



Draft Guidelines for the Implementation of Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit in Academic Programmes offered in Higher Education Institutions

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1. Introduction

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisages flexible learning and innovative and adaptable curricular architecture that allows unique combinations of subjects, provides points of entry and exit, and eliminates the rigid barriers that are currently in place so that learners have the freedom to pursue their own academic paths. The flexibilities envisaged include freedom to exit in between a programme of study, for any reason, and resume it later or continue the rest of the study in another HEI or leave it altogether with an appropriate qualification. Such flexibility is enabled by the “Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit” (ME-ME) scheme – a scheme which will also minimise the dropout rate and improve the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).

While ME-ME is perceived as an option largely for the benefit of students, over a period of time, it is expected to raise the level of academic quality in the country through healthy competition of retaining or attracting learners. It could also lead to collaborations among HEIs either to form a cluster HEIs for smooth mobility of their students from one HEI to the other within the cluster or for mentorship of one HEI by the other to assist in improving their program outcomes in line with clause 10.6 of NEP 2020.

The curricular and credit framework of the undergraduate programmes (i.e. Four-Year Undergraduate Curricular and Credit Framework of the UGC) as well as that of the postgraduate programmes, both based on NEP 2020, embeds within these, the flexibility to exit at the end of every even semester with a qualification commensurate with the level of study completed. The creation of an Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) further facilitates smooth student mobility between and among degree-granting HEIs by formalizing credit recognition, accumulation, transfer, and redemption.

In the restructured degree programmes, the undergraduate degree should be of either a three- or four-year duration, with multiple entry and multiple exit options, and with appropriate certifications. For example, a certificate after completing one year in a discipline or field, including vocational and professional areas; a diploma after two years of study; or a Bachelor’s degree after a three-year programme. The four-year multidisciplinary Bachelor’s programme provides the opportunity to experience the full range of holistic and multidisciplinary education in addition to focus on major and minor subjects, as per a student’s preference. The four-year program may also lead to an honours degree with Research, if the student completes a rigorous research project in the major area(s) of study as specified by the HEI.

For the Master’s programmes, the HEI will have the flexibility to offer different designs:

- a) A two-year programme with the second year devoted entirely to research for those who have completed the three-year Bachelor’s programme;
- b) A one-year Master’s programme for students who have completed a four-year Bachelor’s programme with Research; and
- c) An integrated five-year Bachelor’s/Master’s programme

Various guidelines have been issued for the implementation of NEP 2020, including Transforming Higher Education Institutions into Multidisciplinary Institutions, the National Credit Framework and the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework, detailing minimum credit requirements, level of qualification and learning outcomes for degree programmes. In order to enable a smooth implementation of ME-ME in higher education institutions, UGC is providing these guidelines. These guidelines supersede the UGC guidelines for multiple entry and multiple exit in academic programmes offered in HEIs, notified on 29th July, 2021

2. Objectives

- To provide flexibility to students from the curricular, pedagogic, and disciplinary boundaries of institutions, and enable a wider learning environment in the interinstitutional context.
- To ensure learning is exploratory along with the flexibility to experiment and explore multiple avenues.
- To ensure that the vacant seats are filled up through a transparent admission process for lateral entry from NCrF level 5 onwards.
- To ensure mobility across disciplines and knowledge systems in a credible manner in accordance with the guiding principles of NEP 2020.

3. Requirements for Institutions:

- The creditization process should align with national frameworks such as the National Credit Framework (NCrF), the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF), and the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF). These frameworks provide standardized levels based on the level descriptors as well as credits earned.
- The HEI has a valid NAAC accreditation.
- The HEI is included in the list of institutions maintained by UGC under Section 2(f) of the UGC Act 1956 and has successfully complied, in respect of private universities, with the UGC Committee's report in accordance with Section 13 of the UGC Act 1956.
- For the purpose of multiple entry and multiple exit, the understanding of 'credit', 'notional learning hours', 'learning outcomes' at each level of study and other attendant terms shall be as defined in the relevant UGC documents such as NCrF and NHEQF.
- Approval of the Statutory bodies of the HEIs, such as the Academic Council and Executive Council or their equivalent bodies, is the first step in the implementation of ME-ME.
- The HEI should have registered in the Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) portal and each of its students should have registered in the ABC portal and created his/her Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID or any other ID prescribed by the UGC/ Ministry of Education.
- Credits should be awarded based on the assessment of learning outcomes. This ensures that

the credits reflect the actual knowledge, skills, and competencies acquired by the learner.

