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PROPOSAL FOR REVIEW OF INTERNSHIP AND PLACEMENT SCHEME FRAMEWORK

UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD, INDIA

Integrating Talent Development into Innovation Ecosystems in Higher Education

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The framework review proposal outlines the current University policy and practice regarding student internships and placements and makes proposals for improvements.

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DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT POLICY

Each academic department at University of Hyderabad plans internships for students on its own. Regarding placements, the university has a central placement office.

In most departments, internships carry credits - ranging from two to four credits. This largely depends on the internship period and the department's need to send students on longer internships. The Alumni of the University are also involved in the process of trying to secure more internship opportunities.

PREPARATION OF THE STUDENTS FOR INTERNSHIPS

During the first two semesters of study students are imparted skills that help them face the challenges of working in industry/NGOs. However, before they actually go on an internship, the faculty coordinator in-charge conducts a detailed meeting to develop awareness about the internship possibilities in the discipline. Students are encouraged to find an internship themselves. However, if they are unable to locate one, the faculty coordinator helps them find an internship in the sector of their choice.

As for placements, there is a placement coordinator at the department level who coordinates with the central Placement Cell on a regular basis. In most cases, students find placements towards the end of the third semester. They are allowed by the companies or NGOs to acquire their degree after the fourth semester before joining them.

PROCEDURES IN PLACE TO MONITOR THE QUALITY OF INTERNSHIPS / PLACEMENTS

The central Placement Cell maintains statistics about the placements that students get. The statistical data covers the whole university. Internship statistics and details are, however, maintained at the department level.

COLLECTING FEEDBACK FROM STUDENTS AND EMPLOYERS REGARDING THE QUALITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNSHIPS

Every student who goes on an internship is required to produce:

- A work report at the end of the internship
- An evaluation report completed by the employer.

The internship coordinator also monitors the performance of interns on a regular basis.

PROCEDURES IN PLACE FOR MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT OF THE SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES THAT THE STUDENT HAS DEVELOPED DURING THE INTERNSHIP / PLACEMENT

The reports produced by the students and the employer help the department get a fairly clear idea about the extent to which the internship has developed skills and helped the student acquire new knowledge. However, there is no formal procedure at the university for monitoring the skills acquired during the internship.

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POSSIBILITY FOR ENGAGING IN INTERNSHIPS / PLACEMENTS IN THE NON-PROFIT AND PUBLIC SECTOR

Most departments in the Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts encourage internships and placements in NGOs and public sector organisations. As of now, however, less than 5% of the students in Business and Management disciplines choose to do an internship in the NGO sector.

GAPS, WEAK POINTS AND INEFFICIENCIES OF THE INTERNSHIP POLICIES AT THE UNIVERSITY

Creating more opportunities for internships

The university could benefit from developing a central database for both internships and placements. This will encourage and facilitate cross-disciplinary internships.

Some students specifically seek paid internships to support their stay and daily subsistence. Not all are successful. An online portal that would help employers announce internships would perhaps be helpful in this respect.

Planning

There do not seem to be identifiable gaps in planning for internships.

Preparation of students

There do not seem to be identifiable gaps in preparing students for internships.

Monitoring of quality

The university could benefit from introducing a formal online system to monitor the quality of internships, the skills acquired and the outcomes.

Monitoring of developed skills and competences

The university needs and is indeed planning to put a system in place as it is accorded the status of Institute of Eminence by the UGC / MHRD. This system will be designed to monitor the quality of internships, skills acquired, outcomes and outputs.

Diversification of internship opportunities

The university wants to diversify the internship opportunities by seeking internship opportunities in various sectors and across different disciplines. This will make it possible to cater to the needs of students studying in different fields. Efforts are being made to increase the number of stakeholders participating in all statutory and non-statutory bodies of the University in order to widen the internship opportunities.

POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS IN INTERNSHIP POLICIES

Improving the process of establishing contacts with business, public sector and the non-profit sector in view of creating opportunities for students to get engaged in placements and internships

The university has a good history of maintaining contacts with a variety of organisations able to offer internship opportunities. In order to widen these opportunities, the University has made efforts to incorporate representatives from industry/business, public sector and from NGOs in all statutory and non-statutory bodies of the University. However, in addition to that, changes in the curricula are needed, too. Such changes will help the situation

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with internships, too, as they would demonstrate that the university is willing to respond to the needs of business and also because updated curricula will prepare students and graduates with the skills actually needed by business.

Improving the process of planning internships/placements: Implementation of Training Needs Assessment (TNA)

The monitoring process could be professionalized through an online portal that would help gather data and make it possible to analyse it on a regular basis.

Improving the process of preparation of students for internships/placement

Curricular changes and targeted improvement of skills may help the process of preparation of the students for longer internships (from three to six months). Students get two sets of vacations in a year—one during the summer and another during the winter. All departments should examine the possibility of encouraging internships in both vacation periods.

Strengthening the monitoring process in order to ensure the quality of internships/placements

As of now, the Placement Cell monitors student placements, and it may be better for the same body to monitor internships. The department- or school-level placement coordinators can be put in charge of monitoring the internships, too.

Improving the procedures for monitoring and assessment of the skills and competencies that the students acquire during internships/placements

The University has been planning to improve the existing policies and structures of placements/internships in order to improve the skill sets of students and help them withstand the competition for existing job opportunities. As for placements, most students do manage to get good placements at the entry level. However, in the last couple of years, recession and a proliferation in the number of universities have made placements more competitive. The university therefore do a bit more to improve the employability of the students by imparting soft-skills through targeted workshops.

Expanding the possibilities of internships/placements in the non-profit and public sectors

The university has been doing its bit in regard to encouraging students to take up internships/placements in NGOs and in the public sector. As stated earlier, many representatives of civic and public sectors are being drafted into the statutory and non-statutory bodies of University of Hyderabad. Further widening of the network will help expand the placement/internship opportunities of the students across disciplines.

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