

The Choice Based Credit System (CBCS)

VISION:

To evolve a higher education system that blends together provisions for knowledge, values and skill practices where every student learns without sacrificing his/her creativity.

RATIONALE:

The current higher education curriculum mostly wants in the necessary skills that would make the students employable adequately. There is a lack of interdisciplinary approach and a very little scope for value based courses to be taught. In addition, the evaluation methods are largely based on memory recall processes. In addition, the students need more encouragement to think and analyze on their own.

The 11th five-year plan of India as well as the National Knowledge Commission have recommended revamping of higher education through academic and administrative reforms. The UGC in its 11th plan, has emphasized on such reforms and this was followed by the recommendations made on similar lines by the Association of Indian Universities. (AIU)

GOALS:

The ultimate goal is to bring reforms in higher education so that students develop thinking as well as analytical ability, and get equipped with necessary skills ultimately making them suitable for an employment, and to integrate value of our culture with education.

The most important aspect of this system is that both teaching and learning should be 'credit based' and not 'time based'.

The new system also opens up the opportunity for student mobility, allowing students to transfer credits earned in one institution to another; and for programme portability, allowing movement from one degree programme to another. These will be achieved through unique system of counting credits (which replaces the "papers" system), a uniform evolution system based on grade points (replacing the "marks" system), and a uniform semester based academic year (which replaces the "year long" pattern.)

- The most positive aspect of CBCS is that it is student centric. It recognises the importance of individual learning, wherever and whenever it is achieved. This is the defining idea behind the new system. It treats students as individuals who have independent academic needs and interests, and CBCS, if properly implemented, has potential to empower them and the nation as a whole.

Recommendation of the UGC in its action Plan for Academic and Administrative Reforms

“..... Curricular flexibility and learners’ mobility is an issue that warrants our urgent attention. These can be addressed by introducing credit based courses and credit accumulation. In order to provide with some degree of flexibility to learners, we need to provide for course duration in terms of credit hours and also a minimum as well as a maximum permissible span of time in which a course can be completed by learner... Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) imminently fits into the emerging socio-economic milieu, and could effectively respond to the educational and occupational aspirations of the upcoming generations. In view of this, institutions of higher education in India would do well to invest thought and resource into introducing CBCS. Aided by modern communication and information technology, CBCS has a high probability to be operational efficiently and effectively – elevating learners, institutions and higher education system in the country to newer heights.....”.

Advantages of the Credit-Based-Grading-System:

- 1. Respects ‘Student Autonomy’.** It represent a shift in focus from ‘teaching based’ to ‘learning education’, since the workload is based on the investment of time in learning.
- 2. Records students’ workload realistically.** It calculates not only the time spent by the students in lectures or seminars but also the time they need for individual learning and the preparation of examination etc.
- 3. Helps self-learning.** Students may undertake as many credits as they can cope with, without repeating all the courses (papers) courses along with major courses, which makes education more broad-based.
- 4. Facilitates students’ mobility.** Providing opportunity to transfer the credit earned at one institution to another. Provides more transparency and compatibility between different educational structures.

Disadvantages of the Credit-Based-Grading-System:

- 1.** Autonomy of good institutions would be compromised.
- 2.** Teachers’ workload may fluctuate.
- 3.** A common syllabus is neither desirable nor feasible as this will diminish creativity and lower standard in order to conform to common standards.

(Source: Indian Express, Delhi, e-paper, dated Mon, 29 June, 2015)