The HEIs should notify the learning outcomes of every course, level of study and Programme.

- The ME-ME is possible when the programme is divided into yearly independent modules (NCrF).
- In order to implement ME-ME, the HEI should determine the student intake capacity in advance through its statutory bodies based on the academic and physical facilities available, the student-teacher ratio, the teaching-non-teaching ratio in accordance with the UGC guidelines/norms, and other statutory bodies concerned. Accordingly, before the start of the odd semester, the number of seats for multiple entry in each stream for an academic year may be declared by a HEI on its website.
- The number of vacancies, arising out of students intending to exit a programme or the unfilled seats at the time of admission, may be finalized well in time and indicated in the advertisement as “tentative vacancy”
- HEIs which are part of a “cluster HEI” should indicate the names of collaborating institutions on their website.
- Distance mode of education is not covered under ME-ME

The HEIs may set their own entry requirements to admit students under ME-ME. Broad guidelines for the establishment of equivalence to enable the process of entry and exit are given below.

4. Requirements for Students

- Students should have a functional ABC ID or APAAR ID or any identification number so created or authorised to be created by the UGC/ Ministry of Education, and credentials are uploaded regularly on the ABC portal.
- Students, desiring to opt for entry into a level of study of a programme offered by a HEI (such as Level 5/5.5/6/6.5), should fulfil the minimum eligibility criteria prescribed for initial admission to that programme of study (for instance, students who wish to enter into the second year of four-year undergraduate degree programme in another HEI, after completing the first year of such programme in his/her parent HEI, should fulfil the minimum eligibility criteria prescribed for admission to the first year of such programme of that HEI where he/she intends to enter).
- The awarded credits are recorded and documented in the individual's academic record or transcript, indicating the specific courses or modules for which credit has been granted.
- The student should check the websites of HEIs and shortlist the HEIs where he/she seek to avail entry under ME-ME and apply as per the procedure prescribed by such HEIs.

5. Qualification Types and Credit Requirements

Table 1

Qualification Type and Credit Requirements		
Levels	Qualification title	Minimum Credit requirements
Level 4.5	Undergraduate Certificate (in the field of learning/discipline) for those who exit after the first year (two semesters) of the undergraduate programme. (Programme duration: first year or two semesters of the undergraduate programme)	40
Level 5	Undergraduate Diploma (in the field of learning/discipline) for those who exit after two years (four semesters) of the undergraduate program (Program duration: First two years or four semesters of the undergraduate programme)	80
Level 5.5	Bachelor' Degree (Programme duration: Three years or six semesters).	120
Level 6	Bachelor' Degree (Honors/Research) (Program duration: Four years or eight semesters).	160
Level 6	Post-Graduate Diploma for those who exit after the successful completion of the first year or two semesters of the two-year Master's degree programme). (Program duration: One year or two semesters)	40
Level 6.5	Master's Degree (Program duration: Two years or four semesters after obtaining a Bachelor's degree).	80
Level 6.5	Master's Degree (Programme duration: One year or two semesters after obtaining a four-year Bachelor's Degree (Honors/Research).	40
Level 7	Master's Degree (Programme duration: Two years or 4 semesters after obtaining a four-year Bachelor's Degree.	80
Level 8	Doctoral Degree	Minimum prescribed credits for course work and submission of a thesis

6. Summary of Entry and Exit Points:

NEP 2020 clearly specifies the entry and exit points in the academic programmes offered in the higher education institutions. Based on NCrF and NHEQF, a summary of entry and exit points in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes is provided below:

S.No.	Entry Requirement	Exit	NCrF Level	Qualification
1	Class 12 th or equivalent	1 st Year	4.5	UG Certificate
2	UG Certificate/ Completion of 1 st year UG (40 credits)	2 nd year	5	UG Diploma
3	UG Diploma/ Completion of 2 nd year UG (120 credits)	3 rd Year	5.5	UG Degree
4	UG Degree/Completion of 3 rd Year	4 th Year	6	UG (Hons.) or UG (Hons. With Research)
5	UG Degree (3-year)	1 st Year of 2-year PG	6	PG Diploma
6	Completion of 1 st Year of 2-year PG pursued after UG Degree (3-year)	2 nd Year of 2-year PG	6.5	PG Degree
7	UG Degree (4-year)	1 year	6.5	PG Degree
8	Completion of 1 st Year of 2-year PG pursued after UG Degree (4-year)	2 nd Year of 2-year PG	7	PG Degree

7. Lifelong Learning:

Multiple Entry and Multiple Exit supports lifelong learning. A learner can exit and rejoin the programme and continue from where he/she left if the validity of the credit is intact. After the expiry of the credits, learners can use the “Recognition of Prior Learning” pathway as well as apply for re-assessment provision for the expired credits.

