



*Guidelines for*

# **FOSTERING SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN INDIA 2.0**



**University Grants Commission**  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg,  
New Delhi-110002  
Website: [www.ugc.ac.in](http://www.ugc.ac.in)



**Captions of Cover Page Images as follows:**

**Top Left Image:** Faculty members understanding the Principles & Methodology of Community Based Participatory Research at Valayapatti Village, Dindigul, Tamil Nadu.

**Top Right Image:** Faculty members participating in Traditional Folk Dance- Dhemsas by the Tribal Community at Koraput, Odisha.

**Bottom Left Image:** Faculty Members at Anganwadi Centre at Amgaun, Nagpur, Maharashtra.

**Bottom Right Image:** Faculty members interacting with rural community at Harigaon, Tezpur, Assam.

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&  
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Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092  
Ph.: +91 9312550335, 7042732332  
E-mail: infodma07@gmail.com

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## FOREWORD

Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) can play an important role to achieve the objectives of socio-economic development of New India through their active community engagement. This approach will also contribute to improve the quality of both teaching and research in HEIs as they will develop a better understanding of issues in the society. Therefore, it would in the fitness of things, if HEIs bring in social responsibility and community in their vision and mission itself. It is also important that institutional mechanisms are developed to adopt a holistic and functional approach to community engagement, encompassing all three functions of HEIs—teaching, research and service. UGC's ambitious Quality Mandate launched in 2018 has focused on improving societal linkages of HEIs and enabling students to become socially productive.

UGC set up a Subject Expert Group on Educational Institutions' Social Responsibility in 2018 under Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA), a flagship programme of the Government of India, which worked to develop a report on "Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India". The report has emphasised the importance of socially relevant courses that will make all students understand India's rural society, Government's rural development schemes and contribute to the betterment of the same.

Since the Government of India announced the National Education Policy (NEP) on 29<sup>th</sup> July 2020, this document has been revised to include key recommendations of NEP, as well as the deliberations of the Review Committee, Expert Group and feedback received from the stakeholders.

I am happy to present a revised "Guidelines for Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India" to the Vice-Chancellors, Directors, Principals, faculty members and students of the HEIs.

I would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution of the Chairperson of the Subject Expert Group (SEG), Dr. K. K. Aggarwal, Chairman, National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and all the SEG members in developing this document. I would also like to acknowledge the necessary support and relevant inputs provided by Prof. Rajnish Jain, Secretary, UGC and other UGC officials and Experts in formulating the revised guidelines. This document will give a fillip to UGC's long-standing commitment to strengthen social responsibility and community engagement of Universities/Colleges in India.

December 2022  
New Delhi

Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar  
Chairman  
University Grants Commission





## 1. Introduction

This document emerged from UGC's long-standing commitment to strengthen social responsibility and community engagement of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in India. An earlier policy of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (now renamed as Ministry of Education), Government of India (2012) had been developed into a Scheme to promote stronger community engagement amongst HEIs in the country.

Unnat Bharat Abhiyaan (UBA) 2.0 was launched by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, in February 2018. UBA 2.0 aims to bring a transformative change in rural development through the active participation of higher education institutes with rural communities and the reorientation of communities through research and development. The University Grants Commission (UGC) set up a Subject Expert Group (SEG) on Curricular Reforms and Educational Institutions Social Responsibility for achieving the objectives of UBA 2.0 in June 2018.

“The Subject Expert Group (SEG) on Curricular Reforms and Educational Institutions Social Responsibility will basically work on the reforms in the curriculum at the level of UG and PG to instil the concept of Rural Community Engagement and Social Responsibility. The endeavour will be to ensure that community engagement is not seen as a standalone activity and is integrated into the regular curriculum of the university to ensure the development of the society around the university.”

This document provides the “Guidelines for Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement” of HEIs in India. It has been developed by the Expert Group through a series of consultations over this period. It has been revised to include key recommendations of National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The experiences of the Covid-19 pandemic and responses by students, faculty and staff of HEIs during the same have been incorporated in this revision.

To achieve the objectives of the socio-economic development of New India, HEIs can play an important role through active community engagement. This approach will also contribute to improve the quality of both teaching and research in HEIs in India. As a growing and large sector in the country, HEIs need to foster social responsibility and community engagement in their vision and mission itself. It is also important that institutional mechanisms are developed to adopt a holistic and functional approach to community engagement, encompassing all three functions of HEIs—teaching, research and service.

### 1.1 Global Context

Around the world, HEIs are being encouraged to foster social responsibility and community engagement in their teaching and research activities over the past decade.

