

Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) of Education at UG level in India

One of the most striking features of the contemporary Indian higher education is the introduction of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS). Although institutions like IITs, IIMs, NITs and other premier institutions of higher learning including Agriculture and Technological Universities in India have introduced the CBCS at the UG level, several other universities and colleges in India have not yet taken that step. Nevertheless, the UGC has made it a mandatory criterion to meet if the institutions of higher learning require the financial support from it. Perhaps this would result in more number of educational institutions introducing the CBCS in future.

Therefore, it is important for all the stakeholders to know what kind of system is CBCS, and what is the nature of education going to be in this system, etc? Let us have a glance at the mechanism of the CBCS system.

In India, the UG course, as has often been in practice, is of three-year duration with six semesters. In every semester, a student will study:

1. Compulsory Core Courses consisting of courses with 4, 3 or 2 credits.
2. Elective Courses consisting of courses with 4, 3 or 2 credits and a student will have a choice of choosing any subject from any faculty other than his own subject. For example, a student studying BA with HEP Major (Optional) can choose a course in Literature/ Music / Fine Arts / Statistics / Environmental Science / Computer Applications, etc. The idea is to cross one's own discipline and give exposure to the student across the disciplines. This enables the student to develop diverse competencies and skills of different domains of knowledge.
3. Foundation Courses, which are of two kinds—Compulsory Foundation or Elective Foundation, aim at imparting in-depth knowledge and value-based education.

Each semester will have about 6 Courses with about 20 credits. For example, 4 hours of teacher-student contact hours in theory classroom per week is considered as 4 credit course. If

it is 2 hours of student-teacher classroom contact, then it is equivalent to 2 credits. If it is Laboratory teaching, then 4 hours laboratory work is equivalent to 2 credits. As the UG Course is of three-year duration with six semesters, and if each semester consists of 20 credits, then a student will study a UG course for a total of 120 credits (6 semester x 20 credits each = 120 credits.). But the total credit may vary from 90 to 120 credits, depending upon individual university system.

The credits are converted into Grade, Grade Points and Credit Points. Based on this, calculations are made to derive SGPA (Semester Grade Point Average) and CGPA (Cumulative Grade Point Average).

The CBCS offers the student an opportunity to conduct a small-scale research project during one or two semesters (4 or 8 credits). Further, it is also possible for the student to go to other universities in India or abroad and study there in order to earn some credits for a semester period and come back to his parent university. The credits earned abroad or other university will be considered by his parent university. The flexibility of moving across the disciplines and institutions is the most striking achievement of the CBCS.

However, for the effective implementation of the CBCS, we need to meet certain demands such as massive office automation, classroom with ICT facilities, MOOCs, WiFi facility, Virtual classrooms and e-library facilities, automation of examination, transparency in evaluation, digital evaluation and digital printing of marks cards and degree certificates among others.

Finally, the CBCS is an in-thing now. However, we should not forget that we, teachers with genuine scholarship and scientific temper, shape the educational landscape of our country. Let us welcome the CBCS towards that direction.

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