

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED TO FORMULATE GUIDELINES ON SOME
ISSUES CONCERNING THE AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES IN A P STATE**

Ref: Lr. No. APSCHE/Autonomous Colleges – Commt./2016 dated 26.05.2016 from the Secretary, APSCHE

1.0 The A P State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) has convened a meeting of the Principals of the Autonomous Colleges in Andhra Pradesh on 12th May 2016 at P B Siddhartha College of Arts & Science, Vijayawada, to review the implementation of Choice Based Credit System at the UG Level in their Colleges. In the said meeting, the Principals expressed certain concerns relating to implementation of academic and administrative autonomy in the Colleges, and submitted representations requesting for redress. In this context, the APSCHE has constituted a Committee with the following members to examine the representations and make suitable recommendations:

1. Prof C R Visweswara Rao,
Former Vice-Chancellor, Vikram Simhapuri University, Nellore
2. Prof V Venkaiah,
Former Vice-Chancellor, Krishna University, Machilipatnam
3. Prof P S N Reddy,
Former Professor of Chemistry, Osmania University, Hyderabad
4. Dr K V Ramana Rao,
Principal, Government Degree College, Ravulapalem

2.0 Among the various issues articulated by the Principals in the meeting and submitted in their representation, those concerning Autonomy are listed below:

- (i) Freedom to Autonomous colleges in designing their own courses and starting new and innovative courses,
- (ii) Extending autonomy to PG Programmes offered in the autonomous colleges,
- (iii) Freedom to autonomous colleges to choose and offer in respect of Foundation Courses,
- (iv) Counting the workload of foundation courses and electives,
- (v) Disparity between the total credits of programmes of autonomous colleges and those of affiliated colleges,
- (vi) Increase of practical hours from two to three in science subjects,
- (vii) Nomenclature of the courses offered in Autonomous Colleges,
- (viii) Teaching of HVPE (Human Values and Professional Ethics) course in Telugu medium by Telugu Teachers,

- (ix) Payment of better salaries to unaided staff in autonomous colleges,
- (x) Frequent increase of student affiliation fee by the universities,
- (xi) Prompt issue of pass and degree certificates to students of autonomous colleges.

3.0 The Committee met on 30th May & 1st June, 2016, in the premises of APSCHE to discuss the above issues in relation to the 'UGC Guidelines for Autonomous Colleges during the XII plan period (2012 – 2017)' and reports as under on each of the concerns listed.

3.1 Freedom to Autonomous colleges in designing their own courses and starting new and innovative courses:

3.1.1 One of the objectives, perhaps the most significant one, formulated by the National Policy on Education (1986-92) for autonomous college, and included in the 'UGC Guidelines for Autonomous Colleges during the XII plan period (2012 – 2017)', henceforth referred to as the Guidelines in this report, is to have "freedom to determine and prescribe its own courses of study and syllabi, and restructure and redesign the courses to suit local needs". The role of the parent university will be to promote academic freedom in autonomous colleges by encouraging introduction of innovative programs and by facilitating new courses of study, *subject to the required minimum number of hours of hours of instruction, content and standards*. To further quote from Section 9 of the Guidelines:

"An Autonomous College is free to start a new degree or postgraduate course with the approval of the Academic Council of the college. Such courses shall fulfill the minimum standards prescribed by the university/UGC in terms of minimum number of hours, curricular content and standards, and the university shall be duly informed of such courses."

3.1.2 While autonomous colleges are vested with the authority to design and start innovative courses, this freedom should synchronize with strict adherence to the following procedure prescribed in section 9 of the Guidelines.

Step 1:

The concerned department of the college should conceive the idea of introducing new course and it should be well discussed in the Board of Studies of that subject. The Board of Studies will formulate the idea into a proposal with all necessary details such as objectives, eligibility, course content and fee structure. Such proposal will be forwarded to the Academic Council. The proposal will be in the shape of an ordinance.

Step 2:

The Academic Council will discuss such proposal in its meeting and shall approve the proposal in case the Council finds the proposal appropriate. The Academic Council shall have the right to send back or may reject the proposal giving suitable reasons. The proposal can be resubmitted to the Academic Council for reconsideration after the necessary modifications are made.

Step 3:

The proposal approved by the academic council will ultimately be submitted to the Governing Body of the college for final approval and for permission to execute the proposal.

Step 4:

Autonomous college shall send all proposals approved by the Governing Body of the college to the University for Information.

3.1.3 The role of the University is to foster the above autonomy. It may, however, ask for clarification regarding the issues in the proposal from the college. The college is required to give such clarification. The university shall, after satisfying itself with clarification, accept the proposal for starting newly proposed course(s). Any communication from the university in such matters should reach the College within 30 days from the receipt of all the relevant documents from the College, failing which the proposal made by the College in regard to the new course(s) of study is deemed to have been approved.

3.1.4 Also, the university has the right to review all the new courses of an autonomous college, wherever necessary, with regard to the adequacy of physical infrastructure including laboratories and faculty. Where there is evidence of decline in standards or quality, the university may, after careful scrutiny, and in consultation with the UGC, either help modify the courses, wherever possible, or cancel such courses (Section 9 of the Guidelines).

3.1.5 Ideally, all the above processes should be completed at least 3 months before the start of the academic year in which an autonomous college proposes to introduce the new/innovative course.