**The declaration from the second UNESCO Conference on Higher Education held in Paris in July 2009 stated explicitly that, ‘Higher education has the social responsibility to advance our understanding of multifaceted issues...and our ability to respond to them... Through its core missions of teaching, research and service, it should lead society in generating global knowledge to address global challenges, inter alia, food security, climate change, water management, intercultural dialogue, renewable energy and public health.’<sup>1</sup>**

After the first international conference on higher education, UNESCO supported a new global network in 1999 – Global University Network for Innovations – GUNI ([www.guninetwork.org](http://www.guninetwork.org)). GUNI's 5<sup>th</sup> World Report on Higher Education brings together global experiences on the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000189242>

theme “Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change (2014).” Community University Engagement (CUE) is central to the creation of new citizenship... This Report proposes integrating CUE into all institutional, teaching and research activities, as a way of thinking and acting.”<sup>2</sup> (GUNI, 2012).

There have been several other initiatives around the world that demonstrate the growing practice of community engagement and social responsibility in higher education.

**Living Knowledge Network** in Europe ([www.scienceshops.org](http://www.scienceshops.org)) has emerged from the movement of Science Shops which began in the Netherlands in 1970s. **Science Shops** have been supported by many European governments and the EU over the past decade. These ‘science shops’ are intermediary structures between universities and local communities to mediate research on community identified problems jointly. Science Shops have primarily comprised of engineering and natural science disciplines. **PASCAL** International Observatory ([www.pascalobservatory.org](http://www.pascalobservatory.org)) has focused its attention on promoting university partnerships with regional and local governments over the past decade. The **Talloires Network** on Civic Roles and Social Responsibilities of Higher Education ([www.tufts.edu/talloiresnetwork](http://www.tufts.edu/talloiresnetwork)) began in 2005 and now has more than 400 universities as its members worldwide; it focuses on the promotion of university engagement in communities to strengthen democratic citizenship amongst youth.

The Government of UK has also supported a **National Centre for Coordinating Public Engagement** ([www.nccpe.org](http://www.nccpe.org)) by HEIs where universities are supported to foster social responsibility and community engagement. Over the past two decades, European Union’s Horizon 2020 research programme has been explicitly focusing on ‘**Responsible Research and Innovation**’ ([www.rri-tools.org](http://www.rri-tools.org)) which mainstreams public engagement in all research projects of universities.

In its 6<sup>th</sup> World Report on Higher Education (2017), **GUNI** has focused on this very theme —“Towards A Socially Responsible University: Balancing the Global and the Local” — and it calls upon HEIs...” as centres of training and the production of knowledge, as well as transmission of knowledge, HEIs are well positioned to link the local and the global..”<sup>3</sup>

India is a signatory to the global commitment for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Achieving these 17 SDG goals requires generating locally appropriate solutions. HEIs can play significant roles by teaching about SDGs and undertaking locally prioritised research for communities around them. Research and teaching of each SDG will enable multi-disciplinarily in HEIs, as each SDG cuts across several academic disciplines. Global University Network for Innovations (GUNI) in its 6<sup>th</sup> World Report beacons HEIs to engage with SDGs:<sup>3</sup>

- a) Educating the Generation to make the SDGs a reality, with the necessary knowledge, skills, competencies and partnerships, thereby helping to produce new SDG leaders;
- b) Conducting transversal reviews and refinements of curricula to ensure the mainstreaming of SDG issues across curricula, and including new values and practices for economic development that enhance social equity while reducing environmental risk.

## 1.2 Community Engagement in India

In 2011, a national review was conducted by a Committee of Experts (set up by the then Planning Commission) to analyse the purposes, principles and forms of social responsibility and community

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.guninetwork.org/report/higher-education-world-4>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.guninetwork.org/report/higher-education-world-6>

engagement which are relevant to our context. Its recommendations to the Ministry of Education (MoE) about “fostering social responsibility and community engagement of HEIs” in India contain several important elements for the new policy.<sup>4</sup> The National Education Policy (NEP) announced by the Government of India in 2020 has presented a transformative framework for higher education in the country. It has reinforced many of the recommendations already included in the new policy, as exemplified through the below lines:

*“The purpose of the education system is to develop a good human being capable of rational thought and action, possessing compassion and empathy, courage and resilience, scientific temper and creative imagination, with sound ethical moorings and values. It aims at producing engaged, productive, and contributing citizens for building an equitable, inclusive, and plural society as envisaged by our Constitution (Page 5)”.*

The **goals** of ‘fostering social responsibility and community engagement in HEIs’ can comprise of:

- Improving the quality of teaching/learning in HEIs, by bridging the gap between theory and practice through community engagement;
- Promoting deeper interactions between higher educational institutions and local communities for identification and solution of real-life problems faced by the communities in a spirit of mutual benefit;
- Facilitating partnerships between local communities and institutions of higher education so that students and teachers can learn from local knowledge and wisdom;
- Engaging higher education institutions with local communities in order to make curriculum, courses and pedagogies more appropriate to achieve the goals of national development;
- Catalysing acquisition of values of public service and active citizenship amongst students and youth, which would also encourage, nurture and harness the natural idealism of youth;
- Undertaking research projects in partnership with local community through community-based research methods.

