

1. THE UNIVERSITY

1.1 Introduction

The Indira Gandhi National Open University was established by an Act of Parliament in 1985 to achieve the following

objectives:

- Democratising higher education by taking it to the doorsteps of the learners
- providing access to high quality education to all those who seek it irrespective of age, region, religion and gender
- offering need-based academic programmes by giving professional and vocational orientation to the courses
- promoting and developing distance education in India
- setting and maintaining standards in distance education in the country as an apex body.

1.2 Prominent Features

IGNOU has certain unique features such as:

- international jurisdiction
- flexible admission rules
- individualised study: flexibility in terms of place, pace and duration of study
- use of latest information and communication technologies
- nationwide student support services network
- cost-effective programmes
- modular approach to programmes
- resource sharing, collaboration and networking with conventional Universities, Open Universities and other Institutions/Organisations
- socially and academically relevant programmes based on students need analysis
- convergence of open & conventional education systems

1.3 Important Achievements

- Emergence of IGNOU as the largest Open University in the World.
- Recognition as Centre of Excellence in Distance Education by the Commonwealth of Learning (1993).
- Award of Excellence for Distance Education Materials by Commonwealth of Learning (1999).
- Launch of a series of 24 hour Educational Channels 'Gyan Darshan'. IGNOU is the nodal agency for these channels and regular transmissions are done from the studio at EMPC, IGNOU.
- Student enrolment has doubled in four years from 1.5 million to around 3 million.
- UNESCO declared IGNOU as the largest institution of higher learning in the world in 2010.
- On spot delivery of study material to students.
- Largest network of learning support system.
- Declaration of Term-end result within 45 days.

1.4 The Schools of Studies

With a view to develop interdisciplinary studies, the University operates through its Schools of Studies. Each School

is headed by a Director who arranges to plan, supervise, develop and organise its academic programmes and courses in coordination with the School staff and different academic, administrative and service wings of the University. The emphasis is on providing a wide choice of courses at different levels.

The following Schools of Studies currently are in operation:

- School of Humanities (SOH)
- School of Social Sciences (SOSS)
- School of Sciences (SOS)
- School of Education (SOE)
- School of Continuing Education (SOCE)
- School of Engineering & Technology (SOET)
- School of Management Studies (SOMS)
- School of Health Sciences (SOHS)
- School of Computer & Information Sciences (SOCIS)
- School of Agriculture (SOA)

- School of Law (SOL)
- School of Journalism & New Media Studies (SOJNMS)
- School of Gender and Development Studies (SOGDS)
- School of Tourism and Hospitality Service Management (SOTHSM)
- School of Interdisciplinary and Trans-disciplinary Studies (SOITS)
- School of Social Work (SOSW)
- School of Vocational Education and Training (SOVET)
- School of Extension and Development Studies (SOEDS)
- School of Foreign Languages (SOFL)
- School of Translation Studies and Training (SOTST)
- School of Performing & Visual Arts (SOPVA)

1.5 Academic Programmes

The University offers both short-term and long-term programmes leading to Certificates, Diplomas, Advance Diploma, Associates Degree and Degrees, which are conventional as well as innovative. Most of these programmes have been developed after an initial survey of the demand for such Programmes. They are launched with a view to fulfil the learner's needs for:

- certification,
- improvement of skills,
- acquisition of professional qualifications,
- continuing education and professional development at work place,
- self-enrichment,
- diversification and updation of knowledge, and
- empowerment.

1.6 Course Preparation

Learning material is specially prepared by teams of experts drawn from different Universities and specialized Institutions in the area spread throughout the country as well as inhouse faculty. The material are scrutinized by the content experts, supervised by the instructors/unit designers and edited by the language experts at IGNOU before these are finally sent for printing. Similarly, audio and video cassettes are produced in consultation with the course writers, inhouse faculty and producers. The material is previewed and reviewed by the faculty as well as outside experts and edited/modified, wherever necessary, before they are finally despatched to the students, Study Centres and Telecast through Gyan Darshan.