8. Operational details:

Operation of multiple entry and multiple exit shall be through a well-defined procedure for transfer of credits based on equivalence drawn in the manner so provided, by a body established by the HEI for the same.

- i. Learning outcomes of courses, competencies achieved and the NCrF levels attained shall be the basis for drawing equivalence for considering lateral entry of students/ learners as well as for the purpose of counting the credits earned from outside the parent university/ HEI. Therefore, carefully framing the ‘Learning Outcomes and Competencies’ of each course is important.
- ii. Every University/Autonomous institution will frame curriculum as per the guidelines given in NHEQF clearly specifying the outcomes and competencies of the courses. Following are the points which may be taken into consideration while framing the Learning Outcome of the courses:
 - a. Every course (paper) must have well-defined learning outcomes and competencies which are measurable and duly aligned with NHEQF/ NSQF.
 - b. Such learning outcomes and competencies of a course must have co-relation with the course objectives.
 - c. Learning outcomes and competencies must be framed from the perspective of what the student will be able to do after completion of the course, stating
 - what knowledge & understanding he/she will be able to develop/ describe,
 - what practical/ hands-on skills he/she will be able to demonstrate,
 - where and how he/she will be able to apply the knowledge and skills so acquired.
 - what analysis he/she will be able to do
 - what new innovation can be done, created or developed using the knowledge and skills so gained.

Note: each course (i.e. paper) may or may not have all the five attributes stated above.
- iii. An expert committee will be formed at the institutional level to examine the equivalency of the credit on the basis of the learning outcomes, numbers of credits to be considered at the multiple entry levels etc.
- iv. For determining Academic Equivalence, a HEI:
 - i. can undertake direct assessment in the Learning outcome prescribed and issue relevant award (Certificate/Diploma/Degree) in case the learner clears the assessment.
 - ii. may determine the additional/bridge courses that a learner needs to undertake to earn an award.
- v. Credits from a foreign university may be counted subject to the recommendations of the expert committee of the Indian HEI in accordance with NCrF.
- vi. Credits are generally transferred along with grades but there are several systems of awarding grades nationally and internationally. Institutes must devise a mechanism by constituting a committee of experts in that area to decide the equivalency of grades.
- vii. The National Higher Education Qualifications Framework (NHEQF) may be referred for learning outcomes and competencies for different NCrF levels. (https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/7193743_FYUGP.pdf)
- viii. Flexibility to earn credits- Students and learners should be able to earn credits by –
 - a. studying courses offered by various academic institutions and platforms (such as

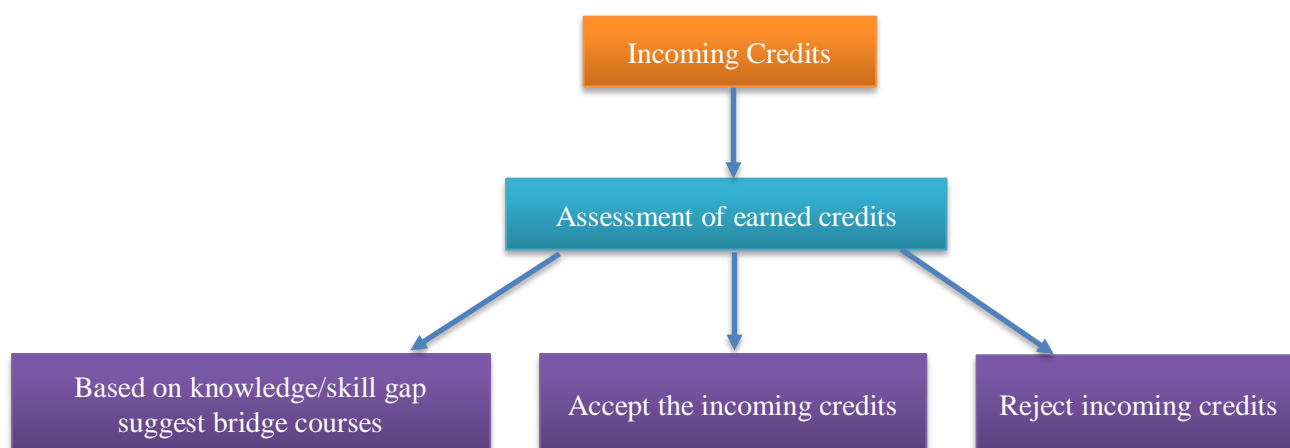
SWAYAM/SWAYAM Plus or any other platform duly recognised by the concerned regulatory body), subject to assessment – anytime, anywhere and any level of learning;