### 1.3 Key Principles for Community Engagement

In light of the global and national approaches currently prevalent, and key recommendations of NEP 2020, the following key principles shall guide community engagement of HEIs:

- Mutual learning and respect:*** Mutually agreed interests and needs of both rural and peri-urban poor communities and HEIs should be articulated and respected. Without ensuring mutual benefit, community engagement does not serve the purpose of social responsibility of HEIs. While community learns from students and faculty engaging with them, students and teachers should also learn from community knowledge and experiences.
- University-wide, in each faculty and discipline:*** Community engagement should not be limited to a few social science disciplines alone. It should be practised across all disciplines and faculties of HEIs. Faculties of natural sciences and engineering can also promote community engagement in teaching and research. This will help educate local communities about new technological innovations as well as inform students and faculty about ways to harness local technology and knowledge.
- Credit-based for students:*** Participation of students in teaching activities of community engagement and research projects and learning should earn them credits. Community

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.pria.org/uploaded\\_files/article\\_category/1531475111\\_Fostering\\_Social\\_Responsibility.pdf](https://www.pria.org/uploaded_files/article_category/1531475111_Fostering_Social_Responsibility.pdf)

engagement should thus be included to meet their graduation requirements and it should be integrated into their assessments.

- d) ***Providing credit to Teachers for Engagement activities:*** Performance assessments of teachers, researchers and administrators in HEIs should include a review of their involvement and contributions to community engagement in teaching and research. Criteria of and weightage to community engagement by teachers and researchers should be explicitly included in assessments for recruitment, regularisation and promotion.

In this regard, UGC vide its letter No. F. 9-5/2021 (PS/MoE) dated 17<sup>th</sup> March, 2022 has requested all Universities to consider the activities mentioned in the Vidyanjali Guidelines and include them in the assessment criteria in accordance with the UGC Regulations (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education), 2018 (**Annexure-I**).

As per these Regulations, community service is one of the assessment criteria for Universities/Colleges teachers, as per details given below:

- Clause 17.0 (Code of Professional Ethics) of UGC Regulations 2018 (Page no 96) highlights the participation of college teachers in extension, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, including the community service.
- Appendix-II, Table-I (Assessment criteria and methodology for Universities/Colleges teachers highlight the involvement of teachers in the universities/colleges students related activities/ research activities. [Co-curricular, extension and field-based activities such as students' clubs, career counselling, Study visit, Student seminars and other events, cultural, sports, National Cadet Corps (NCC), National Service Scheme (NSS) and community services] Page no 104 of the UGC Regulations.

[https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/4033931\\_UGC-Regulation\\_min\\_Qualification\\_Jul2018.pdf](https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/4033931_UGC-Regulation_min_Qualification_Jul2018.pdf)

- e) ***Linkages with local institutions:*** In order to sustain regular community engagement programmes, HEIs should develop organic and long-term linkages with local institutions around them. These include local governments, district administration, local entrepreneurs, businesses and local NGOs.

## 1.4 Forms of Community Engagement

When the above principles are applied in practice by HEIs, they can choose any combination of the following forms:

- a) **Linking learning with community service**

In this approach, students and teachers apply their knowledge and skills in a chosen community to improve the lives of people in that community. This can be achieved through the model of 'service-learning' (a globally accepted best practice), providing engagement opportunities to students from various disciplines and courses to apply their knowledge to address the challenges of a specific community. For example, students of chemistry can conduct water and soil testing in local areas and share the results with the local community.

- b) **Linking research with community knowledge**

In this approach, various faculties and programmes of HEIs devise joint research projects in partnership with the communities and local agencies. The community's own knowledge is integrated into the design and conduct of the research. New research by students helps them

to complete their academic requirements, and at the same time the community's knowledge is systematized. Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) approaches are gaining recognition in this regard.<sup>5</sup>

Students of engineering, for example, can undertake research in partnership with the community on solid and liquid waste disposal.