1.7 Credit System

The University follows the 'Credit System' for most of its programmes. Each credit in our system is equivalent to

30 hours of student study comprising all learning activities (i.e. reading and comprehending the print material, listening to audio, watching video, attending counselling sessions, teleconference and writing assignment responses).

Thus, a 4-credit course involves 120 hours of study. This helps the learner to know the academic effort he/she has to put in, to successfully complete a course. Completion of an academic programme (Degree or Diploma) requires successful completion of the assignments, practical's projects and the term-end examination of each course in a programme.

1.8 Support Services

In order to provide individualized support to its learners, the University has a large number of Study Centres, spread throughout the country. These Study Centres are co-ordinated by 67 Regional Centres and Recognised Regional Centres. At the Study Centres, the learners interact with the Academic Counselors and other learners, refer to books in the Library, watch/listen to video/audio programmes and interact with the Coordinator on administrative and academic matters. The list of Regional Centres is given in this handbook. Support services are also provided through Work Centres, Programme Study Centres, Skill Development Centres and Special Study Centres.

1.9 Programme Delivery

The methodology of instruction in this University is different from that of the conventional Universities. The Open University system is more learner-oriented and the learner is an active participant in the pedagogical (teaching and learning) process. Most of the instructions are imparted through distance education methodology as per the requirement.

The University follows a multimedia approach for instruction, which comprises:

- a) Self Instructional Written Material: The printed study material (written in self-instructional style) for both theory and practical components of the programmes is supplied to the learners in batches of blocks for every course (on an average 1 block per credit). A block which comes in the form of a booklet usually comprises 3 to 5 units.
- b) Audio-Visual Material Aids: The learning package contains audio and video CDs which have been produced by the University for better clarification and enhancement of understanding of the course material given to the learners. A video programme is normally of 25-30 minutes duration. The video cassettes are screened at the study centres during specific sessions which are duly notified for the benefit of the learners. The video programmes are telecast on National Network of Doordarshan and Gyan Darshan. All Gyan Vani stations are broadcasting curriculum based audio programmes. In addition, some selected stations of All India Radio are also broadcasting the audio programmes. Learners can confirm the dates for the programmes from their study centres. The information is also provided through the university website.
- c) Counselling Sessions: Normally counselling sessions are held as per schedule drawn by the Study Centres. These are mostly held outside the regular working hours of the host institutions where the study centres are located.
- d) Teleconferences: Live teleconferencing sessions are conducted via satellite through interactive Gyan Darshan Channel as well as simulcasted on 'Edusat' channel from the University studios at EMPC, the schedule of which is made available at the study centres.
- e) Practicals/Project Work: Some Programmes have practical/project component also. Practicals are held at designated institutions for which schedule is provided by the Study Centres. Attendance at practicals is compulsory. For project work, comprehensive project guide, in the form of a booklet, is provided to the student alongwith the study materials.

1.10 Evaluation System

The system of evaluation in IGNOU is also different from that of conventional universities. IGNOU has a multitier system of evaluation.

1. Self-assessment exercises within each unit of study.
2. Continuous evaluation mainly through assignments which are tutor-marked, practical assignments and seminar/workshops/extended contact programmes.
3. The term-end examinations.
4. Project work

The evaluation of learners depends upon various instructional activities undertaken by them. A learner has to write assignment responses compulsorily before taking term-end examination from time to time to complete an academic programme. A learner has to submit TMA responses to the Coordinator of the Study Centre concerned to which s/he is attached. A learner should keep duplicate copies of assignment responses of TMA that may be required to be produced at Student Evaluation Division on demand. Term-end examination is conducted at various examination centers spread all over the country and abroad in June and December.