- b. Undergoing skill/vocational courses in a formal set up;
- c. experiential learning in an informal set up (for awarding Credits for such experiential learning, the HEI concerned will need to conduct assessment).
- d. Experiential learning in a formal set-up in the form of an internship or apprenticeship, work-embedded program as part of the curriculum. (Please refer to

https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/9105852_ugcguidelines_ApprenticeshipInternship.pdf)

I. Principles of credit transfer:

The decision of an institute to allow entry or otherwise, under the ME-ME should be based on objective criteria, providing a fair and equal opportunity to every applicant. However, entry into another institution, after exiting from the institution where a student is originally enrolled, is not a matter of right. The institution, where entry is sought, may reject the transfer or recommend bridge courses to fill the gaps, if any, while accepting the request for entry, as illustrated below.



It is desirable that groups of HEIs, having commonality in terms of admission process, largely similar curricula and assessment, congregate to form a ‘Cluster HEI’ to enable smooth mobility of their students and credit transfer among these HEIs.

II. Procedure to Establish Equivalence:

The Learning Outcomes based Curriculum Framework is central to the operation of multiple entry and multiple exit. The National Higher Education Qualification Framework (NHEQF) envisages that students, on completion of a programme of study, must possess and demonstrate the expected graduate attributes. Graduate attributes include learning outcomes that are specific to disciplinary areas relating to the chosen field(s) of learning within broad multidisciplinary/interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary contexts. The graduate profile/ attributes are acquired incrementally and describe a set of competencies (knowledge, skills and abilities) fostered through meaningful

learning experiences made available through the curriculum and field/industry exposure, the total college/university experience, and a process of critical and reflective thinking. The NHEQF also prescribes the learning outcomes for UG certificate (1st year of UG), UG Diploma (2nd year of UG), UG degree (3rd year UG), UG (Hons. and Hons. with Research), PG Diploma, Master's and Doctoral degree.

The learning outcomes of a programme are attained by learners through the essential learnings acquired on completion of selected courses of study within a programme. Course learning outcomes are specific to the learning for a given course of study related to a disciplinary or interdisciplinary /multi-disciplinary area. Based on the Programme Learning Outcomes (PLO) there will be Course Learning Outcomes (CLO) for each course. The achievement by students of course-level learning outcomes leads to the attainment of the programme learning outcomes. At the course level, each course may well have links to some but not all PLOs as these are developed through the totality of student learning experiences across the years of their study. A course map indicating the linkage between course learning outcomes and each programme learning outcome will help in establishing equivalence. Course-level learning outcomes will be aligned to programme learning outcomes. Course-level learning outcomes are specific to a course of study within a given programme of study. It is the responsibility of the concerned Higher Education Institutes to notify the learning outcomes of the program. The HEIs must also prepare methodologies to assess the defined learning outcomes.

III. Equivalence Establishing Body:

Universities shall constitute the Equivalence Committee. The equivalence committee will put in place appropriate measures for identifying and mapping an applicant's relevant skills, knowledge, and competencies acquired by them/, leading to the award of the relevant qualification, with that of the Level Descriptors prescribed in NHEQF.

The equivalence committee of the HEI where the student seeks entry will determine the equivalence of the courses completed by the student with those of their own. The learning outcomes of the courses completed at the HEI from where the student exits should match with the courses set as entry requirements by the HEI where the student seeks entry. The equivalence committee will determine the weightage given to each category of assessment to ensure a comprehensive and fair evaluation of the candidate's eligibility to transfer credits.

IV. Grievance Redressal Committee

The grievance redressal committee established at the school/department level, as per University Grants Commission (Redressal of Grievances of Students) Regulations, 2023, and its amendments from time to time, will address any grievance related to ME-ME.



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