**c) Knowledge sharing and knowledge mobilization**

The knowledge available with students and teachers in various disciplines is made available to the local community to realize its developmental aspirations, secure its entitlements and access its benefits from various agencies and schemes. These can take the forms of enumerations, surveys, awareness camps and campaigns, training, learning manuals/films, maps, study reports, public hearings, policy briefs, cleanliness and hygiene teachings, legal aid clinics, etc. For example, students can undertake a 'swachhta survekshana' and/or nutrition survey for mothers and children, and educate them about hygiene and nutrition.

**d) Devising new curriculum and courses**

Many institutions of higher education develop new curricula in existing courses as well as design new courses to engage with the community. This enriches the curriculum of existing courses through locally-appropriate subject matter. It also creates new, locally appropriate educational programmes that interest a new generation of students. For example, new courses on financial inclusion, entrepreneurship development and nutritional value of local produce can improve knowledge and business opportunities for students.

**e) Including practitioners as teachers**

Local community elders, women leaders, tribals, entrepreneurs and civil society practitioners have enormous practical knowledge of a wide variety of issues—from agriculture and forestry to child-rearing, micro-planning, water-harvesting and project management. This expertise can be tapped by inviting such practitioners to co-teach courses both in the classrooms and in the field. Such instructors should be duly recognized, compensated and respected for their practical experience and knowledge.

**f) Social innovations by students**

The students can be encouraged to initiate learning projects with a social impact and supported by HEIs. Incubation of such social innovation projects by students can also have meaningful links to existing curriculum and courses. Some competitions for social innovation are being organized by some HEIs; they should be integrated into the curriculum.

The post-pandemic context and NEP 2020 demands that community engagement be mainstreamed in all teaching-learning, research and service activities of HEIs. The curriculum of the 2 credit course needs to focus on community engagement, especially with vulnerable and excluded households. The corona virus has disrupted the life and livelihoods of many households and communities. Migrant labour, students in rural and remote areas, basic service providers (like Asha and Anganwadi workers, teachers, panchayat secretaries, etc) have all been affected due to lockdown and disruptions due to the virus. Many new social protection and welfare schemes have been since announced by the central government like Atma Nirbhar Bharat, PM Garib Kalyan Yojana, Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), portability of PDS cards, cash transfer, Ayushman Bharat health insurance, etc. Awareness and last mile delivery of all

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<sup>5</sup> [http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/Knowledge%20&%20Engagement\\_26-09-16\\_pdf%20ver-mail.pdf](http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/Knowledge%20&%20Engagement_26-09-16_pdf%20ver-mail.pdf)



these benefits to the excluded households needs to be included in the syllabus, and field study by students.

Likewise, the roles of panchayats and urban local bodies (ULBs) became very critical during the pandemic. These local governance institutions need support to perform their responsibilities in the post-pandemic era. Students and their teachers can utilise this 2 credit course to provide such support to panchayats and ULBs around their institutions.

## 2. Operational Guidelines

This section provides operational guidelines for the implementation of this national curriculum framework for fostering community engagement and social responsibility in HEIs.

Support to the framework and its operational guidelines of the UGC scheme are so described in the NEP 2020:

*“Higher Education plays an extremely important role in promoting human as well as societal well-being and in developing India as envisioned in its Constitution- a democratic, just, socially-conscious, cultured, and humane nation upholding liberty, equality, fraternity, and justice for all. Higher education significantly contributes towards sustainable livelihoods and economic development of the nation.*

*A quality higher education must enable personal accomplishment and enlightenment, constructive public engagement, and productive contribution to society. It must prepare students for more meaningful and satisfying lives and work roles and enable economic independence. (Pg 33)”*

This section contains four sub-sections:

- 1.1 Recommended Curriculum for a new course in community engagement for all UG and PG students in HEIs.
- 1.2 Suggestions for modifying existing courses and curriculum to align with the national framework outlined above.
- 1.3 Offering new courses for promoting community engagement and social responsibility.
- 1.4 Undertaking research in partnership with the local community.

### 2.1 New Course on Community Engagement and Social Responsibility

The title of the course will be Community Engagement and Social Responsibility. It is recommended that each HEI conducts a course to provide community engagement to all Undergraduate and Post Graduate students so that their appreciation of rural field realities is holistic, respectful and inspiring.

The model community engagement course is described below.