IGNOU uses the following system of "Grading" for evaluating learners's achievement

Letter Grade	Qualitative Level	Point Grade
A	Excellent	5
B	V.Good	4
C	Good	3
D	Average	2
E	Unsatisfactory	1

For Bachelors' and Masters' degree programmes, normally the system of numerical marking is followed, and the marks secured in assignments, TEEs, etc. are later converted into grades as per the five-point grading scale given above. However, if required by the learner, the university provides numerical marks and division (I, II or Pass).

Term-end Examination and Payment of Examination Fee

The University conducts Term-end Examination twice a year in the months of June & December. Students will be permitted to appear in term-end examination subject to the conditions that 1) registration for the courses, in which they wish to appear is valid, 2) minimum time to pursue these courses is elapsed, and 3) they have also submitted the required number of assignment(s), if any, duly authenticated by the Coordinator/ Incharge of the Study Centre/ PSC/ PI etc. in the courses by the due date.

Examination fee @ Rs. 60/- per course is required to be paid through demand draft in favour of IGNOU and payable at the city of the Regional Centre where submitting the examination form. Students can also submit on-line examination form through online payment gateway (guidelines available at IGNOU website www.ignou.ac.in).

1.11 Associate Studentship

The University has a scheme of 'Associate Studentship' which provides for a candidate who fulfils the minimum eligibility requirements for the programme under which the course(s) is/are offered, to register for only one course or a limited number of courses, subject to a minimum of 8 credits and maximum of 32 credits. An Associate Student is attached to a Study Centre for counselling, assignment evaluation, library facility, etc. The application form provided at the end of the Prospectus (please see page no 183) can be used for registration. A fee of Rs.700/- per 8 credit course, or part thereof, is charged for admission to course(s) under B.A, B.Com, B.Sc.,BSW and BTS programmes. The fee is irrespective of whether the course is of 2 credits, 4 credits, 6 credits or 8 credits. For rest of the programmes, the fee will be charged on pro-rata basis, i.e. by dividing the programme fee by the number of credits of the programme = fee for 1 credit, multiplied by the credit assigned to the specific course (rounded off to the next Fifty Rs.). Associate students choosing courses of B.A. can exercise their option for 'one course' only from a Group. If a student wants to opt four courses of 8 credits each, he/she can opt one each from Group-1 to 6 as per his/her choice. Grouping of courses are given in the Prospectus under B.A. (General).

The minimum and maximum period allowed to Associate students for completion of their course(s) would be six months and two years, respectively. There will be no separate counselling or lab work schedule for the associate students. They will have to be in touch with the Study Centre concerned in order to know the schedule and participate in the sessions accordingly. Minimum period of six months would be allowed, if the courses opted by the students are up to 16 credits. If the option exceeds 16 credits, the minimum period should be one year.

Associate students would be permitted to seek admission in any of the admission cycles and to opt the courses that are on offer either in January or July cycles. However, no counselling and/or lab/practicals would be conducted separately for the Associate students. In such a case the students would be allowed to avail the counselling/ practical session in the next semester and accordingly the minimum duration would be extended to another six months. However, the maximum duration of two years would remain unchanged.

If an Associate student opts for more than 16 credits worth of courses in either of the admission cycles, he/she is not entitled to seek admission in the next consecutive cycle unless the prescribed minimum duration is completed. Associate Students are not eligible to seek admission to the courses under the Programmes where the number of seats are limited and/or the admission is done through Entrance Test .

Associate Students are not eligible for the award of any kind of 'Certificate/Diploma/Degree'. They are also not eligible for continuation of study by way of re-registration for 2nd and/or 3rd year, as the case may be. 'COURSE COMPLETION STATUS' Card only will be issued to Associate Students.

Change of course is not permitted under this scheme. Similarly, re-admission facility is not extended to Associate Students. Separate Enrolment No., i.e. 'AS - - - - -' would be allotted to such students. The filledin forms of 'Associate Studentship' are to be sent to the Regional Director concerned. Forms received by any other Office than the Regional Centre concerned would be summarily rejected.