

Office of the Dean Academics

Minutes of the first meeting of Postgraduate Curriculum Review Committee

December 14, 2012

The first meeting of the Postgraduate Curriculum Review Committee (PG-CRC) was held in the Board room at 1000 hrs on December 5, 2012. The following members were present:

(Italics indicate inability to attend).

Prof. Anurag Sharma, Prof. Bhim Singh, Prof. Naveen Garg, *Prof. B. Bhattacharjee*, Prof. P.M.V. Subbarao, Prof. V.K. Jain, *Prof. D.T. Shahani*, *Prof. M.G. Dastidar*, *Prof. Maithili Sharan*, *Dr. Shalini Gupta*, Dr. Pritha Chandra, *Prof. D. Ravi Kumar*, Prof. Joby Joseph, Prof. M.R. Ravi. Prof. N.K. Jain was also present, representing Prof. D.T. Shahani.

At the outset, the Dean Academics welcomed all the members of the committee. Being the first meeting, the discussion was in free format, to evolve a list of important issues to be taken into account in the revision of PG curriculum. The following is a list of issues that emerged:

1. The issue of student attrition from different programmes was discussed. It was suggested that to reduce this tendency, a re-look at the admission process is needed: to identify whether the student has some aptitude and inclination towards research. Different related points were brought up: is GATE exam in the present form a good indicator of student ability for higher education and research? Is written test a good substitute for interviews? Should we request GATE to be two-tier like JEE, with the second tier specifically targeting aptitude for research? It was decided that a dedicated discussion on admission process is necessary across the institute.
2. It was also observed by the members that there is substantial variation in abilities amongst the students admitted to each PG programme. Several possibilities on how to bring all these students to the desired preparedness level were discussed: Incorporating a self-study component in the credit structure of PG courses (L-T-P-S structure); Preparatory course option for students who are weak, similar to 24 UG credits requirement of AMIE-equivalent degree students, etc. It was decided that this issue also needs to be debated widely.
3. The issue of Teaching Assistantship was discussed. It was observed that first year M.Tech students are often poorly prepared to handle TA work. It was also observed that allotment and monitoring of TA duty was not done with equal rigour in different Departments / Centres across the institute. It was also proposed that the TA work should be registered as a separate course to formalize the evaluation of performance in TA work rendered by students systematically. It was also suggested that the threshold GPA requirement for continuation of assistantship and continuation of programme must be the same for avoiding stoppage of financial support to continuing students. Continuous engagement of PG students with Departmental activity (academics / TA work etc.) necessitates sitting space for all PG students in Departments / Laboratories. These issues should be debated and decisions need to be arrived at.
4. The course structure of PG courses, as of now, is very similar to that of UG courses. It was proposed that the PG students should do fewer courses of greater intensity and larger quantum of self-study in a semester. The suggestion to include separate credits for self-study as mentioned in item 2 above was discussed. Also, the structure of PG courses should provide for adaptation of students in view of the varying abilities of the incoming students. The overall credit structure of the PG programs should be decided with this background.
5. The PG projects and their evaluation is another matter for discussion. It is desirable that

every project work done by a PG student results in a tangible outcome such as a research paper, patent, product development, technology development, implementation, etc. In order to facilitate this, provision to extend the project beyond the nominal duration should be made, with necessary TAs'hip payment, fee concession, hostel accommodation etc. so that the project can be taken to a logical conclusion before evaluation and acceptance. Also, the issue of grading projects with regular letter grades vis-a-vis S and Z grades, inclusion or non-inclusion of project grades in CGPA, separate mention of project grade in degree, making Project part II optional as it has been done in UG curriculum so as to allow only serious students to pursue the project further, etc. were discussed in this connection. A detailed discussion on this issue is also necessary.

6. Discussion was also held on encouraging IIT UG students to register for PG courses. In addition to the existing provisions for advance standing registration to PG programmes at the level of third year to M.Tech, M.S. (Research) and Ph.D. Programmes, it was proposed that IIT Delhi could consider entry of B.Tech. graduates from IITs, NITs and such identified institutes of good repute directly into the second year of the M.Tech. Programmes to enable a selected number of good students to pursue M.Tech. Projects that could produce tangible outputs. The seats vacated by students leaving during the first year could be utilized for providing assistantship to such students: this could also offset the attrition in PG programmes effectively. It was proposed that these issues warranted detailed discussion.

The meeting ended with thanks to all the members.

Comments on the above minutes should be sent to the undersigned within one week of circulation of these minutes.

M.R. Ravi
Associate Dean Academic (Curriculum)
and Convener, PG-CRC.