#### a) Introduction

New generation of students are increasingly unaware of local rural and peri-urban realities surrounding their HEIs, as rapid urbanisation has been occurring in India. A large percentage of Indian population continues to live and work in rural and peri-urban areas of the country. While various schemes and programmes of community service have been undertaken by HEIs, there is no singular provision of a well-designed community engagement course that provides opportunities

for immersion in rural realities. Such a course will enable students to learn about challenges faced by vulnerable households and develop an understanding of local wisdom and lifestyle in a respectful manner.

**b) Objectives:**

- To develop an appreciation of rural culture, lifestyle and wisdom amongst students.
- To learn about the status of various agricultural and development programmes.
- To understand the causes of distress and poverty faced by vulnerable households and explore solutions for the same.
- To apply classroom knowledge of courses to field realities and thereby improve the quality of learning.

**c) Learning Outcomes**

After completing this course, students will be able to

- Gain an understanding of rural life, Indian culture and ethos and social realities
- Develop a sense of empathy and bonds of mutuality with the local community
- Appreciate significant contributions of local communities to Indian society and economy
- Learn to value the local knowledge and wisdom of the community
- Identify opportunities for contributing to community's socio-economic improvements

**d) Credit**

2 credit, 30 hours, at least 50% in the field, for all students

**e) Contents**

Divided into four Modules, field immersion is part of each Unit

Course Structure: 2 Credits Course (1 Credit for Classroom and Tutorials and 1 Credit for Field Engagement)

1	<b><i>Appreciation of Rural Society</i></b>	Rural lifestyle, rural society, caste and gender relations, rural values with respect to community, nature and resources, elaboration of "soul of India lies in villages" (Gandhi), rural infrastructure.	Prepare a map (physical, visual or digital) of the village you visited and write an essay about inter-family relations in that village.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Classroom discussions</li> <li>– Field visit**</li> <li>– Assignment</li> <li>Map</li> </ul>	2 4 2
2	<b><i>Understanding rural and local economy and livelihood</i></b>	Agriculture, farming, land ownership, water management, animal husbandry, non-farm livelihoods and artisans, rural entrepreneurs, rural markets, migrant labour.	Describe your analysis of the rural house hold economy, its challenges and possible pathways to address.  Circular economy and migration patterns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Field visit**</li> <li>– Group discussions in class</li> <li>– Assignment</li> </ul>	3 4 1

S. No.	Module Title	Module Content	Assignment	Teaching/ Learning Methodology	No. of Classes
3	<b><i>Rural and local Institutions</i></b>	Traditional rural and community organisations, Self-help Groups, Panchayati raj institutions (Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Standing Committees), Nagarpalikas and municipalities, local civil society, local administration.	How effectively are Panchayati Raj and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) institutions functioning in the village? What would you suggest to improve their effectiveness? Present a case study (written or audio-visual).	– Classroom	2
				– Field visit**	4
				– Group presentation of assignment	2
4	<b><i>Rural and National Development Programmes</i></b>	History of rural development and current national programmes in India: Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, Ayushman Bharat, Swachh Bharat, PM AwaasYojana, Skill India, Gram Panchayat Decentralised Planning, National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA), SHRAM, Jal Jeevan Mission, Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), Atma Nirbhar Bharat, etc.	Describe the benefits received and challenges faced in the delivery of one of these programmes in the local community; give suggestions about improving the implementation of the programme for the poor. Special focus on the urban informal sector and migrant households.	– Classroom	2
				– Each student selects one program for field visit**	4
				– Written assignment	2

**After completing this 2 credit course (one credit theory and one credit field work), PG students can undertake a field project for additional 2 credits on any one topic appropriate to their regional community context.**

#### **Assessment:**

Readings from e-content and reflections from field visits should be maintained by each student in a Field Diary. Participation in Field Visits should be allocated 30% marks; group field project should have 40% of total marks; presentation of field project findings to the community institution should have 30% of total marks.

#### **Themes for PG field-based research are listed below:**

- Functioning of School Management Committees
- Effectiveness of Gram Sabha meetings



- Contributions of Village Health Sanitation and Nutrition Committees in supporting Anganwadi
- Maintenance of traditional water bodies
- Village governance of common grazing lands
- Safety of girls in public spheres
- Competitive mechanisms for marketing of agricultural produce
- Potential use of digital technology in market information
- Quality of functioning of Common Service Centres
- Opportunities for natural resource-based entrepreneurship
- Inventorising 'Recognition of Prior Learning' for skilling programmes relevant for local economy

The field research should be conducted using community-based participatory research methodology in partnership with local community institutions and relevant public agencies so that the findings of research are shared with them and they develop ownership of the same.

