### I) Proper sharing of information with the concerned stakeholders.

Information pertaining to all aspects of University functioning as outlined below is shared with the concerned stakeholders.

1. The composition of all statutory bodies is completed as per the rules and statutes of the University and all decisions of these bodies are available on the IGNOU website.
  2. **Programmes and Learner Support Services (LSS):** All updated information related to Programmes and LSS is shared with learners, Faculty, Academic Counsellors, RC and LSC functionaries, etc.
  3. **Recruitment:** The teaching and other academic positions are advertised nationwide as per UGC norms, with clearly spelt out eligibility criteria and screening procedures. The non-academic positions are advertised in the national newspapers and displayed on the websites as per R&P rules, 2010 adopted by the University.
  4. **Promotion.** The promotion policy for IGNOU teachers and other academics is in accordance with the UGC Regulations, and the IGNOU Ordinances contextualized as per the ODL requirements are placed in the public domain. The Departmental Promotion rules and MACP followed for the nonacademic staff are publicly available.
  5. **The annual Report** is approved by the BOM and placed before the Parliament for its scrutiny and approval.
  6. **Financial Transparency:** The University has a transparent financial policy to ensure judicious spending of its financial resources and follows established procedures and financial codes as laid down in the GFR.
- **Procurement and purchase** as per government procedure and documents are shared with all concerned through Government e-Marketplace- GEM.
  - **Outsourcing of services and empanelment of service providers** for printing, supply of library books, supply of workforce for security, maintenance of facilities, housekeeping, horticulture, contractual work at Group C and D level, etc. is done through well-publicized procedures.
  - **Campus Development:** Construction and maintenance work in the University is carried out through online open tendering processes and financial codes shared publicly.

- **Audit:** Internal and external audit accounts are conducted annually. External audit is done by the Director General (Audit) Central Expenditure (DGACE). Audit observations are shared with all concerned for compliance. The Audit Report of the CAG of India is submitted to the Finance Committee and the BOM of the University and subsequently to the MHRD for being placed before the Parliament.
- **Financial Management System:** The University has effectively introduced an online receipt and payment system ensuring transparency and has graduated to a Public Financial Management system for direct benefit transfer, fund flow management and financial reporting, which is shared with all.
- **7. Rules for Disciplinary Procedures:** University has adopted CCA/CCS rule.
- **8 Right to Information:** The University has instituted PIOs in its Schools/Divisions/Centres/Units/Regional Centres, etc. to provide information under the RTI, Act.

## **II) All relevant information is made available in the public domain.**

- **University website:** has information about (i) the University authorities, Schools of Study/divisions/Centres/Cells/Units, (ii) registration, examination, (iii) student support and (iv) regional network, as well as various notifications related to the academic calendar, admissions, placement, alumni, date sheets, archives of question papers, entrance examinations, recruitment, tenders, e-tendering (through CPP and GeM), etc. Student Zone provides all information required by learners. For University employees, the website has the provision of the ODLSOFT system for their HR and financial activities and personal profiles.
- **Bulk SMS and e-mail services:** Bulk SMSs are used for sending acknowledgements to learners and updating/alerting them about re-registration, counselling schedules, submission of assignments, filling of examination forms, TEE Datesheet, etc.
- **E-Gyankosh and YouTube:** The e-Gyankosh, a digital repository, facilitates access to SLMs for everyone. Video programmes are accessible through IGNOU YouTube channel.



- **Electronic and digital media:** GyanDarshan (TV channel) broadcasts educational programmes and provides opportunities for live interaction. Gyan Vani FM Radio and Interactive Radio counselling from the Headquarters and select cities provide opportunities for learners and other stakeholders to interact with faculty, Academic Counsellors and student support staff through radio. GyanDhara is an internet web-radio service for reaching different stakeholders across the world.
- **Social Media:** IGNOU's Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide forums to all stakeholders for two-way communication.
- **Mobile App: 'IGNOU e-Content'** for on-the-go learners provide access to SLMs using smartphones ([https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ac.in.ignou.Viewer&hl=en\\_IN](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=ac.in.ignou.Viewer&hl=en_IN)).
- **Sugamya Pustakalaya and Information Brochure in Sign Language:** These are means of enabling learners with special needs to access library resources and information about IGNOU programmes.
- **Public Information Unit (PIU):** The PIU is located at the IGNOU HQs and functions as a link between the University and the stakeholders through press releases, advertisements pertaining to admissions, appointments, tenders, student placements, and other notifications, e-Newsletter and IGNOU DIGI NEWS (an online repository) etc.
- **National and regional newspapers:** The University disseminates information about the ODL system, and IGNOU through articles, news reports and interviews in national and regional newspapers.
- **Online Counsellors Empanelment Portal:** A dedicated portal for the online empanelment of Counsellors has been created for prospective Counsellors whose applications are processed online.
- **Information from RCs:** is shared with all stakeholders through RC websites. Periodical announcements through email, SMSs, letters, etc., organizing major events like press meets and advertisements in local dailies. Information regarding Induction and Orientation programmes is disseminated through RC websites. A 24x7 Online Portal for the orientation of Counsellors is in place.
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## COMPILATION & DESIGN

- *Prof. Manjulika Srivastava, CIQA*
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