

**D.O.No.F.1-2/2008 (XI Plan)**

**January 31, 2008**

**Subject :- New Initiatives under the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan - Academic Reform in the Universities**

Dear

At the outset let me wish you a very happy and productive new year 2008.

You are aware that the UGC in its 11<sup>th</sup> Plan proposal and strategies has taken a number of new initiatives which involved steps for reforms in higher education. These include major emphasis on academic reforms in the central and state universities. Emanating from the consensus emerged in the National Conference of Vice-Chancellors, organised by the UGC on 10-11 October, 2007, these reform measures have general consensus and wider acceptability of the academic community.

While the UGC has set up a committee to work out an Action Plan to give effect to the academic reforms in the arena of admission policy, procedure and methods, examination reforms including continuous internal assessment, introduction of credit-based courses, semester system, mobility of students, credit accumulation and credit transfer and that the recommendations of the Committee will be shared with the universities after the submission of the report, it is felt that the State Universities should take lead in this regard. I, therefore, urge upon you to initiate the process of implementing academic reforms as incorporated in the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan of the UGC. Some of the important areas that require urgent attention at your end are delineated below:

1. Admission to all courses should be determined by the past academic records of students or their performance in the entrance examination conducted by the university, with due provision for the government policy on reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Physically Challenged and additional provisions considered appropriate and used by the universities for other disadvantaged groups.
2. The M.Phil. and Ph.D. programmes need to be made formal. Admission to these programmes should be based on combined merit

of entrance examination and interviews conducted by the respective universities. The informal methods currently used in some universities for admission to Ph.D. need to be discontinued and the admission methods to these high level research courses should be made formal and transparent. There is a need to introduce course work in Ph.D. rather than making it only dissertation/thesis based.

3. Annual examination with emphasis on external written examination needs to be reformed. We can make a beginning by introducing Semester system. Similarly we have to gradually move to a system which emphasises on continuous internal assessment and reduces the written examination component to a reasonable level. Duration of the semester, number of contact hour per paper, per semester and relative weightage of continuous internal assessment and semester-end examination need to be prescribed unambiguously.
4. We also need to move away from marks and division system in evaluation and need to introduce Grading system – preferably on a 9 point scale and Cumulative Grade Point Score (CPGS) in order to make our evaluation system at par with the best practices.
5. Curricular flexibility and students' mobility is another 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 students, 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 a student.
6. Continuous updating and revision of curricula is something which must be deeply ingrained in the academic culture of a university. Each individual university must ensure that the curricula development exercise leading to major revision in course contents and curricula is taken up every three years.
7. Uniform academic calendar across all institutions of higher education has already been urged upon by the UGC. Universities need to streamline their examination process such that the results are declared in a time-bound manner and no student suffers in his/her career mobility and academic progression due to delays in declaration of results and issue of mark sheet.

I hope that you will initiate the process of implementing these reforms on a priority basis and the UGC is committed to extend all the necessary support and assistance to you in this endeavour. You will agree that these reforms are long over due and can not afford further delay.

The UGC would like to reiterate here that universities are autonomous institutions and have necessary freedom to experiment new ideas and adopt practices which they consider appropriate for promoting relevance, quality and excellence and equal access, within the broad framework of the national policy. Thus, while above mentioned reforms be initiated on priority basis, the university may also combine with other best practices which the university has evolved over a period of time and found useful in promotion of relevance, quality, excellence and equal access in higher education.

You may also like to forward your considered views on the above to the UGC so that the same could be considered by the committee constituted by the UGC. The final recommendation of committee would be sent to you shortly to further help you in formulating these reforms.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sukhadeo Thorat', with a horizontal line underneath.

**(Sukhadeo Thorat)**