**\*\* Recommended** field-based practical activities (Both at UG and PG level):

- Interaction with Self Help Groups (SHGs) women members, and study their functions and challenges; planning for their skill-building and livelihood activities;
- Visit Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGS) project sites, interact with beneficiaries and interview functionaries at the work site;
- Field visit to Swachh Bharat project sites, conduct analysis and initiate problem solving measures;
- Conduct Mission Antyodaya surveys to support under Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP);
- Interactive community exercise with local leaders, panchayat functionaries, grass-root officials and local institutions regarding village development plan preparation and resource mobilization;
- Visit Rural Schools/mid-day meal centres, study academic and infrastructural resources, digital divide and gaps;
- Participate in Gram Sabha meetings, and study community participation;
- Associate with Social audit exercises at the Gram Panchayat level, and interact with programme beneficiaries;
- Visit to local Nagarpalika office and review schemes for urban informal workers and migrants;
- Attend Parent Teacher Association meetings, and interview school drop outs;
- Visit local Anganwadi Centre and observe the services being provided;
- Visit local NGOs, civil society organisations and interact with their staff and beneficiaries;
- Organize awareness programmes, health camps, Disability camps and cleanliness camps;
- Conduct soil health test, drinking water analysis, energy use and fuel efficiency surveys and building solar powered village;
- Raise understanding of people's impacts of climate change, building up community's disaster preparedness;

- Organise orientation programmes for farmers regarding organic cultivation, rational use of irrigation and fertilizers, promotion of traditional species of crops and plants and awareness against stubble burning;
- Formation of committees for common property resource management, village pond maintenance and fishing;
- Identifying the small business ideas (handloom, handicraft, khadi, food products, etc.) for rural areas to make the people self reliant.

#### f) **Teaching and Learning Methods**

A large variety of methods of teaching must be deployed.

An ICT based online module needs to be prepared for self-paced learning by students for one credit which can be supplemented through discussions in the classroom.

Reading and classroom discussions, Participatory Research Methods and Tools, Community dialogues, Oral history, social and institutional mapping, interactions with elected panchayat leaders and government functionaries, Observation of Gram Sabha, Field visits to various village institutions (see Section -3 Implementation Strategy).

## 2.2 Adapting Existing Courses for Community Engagement

The purpose of teaching is to enable the learning of students. However, the reality of the present system of teaching in most HEIs is that students are taught only in the classroom style delivery of content. Using advances in teaching aids, infrastructure, updated curricula and pedagogies, students should be able to relate what they study in the classroom to the field realities in which they live and where they would work in future. Therefore, it is important that the classroom theory is linked to the realities of the local field areas. Thus, existing courses can be adapted, both in content and pedagogy, for community engagement to facilitate learning from the field. For instance, a management curriculum may include aspects of micro-financing in a rural context; chemistry syllabus can have a component of conducting water and soil analysis in surrounding field areas; political science syllabus could include a mapping of local rural governance institutions and their functioning.

In terms of adapting all courses to engage with society for mutual learning in the context of the climate crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic, the NEP 2020 suggests:

*“Towards the attainment of such a holistic and multidisciplinary education, the flexible and innovative curricula of all HEIs shall include credit-based courses and projects in the areas of community engagement and service, environmental education, and value-based education. Environment education will include areas such as climate change, pollution, waste management, sanitation, conservation of biological diversity, management of biological resources and biodiversity, forest and wildlife conservation, and sustainable development and living (Page 37).”*

In all these courses, localisation of content and field work through community engagement can be included. Practical internships and field studies can also be used to document and analyse local community innovations and solutions. Local knowledge of farming, livestock, forestry and water management practices can be a source of knowledge in such community engagement, and documentation of the same will make these available to others in the country.

One of the essential prerequisites for HEIs to fulfil the twin mandates of improved quality of learning of students and their practical contributions to the socio-economic development of the nation is to introduce such dynamic curricular reforms which facilitate the connection between classroom theory and field realities. Within existing courses being taught at HEIs, community

engagement may provide better quality learning opportunities for students, while also contributing to service to the local community.

Keeping local realities in view, HEIs can develop new contents in existing courses which make them more relevant to students from the local areas and also be useful to the local community. This will not only enrich the curriculum of existing courses through locally- appropriate subject matter, but will also create new, locally appropriate course content that is useful to local community.

