

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

SCHEME ON INNOVATION UNIVERSITIES

1. OBJECTIVE

India shares the global challenge of higher education in the 21st century. An unprecedented rise in the number of university students, their changing social profile, rise of interconnected networks of knowledge facilitated by new technologies, greater integration of world economy, increasing recognition of cultural plurality and the emergence of new problems that defy existing solutions define the context of higher education all over the globe. These changes present the universities with the challenge of innovation.

This challenge requires innovations that go beyond changes in management, governance and financing. The new century has brought new issues (climate change, technologies of biological intervention, trans-national law and justice) and has brought to fore some old issues (global poverty, accommodation of diversities, energy crisis) that defy the existing divisions and protocols of knowledge and demand adequate and fast responses to problems that affect the well being of humanity and indeed the planet. The context of knowledge production has been changing because of the dynamics of the inter-related phenomena in the real world. No single discipline will be able to generate adequate and complete knowledge about the inter-related phenomena and to provide solutions to the problems of the real world.

The innovation required today invites us to go beyond the orthodox ideas about innovation itself. The National Innovation Council defines innovation as:

“Innovation today is increasingly going beyond the confines of formal R&D to redefine everything. Today innovation can mean new and unique applications of old technologies, using design to

develop new products and services, new processes and structures to improve performance in diverse areas, organizational creativity, and public sector initiatives to enhance delivery of services. Innovation is being seen as a means of creating sustainable and cost effective solutions for people at the bottom of the pyramid, and is being viewed as an important strategy for inclusive growth in developing economies.”

Yet the response of the university system to this challenge and opportunity presented by the 21st century has been, at least so far, piecemeal, diffused and limited. Indian universities have been particularly hamstrung in responding to these challenges. Lack of imagination in the universities and lack of encouragement from the state and funders has created a culture that actively shuns and often punishes innovation.

A response that measures up to this vast challenge and unusual opportunity requires nothing short of a paradigm shift in the established ways of thinking about university education. It calls for redefinition of knowledge and its purpose, reorganization of branches of knowledge, rethinking the existing practices of teaching-learning and research and recognition of the limits of what we know. Like all paradigmatic shifts, it involves recovery, reconstruction and bold re-imagination. We need to go back to foundational debates on the ideals of a university. We need to carefully preserve all that is good in the present model and treat this as the starting point of a reconstruction. At the same time there is no escaping the challenge of thinking afresh to meet the new situation that confronts us.

The UGC has long recognized the need for innovation and has from time to time introduced Schemes to improve quality of teaching and research at the universities and colleges. Special Assistance Programmes (SAP) at various levels “Centre of Advanced Study (CAS)”. Department of Special Assistance

(DSA)” and “Departmental Research Support (DRS)” Programmes, Innovative Programmes to encourage the pursuit of excellence and teamwork etc. are examples of such schemes. A scheme on Innovative Courses has also been introduced.

In addition, the UGC established six Inter-University Centres (IUC). The first IUC that was established by UGC in 1984 was the Nuclear Science Centre (NSC), in Delhi, later renamed as the Inter University Accelerator Centre (IUAC). The IUAC has been providing universities with opportunities to do internationally competitive research in different branches of science.

The UGC has also identified 15 Universities under the Scheme “Universities with Potential for Excellence” during IX, X and XI Plan period. Those universities identified during IX Plan period have been given Phase II of the UPE Scheme during the XI Plan period based on the peer evaluation.

2. SCOPE

The challenge of innovation requires that we go beyond these initiatives. Therefore, the UGC would like to introduce a scheme called “Innovation Universities”. Under the scheme, the UGC invites proposals from Universities on (a) Innovative Teaching/Educational Programmes; (b) Innovative Research Programmes; and (c) Organistical Innovations for financial support during the XII Plan.

The basic objective is to promote innovative ways of learning, sharing and collectively growing within and without. The scheme is meant to support bold and big ideas that require substantial support and flexibility, ideas that usually do not fit into any of the existing patterns of funding and do not, therefore, see the light of the day. This basic mandate of the scheme will be interpreted flexibly. The proposal may or may not cover all the three areas outlined here; it may or

may not relate to all the departments or activities of the universities. The scheme will recognize and support localized as well as general innovations. Under this scheme, innovation will include, but will not be limited to:

(a) Innovative Teaching/educational programme

- i. New types of degrees and courses;
- ii. Innovation in curricula including evaluation;
- iii. Pedagogic innovation;
- iv. Creation of new kind of teaching-learning material;
- v. Innovations in teaching feedback mechanisms.
- vi. Innovative methods of Internationalization of teaching programmes.

