

# REPORT



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## BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON E-MODULE

**Organized by:** Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) & Centre for Online Education (COEdn)

**Venue:** Netaji Subhas Sabhaghar

**Date & Time:** 4<sup>th</sup> November 2022, Friday; 11A.M.-3 P.M.\*

**Attendees:** NSOU faculty members, Directors of all Schools of Studies, some Officers and staff members. *Hon'ble Vice Chancellor presided over the program. (51 Participants)*

Director, CIQA & OIC, COEdn were the coordinators of the session.

### **Backdrop & Objectives of the Program:**

In view of the revalidation of all the existing programmes of NSOU (which is due on 2023-2024) from UGC-DEB, the exercise of preparing online teaching-learning modules will be a way forward to suffice the requirements as envisaged in UGC(ODL and Online programme) Regulations 2020.

Module is the term that is most often used to describe online lessons or units. Online course modules typically contain content and activities organized to create a clear learning path for students. Modular Distance Learning is in the form of individualized instruction that allows learners to use self-learning modules (SLMs) in print or digital format/electronic copy, whichever is applicable in the context of the learner and other learning resources.

A curriculum is not only that which is designed and prescribed, but that which is administered and implemented. Envisioning and enacting new forms of curricula, based on open and shared knowledge, depends greatly on the work of teachers. While digital technology offers a world of possibilities, innovations are more likely to be successful when they are designed to meet the particular needs and characteristics of students in specific contexts. Teachers have an important role to play in personalizing learning so it is authentic and relevant. They need latitude, adequate preparation, instructional resources and support to adapt, build, design and create the best learning opportunities for their students. The curricula of the future must provide teachers with a wide margin of autonomy that is complemented

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with strong supports, including what is offered by technology, and which comes through rich collaboration with peers and from partnerships with subject matter experts.

Against this backdrop, the CIQA & COEdn came together to organize a Brainstorming Session on e-Modules for all NSOU faculty members.

#### **Proceedings of the Session:**

- Prof. Someswar Bhowmik, Officer-in-Charge, Centre for Online Education (COEdn) introduced the session and welcomed one and all. He appreciated Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor's reflective thoughts and extended his thanks to the Directors of all schools for responding to this call.
- Professor Ranjan Chakrabarti, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Netaji Subhas Open University was felicitated by Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Assistant Professor, SoE, NSOU. Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor addressed and greeted everyone. He spoke on qualitative transformation which has already made an impact. Global transformations were vividly exemplified in his speech. In tune with all the changes around, he envisioned a synergy of Open and Distance Learning and Online Education. He remarked that the establishment of the COEdn was a step in the right direction. He briefly touched upon the stipulations of the UGC (ODL Programmes & Online programmes) Regulations 2020 and need to offer at least 20-25% of the existing degree courses as e-modules online by 2024. The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor's call to the faculty was to work in war-footing with a view to accomplishing the target.
- Prof. Someswar Bhowmik, OIC, CoEdn in his presentation on "Envisioning a roadmap for embedding online modules & courses in the NSOU ecosystem" emphasized upon compliance with the UGC (ODL Programmes & Online Programmes) Regulations 2020 in a phased manner marking a systematic voyage from online modules to full-fledged degree programs; he also suggested that intra-university credit mobility may be introduced as an interim flexibility proposition, before switching over to full-scale credit mobility in compliance with the UGC (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM) Regulations 2021. He also highlighted that cognizance of and participation in ABC would increase visibility of NSOU in the academia. His final suggestion was that the faculty of each

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School should develop three/four courses every semester in order to attain the goal suggested by the Hon'ble VC.