Even within the existing curriculum and syllabus, community engaged learning can be facilitated through the use of new and innovative teaching-learning methods. The pedagogies of engaged and experiential learning can be designed in each course and discipline. These include field labs, internships, participatory action research, service-learning, community projects, etc. Engaged teaching entails the interaction of students with the curriculum and the world around the university. An engaged, outward, trans-disciplinary stance will enable enriching the curriculum and promoting learning in multi-modal pedagogies in addition to the classroom and laboratories. Therefore, new approaches to learning based on dialogical, co-learning, participatory and problem-oriented methods are required for teaching the existing curriculum. If a part of the theory is complemented with field-based application, the value and usability of the theory increases manifold. This will improve the quality of learning through application of classroom theory in field realities. It will also contribute to the deeper sensitisation of students and faculty to the socio-economic realities of our nation. The wisdom, knowledge and expertise of local communities and practitioners will also thus become accessible to students and their teachers alike.





*Faculty Members from UP, Delhi, Uttarakhand, J&K, Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh understanding the principles and course design of Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).*



*Faculty members from Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu sharing their experience about field visit to rural institutions in Nagpur.*



*Community mapping exercise by faculty members from Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, Telangana, Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep at Valayapatti Village, Chettiyapatti Gram Panchayat @ Dindigul.*



*Village Mapping by Faculty Members During Field Visit at Chettiyapatti Gram Panchayat, Dindigul.*



*Faculty members from West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha and Sikkim building rapport with community members at Barakutuni Village, Koraput, Odisha.*



*Faculty members from M.P., Rajasthan and Chattisgarh understanding local rural institutions using the Venn diagram/chapati diagram method.*



*Participants from Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh and Punjab at Master trainers training programme in CBPR, Kurukshetra.*

*Above photographs are from the face to face Master Trainers Training Programme on Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) held at UGCs 7 Regional Centers from April to July, 2022.*

## 2.3 Offering New Courses

Effective engagement between local communities and HEIs calls for dynamic revision of curriculum and introduction of new courses. Therefore, HEIs need to design and introduce new courses at undergraduate and post-graduate levels which foster social responsibility and enable community engagement. For instance, new courses for engineering students may be designed focusing exclusively on water harvesting, storage, security and distribution; management programmes may design a new course on logistic and business planning for sustainable 24x7 water supplies to rural habitations, etc. Courses on solid and liquid waste management, design of new toilets, and low-cost housing materials are all examples of such new courses which enable community engagement by students. To tap local knowledge, new courses can enable the systematisation of local community knowledge (like folk medicine for the treatment of household animals).

These can be short-term certificate courses, or integrated into the existing syllabus. By their very nature, such courses are trans-disciplinary and require community engagement activities by students. Additionally, new courses which teach about Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will provide local understanding about some of these goals to students, in addition to learning about Agenda 2030.<sup>6</sup>

The NEP 2020 also emphasises the alignment of teaching and research with SDGs as below:

*“The global education development agenda reflected in Goal 4 (SDG 4) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by India in 2015- seeks to ‘ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all’ by 2030. Such a lofty goal will require the entire education system to be reconfigured to support and foster learning, so that all of the critical targets and goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development can be achieved (Page 3).”*

An indicative list of such new courses, compiled from various HEIs, is presented below:

- a) Understanding panchayats and constitutional mandate of local governance.

<sup>6</sup> [http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/BHALL\\_Community\\_Based\\_Research\\_ENG\\_Dec13.pdf](http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/BHALL_Community_Based_Research_ENG_Dec13.pdf)



- b) Panchayat administration, Gram Sabha, Mahila Sabha, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), local planning of basic services.
- c) Micro-finance, SHGs, system of savings and credit for local business, linkages to banks, financial inclusion.
- d) Rural – entrepreneurship, opportunities for small business in local communities, access to financial and technical inputs to new entrepreneurs.
- e) Renewable energy, access to household and community level solar and bio-mass systems for sustainable energy use.
- f) Participatory Monitoring and evaluation of socio-economic development programmes, and cost-benefit analysis of project proposals.
- g) Participatory decentralised planning, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP), and micro-level data analysis for new investments.
- h) Urban informal settlements and basic services.
- i) Migrant workers’ livelihood security and social services.
- j) Hygiene and sanitation, improving health and personal behaviours, locally manageable decentralised systems and awareness against stubble burning.
- k) Water conservation, traditional practices of storage and harvesting, new systems of distribution and maintenance.
- l) Women’s empowerment, gender inequality at home, community and public spaces, safety of girls and women, access to skills, credit and work opportunities.
- m) Child security, safety and good parenting, nutrition and health, learning and training for child care.
- n) Rural Marketing, market research, designing opportunities for rural artisans and crafts, and new products based on demand assessment.
- o) Community Based Research in Rural Settings, undertaking research that values local knowledge, systematises local practices and tools for replication and scale-up.
- p) Peri-urban development of informal settlements, mapping and enumeration, design of local solutions.