(b) Innovative research programme

- i. Inter-disciplinary and cross-border research (especially that challenges high boundaries, say, between natural sciences and social sciences and humanities);
- ii. Innovative methodologies that cut across disciplines;
- iii. Creation of research facility that may be shared by a number of universities and research institutions;
- iv. Innovative collaborations and research networks across institutions;
- v. Research that connects academic knowledge to 'traditional' and 'practical' knowledge or innovations that take place outside the academia;
- vi. Innovative dissemination of research that connects the university to the community and its local context.

(c) Organisational innovations

- i. Innovations in admission process and expanding access;
- ii. Innovative ways of improving diversity profile and deepening equity;
- iii. Innovative ways of involving students in the decision making;

- iv. New ways of increasing the motivation of teachers and non-teaching staff;
- v. New models of governance that enhance efficiency, transparency and accountability and discourage conflict of interest;
- vi. Innovations in raising funds and transparent and efficient ways of monitoring expenditure.

The proposed scheme is **not** intended to cover the following:

- a. Up-gradation of the overall infrastructure of the university;
- b. Creation of new departments and centres in the established disciplines or those covered by existing schemes like Areas Studies, Women's Studies and so on;
- c. Routine improvements in teaching, teachers training and updating of curricula;
- d. Supporting professional associations and bodies of researchers;
- e. Regular implementation of the UGC Regulations and Guidelines about quality improvement and assessment.

3. TARGET UNIVERSITIES

This scheme is open to centrally funded, state funded and deemed to be universities which have been put under **Category "A"** by the Tandon Committee appointed by the MHRD.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- 4.1 Grade 'A' by NAAC at the time of applying under the Scheme.
- 4.2 At least 10 years of standing at the time of application

5. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE SCHEME

Under the scheme, a university may under one of the three categories of financial assistance:

- 5.1 **“Innovative project”** would involve a one-time grant of up to **Rs.25 crores**. An innovative project would typically relate to one or two specific objectives outlined under 2 above and may be limited to one department or faculty of the university. The expenditure may be permitted over a period up to 5 years.
- 5.2 **“Innovative programme”** would involve a grant from **Rs.25 up to 100 crores**. An innovative programme would typically, but not necessarily, cover several objectives outlined under 2 above and may not be limited to one department or faculty of the university. The grant may be released and expenditure permitted over a period up to 5 years.
- 5.3 **“Innovation University”** shall be eligible to receive a grant from **Rs.100 crores upto a maximum of Rs.300 crores** for a period of five years. An “Innovation University” will be typically, though not necessarily, cover a wide range objectives under all the three dimensions outlined in 2 above. In exceptional situations, a university may be recognized as “Innovation University” on the basis of just one activity, especially if it offers research facility for several other universities and institutions.

6. SELECTION PROCEDURE

- 6.1 All the Universities which meet the eligibility criteria may give a **five page pre-proposal** indicating the category of support sought and innovative ideas they would like to pursue in (a) education (b)

research with special emphasis on inter-disciplinary research and
(c) organizational innovations.

- 6.2 The Standing Committee on “Innovation Universities” shall evaluate these pre-proposals and shortlist the universities for submitting a **detailed proposal**;
- 6.3 Those universities which have been shortlisted shall be called for an interface meeting with the Standing Committee. Final decision on proposals for category 5.1 (Innovation Projects) will be taken by the Committee at this stage. Proposals for category 5.2 (innovation Programme) and 5.3 (Innovation University) will be screened further so as to prepare a Detailed Project Report (DPR);
- 6.4 The universities are expected to prepare the DPR within the period specified by the Standing Committee which shall not be less than three weeks;
- 6.5 The universities shall send the DPRs to UGC which will be evaluated with the help of Expert Committees. Proposals for 5.2 (Research Programmes) may be decided by the Expert Committee without visiting the University, but the Standing Committee may decide for a visit by the Expert Committee. Proposals for 5.3 (Innovation Universities) shall require that the Expert Committee will visit all the universities and give a report;
- 6.6 The Vice-Chancellor and relevant faculty in the Universities shall be called to make a presentation before the Standing Committee wherein the report of the Expert Committee shall be considered by the Standing Committee and further shortlisting of the Universities shall be made by the Standing Committee.
- 6.7 The recommendations of the Standing Committee shall be placed before the Commission for a final decision.

7. MONITORING

The Standing Committee shall lay down a procedure for annual monitoring of these grants. The DPR of grant under 5.2 and 5.3 shall contain a calendar of milestones to be achieved and expected outcomes, which shall form the basis of regular monitoring. The Standing Committee shall be authorized to sanction revisions in the DPR that may be required in the light of the experience of the grant.