3.2. Extending autonomy to PG Programmes offered in the autonomous college:

There is no ambiguity about it. Section 2(c) of the Guidelines clearly states that

“Autonomy granted to the Institution is Institutional and covers all the courses at UG, PG, Diploma, M Phil level which are being run by the Institution at the time of conferment of autonomous status. Also, all courses introduced by the institution after conferment of autonomous status shall automatically come under the purview of autonomy. *Partial autonomy cannot be given to any Institution*”.

Therefore, all the PG programs offered in an autonomous college will come under the scheme of autonomy.

3.3. Freedom to autonomous colleges to choose and offer in respect of Foundation Courses

3.3.1. As per the recent guidelines from the UGC, the courses under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) are classified into Core, Elective and Foundation. Autonomous Colleges may have freedom to offer Foundation courses of their choice provided that a minimum of 70% commonality in the total syllabus is maintained with the syllabus formulated by the university in a similar course. This would permit the students of the autonomous college to compete *at par*

with the students of non-autonomous affiliated colleges at the entrance examinations, etc. The autonomous college should have the freedom to offer a new Foundation Course of its choice and which suits the environment of the College within the 30% limitation.

3.4. Counting the workload of foundation courses and electives:

An elective may be (a) 'Discipline centric' opted to enhance the proficiency in specified area of chosen discipline within a faculty (arts/humanities/social sciences/ sciences/ commerce/ or (b) 'Interdisciplinary' that enables fundamental understanding of concepts beyond a single discipline within or across the faculties or (c) an 'open option' chosen from unrelated discipline/faculties, which add general/specific knowledge to enhance students' intellectual acumen. If a regular teacher of the autonomous college is teaching the elective even in departments other than his/her own, it shall be included in the workload of the teacher concerned. The APSCHE may clarify this issue and make a suitable recommendation to the Commissioner of the Collegiate Education.

3.5. Disparity between the total credits of programmes of autonomous colleges and that of affiliated colleges.

The affiliating universities have designed a common template for CBCS for implementation in all affiliated colleges, and the total minimum credits required in a given course/programme must have been defined to qualify for the degree. That being the standard set by the university in terms of credits required, an autonomous college should not have a structure that has less number of total minimum credits than prescribed by the affiliating university. It may have more if the college is offering additional papers /courses.

3.6. Increase of practical hours from two to three in science subjects.

It is a genuine request. Laboratory courses in science subjects are complimentary to the theory courses, and are designed to test applicability of the theoretical concepts learnt in the classroom, and to impart hands-on experience to improve the functional capabilities of the student. Thus the training in laboratory will help the student in his/her progression and employment. The UG and PG syllabi in most of the science subjects are designed with theory / lab courses in 60:40 ratio, and a majority of the experiments require a 3-hour session for completion. Therefore, the request for increase of lab session from 2h to 3h in science subjects without, however, affecting the total contact hours in a week and minimum credits required may be agreed to.

3.7. Nomenclature of the courses offered in Autonomous Colleges:

3.7.1 The autonomous colleges have the freedom to start a new and innovative degree program. However, it is prudent to name it in accordance with the nomenclature approved by the University/UGC, lest problems would arise at the time of awarding the degree by the university.

3.7.2 In case an autonomous college feels that naming a degree course differently is imperative for academic reasons, the college should represent to the University / UGC for inclusion of the new title in their approved list and the college should name degree program accordingly only after receiving the assent from the affiliating university / UGC.

3.8 Teach HVPE (Human Values and Professional Ethics) in Telugu medium by Telugu Teachers:

3.8.1 HVPE is an all purpose 'Generic Foundation course' aimed at imparting human values and professional ethics among the students. It is a specialized course by its nature and does not belong to a specific discipline. Any teacher who is conversant with the principles of human values and professional ethics should be eligible to teach. Such a teacher may be from any department including Telugu.

3.8.2. This course should be taught in that language which is the official medium of instruction.

3.9 The remaining items like better pay structure and salaries to unaided staff in autonomous colleges; frequent increase of student affiliation fee by the universities, prompt issue of certificates to students of autonomous colleges are issues of administrative nature and should be resolved in consultation with the managements of autonomous colleges/ affiliating universities. It is desirable that the unaided degree teachers of autonomous colleges should be paid on par with the contract lecturers in Government Degree colleges. The APSCHE may initiate necessary action in this regard.

4.0 The UGC document on XII Plan profile of higher education in India states that:

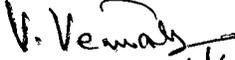
"the only safe and better way to improve the quality of undergraduate education is to de-link most of the colleges from the affiliating structure. Colleges with academic and operative freedom are doing better and have more credibility. The financial support to such colleges boosts the concept of autonomy."

The UGC proposed to increase the number of autonomous colleges to spread the culture of autonomy, and the target is to make 10 per cent of eligible colleges autonomous by the end of XII Plan period. This would be possible if the three stake-holders - UGC, State Government the parent affiliating university - play a very harmonious and proactive role as facilitators in letter and spirit. At the same time, the College should realize that autonomy does not mean freedom

to do whatever it wants and is totally liberated from the affiliating rules of the parent university. Autonomy is granted to the college for achieving higher educational standards by innovation and improving the pedagogies, teaching-learning methods, research base, student support systems, MIS and healthy practices. It is obligatory for the Autonomous Colleges to constitute the statutory bodies like Boards of Studies, Academic Council, Governing Body, and follow scrupulously the Guidelines issued by UGC from time to time in this regard. Any freedom will flourish only on accountability, and both are not mutually exclusive.

The committee members sincerely thank Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and all the officers of the APSCHE for providing the necessary support to the committee.


1.6.16
(Prof C.R. Visweswara Rao)


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