- The house was then thrown open for interaction. Hon'ble VC initiated the discussion with concern over e-assessments, quality & credit transfer in lucid terms. A vibrant interaction, exchange of ideas and thoughts ensued involving all present. The Hon'ble VC proposed marketing of online courses. He emphasised upon creating a brand value of NSOU. This would take a while. He also highlighted on increasing short term value-added/Add-on online courses. Some of the faculty members expressed serious concern about the adequacy of technical infrastructure in handling online modules/courses. The Hon'ble VC assured to provide full support from the University in augmenting the production and post-production facilities. He also mentioned about the introducing of CISCO web platform to augment the online synchronous services. It was agreed that regarding the technical know-how about online modules/courses, the COEdn would act as facilitator. It was further agreed that the self-financed nature of the Online Courses at the Certificate and Diploma level would be replicated for Degree programmes to boost university revenue.
- After a short tea break Prof. Anirban Ghosh, Director, Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) presented & deliberated on "E-content & MOOCs: Development & Delivery". The presentation focussed on benefits of all stakeholders – teachers, students, and university as a whole. He outlined and clarified the concepts of E-content, MOOC and OER. He provided a description of MOOC, its transaction and modalities. He also mentioned that credit mobility comes to play when courses are offered through SWAYAM LMS. He also highlighted on the initiatives of GOI & NSOU.
- Prof. Kajal De, Director, School of Sciences, narrated that students opting for degree course in GE Chemistry have an option to earn credit from approved SWAYAM. She also outlined how PhD students were advised to complete their Coursework through NPTEL MOOCs during the pandemic. She proposed that this practice may be continued post-Pandemic. She then narrated how the School of Sciences has addressed the practical paper challenges through Blended mode developed by Mrinal Nath, Assistant Professor of Computer Science. She made out a list of online courses under School of Sciences which have been developed & also in the pipeline. Mr.

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Mrinal Nath was requested to speak on the online course, which he had developed. Mr. Nath also presented an analysis of feedback on e-assessment of their courses.

- Prof. Atindra Nath Dey, Director, School of Education described the scenario of UGC ODL, Open University & SoE's ICT-Pedagogy in a nutshell. School of Education has interdisciplinarity among its two departments (Education and Special Education) offering UG, PG and 2nd degree programmes. Value-Added courses, training modules and online curricular courses may be well\*fulfilled through sharing of resources, and competence. Blending of MOOCs, online modules to cater to the curricular fulfilment and enrichment is envisioned as an array of thoughts into action. Faculty members are encouraged to develop online courses to empower the blend of transactional mechanisms.
- Dr. Chandan Basu, Director, School of Social Sciences in his address expressed the hope that henceforth the Honb'le VC would regularly meet with the faculty members. He highlighted on the constraints of UG-CBCS load in SLM preparation & translation. Further to this, he reported on the online Value-Added course on Prospects of Travel & Tourism, taken up by the School of Social Sciences.
- Prof. Manan Kumar Mandal, Director, School of Humanities provided the congregation with interesting counter narratives by saying:
  - i) 4-Quadrant approach is not the only one to develop MOOCs.
  - ii) Rigidity of method should not constrain the scope and peculiar demands of a subject.
  - iii) The content should be developed in an innovative way rather than concentrating on a pre-set template.
  - iv) Besides developing curriculum-based MOOCs the faculty should also be encouraged, and given freedom, to develop online modules/courses on their individual research interests.

He elaborated on the several short-term online courses developed and delivered by the CLTCS, under the aegis of SoH. He also mentioned that serious academic engagements are required to explore all possibilities.

Prof. Ghosh clarified some of the points referred by Prof. Mandal on SWAYAM - CEC, IGNOU, NPTEL etc. & their responsibilities.





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- CA Sachindra Chandra Kar, the Finance Officer in his brief address lauded the emergence of online courses/e-modules and significance attached to it. But he also emphasized upon the sustainability of the courses in a manner so that the university finances would not be unduly stressed.
- Smt. Rokeya Ray, the Controller of Examinations, underscored the unique nature of NSOU's examination system, the large no. of examinees living in areas with poor infrastructure, and overall management of the examinations in the open system. She reminded the congregation that the online initiatives of the University started way back in 2014 through online form filling and submission. She in fact anticipated that introduction of online courses/ modules would lighten the burden of the Examinations department to some extent.
- Finally Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Assistant Professor, SoE, proposed the vote of thanks. She thanked everyone for making the brainstorming session a memorable experience.

[Prepared with input from Dr. Papiya Upadhyay, Assistant Professor, School of Education.]

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9.11.2022