## 2.4 Undertaking Research in Partnership with Local Community

If a mutually beneficial partnership with local communities and institutions—business, government, civil society is built, community university research partnerships may become supportive of new knowledge and its use. Many students and faculty undertake research in the field. However, such research is currently carried out only to advance the research interests of the students and faculty. Research questions can be framed in the partnership with local community so that new knowledge thus produced can provide solutions to local challenges.

In addition, most of the researchers, students and faculty generally assume that the community does not have much knowledge on the subject of their research interests. Such an orientation is largely based on ignorance of local expertise and knowledge available with the community and other practitioners. Undertaking research in partnership with local communities can access local knowledge and further contribute to new knowledge solutions. The local community can be involved as co-researchers in data-collection and sharing of results.

In several countries, governments incentivise community engagement through additional funding for

HEIs. Indonesia and South Africa have developed an extensive programme in this regard. Canada's Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) began a separate research funding stream focusing on Community – University Research Council (CURA). Recognising the significance of the theme of social responsibility in higher education, UNESCO has instituted a Chair on Community based Research and Social Responsibility in Higher Education ([www.unescochaircbr-sr.org](http://www.unescochaircbr-sr.org)).

There is a large body of knowledge on community-based participatory research (CBPR) already practicing in India, and internationally. The use of CBPR methodology generates locally appropriate knowledge solutions, as well as disseminates new knowledge for generating awareness and taking actions to improve the situation in light of that new knowledge<sup>7</sup>.

In addition, undertaking research in partnership with the local community helps in documenting and systematising local knowledge generated through years of practice and experience.

In order to promote the practice of sustainability in the infrastructure and functioning of HEIs, it can undertake research in partnership with local communities to reduce energy and carbon consumption. Such partnership research can also help recycle water and waste in ways that are locally useful by communities around them.

When HEIs undertake research in partnership with local communities and other institutions, they can improve the relevance and quality of their research. Local governments, district administration, local businesses and NGOs can also be benefited from research undertaken by students and faculty of HEIs, in partnership with the local community. Students thus gain a sense of satisfaction about their research making a useful contribution to society through community engagement.

In line with this framework, the NEP 2020 has made a strong recommendation to produce locally relevant knowledge to address India's needs:

*“The societal challenges that India needs to address today, such as access for all its citizens to clean drinking water and sanitation, quality education and healthcare, improved transportation, air quality, energy, and infrastructure, will require the implementation of approaches and solutions that are not only informed by top-notch science and technology but are also rooted in a deep understanding of the social sciences and humanities and the various socio-cultural and environmental dimensions of the nation. Facing and addressing these challenges will require high-quality interdisciplinary research across fields (Page 45).”*

**Internships with various local agencies can be an effective mechanism for undertaking field research which is locally relevant and can contribute to local development and provide feedback for the effective implementation of various development schemes of the governments.**

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<sup>7</sup> [http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/BHALL\\_Community\\_Based\\_Research\\_ENG\\_Dec13.pdf](http://unescochair-cbrsr.org/pdf/resource/BHALL_Community_Based_Research_ENG_Dec13.pdf)

### 3. Implementation Strategy

The launch of new National Education Policy (NEP) in July 2020 gave new recommendations for making higher education relevant to society. The experience of the Covid-19 virus spread, had demonstrated the active engagement of students, faculty and staff of several HEIs in voluntary community service, from food relief, to migrant support to preventive health care and also curative hospital care.

The Subject Expert Group deliberated upon the recommendations in light of NEP and the prevailing pandemic situation in the country.

This revised Implementation Strategy has resulted from the above process.

1. For the implementation of this initiative, building capacity of teachers is critical. Additionally, the context of community engagement varies greatly in different regions of this diverse country. Therefore, Seven Regional Centres for Capacity Building of faculty as Master Trainers for Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) have been identified and supported by UGC to act as regional hubs for anchoring the implementation of this important initiative. **(Annexure-II)**.
2. Each Regional Centre should undertake Training of Master Teachers who would begin piloting this course. Such training should include teachers from all faculties, disciplines and types of HEIs (including colleges and specialized technical institutions too).
3. A centrally designed faculty development programme for Capacity Building of Master Trainers in Community-based Participatory Research (CBPR) should be conducted at each Regional Centre regularly to prepare teachers for conducting field-based, community engagement components of the course.
4. An online module should be prepared, which provides information about the various content areas, especially government schemes and development programmes being implemented for the poor and vulnerable rural and urban households, youth and women.
5. This online module for one credit should be complemented with field –based practical engagement activities as outlined in this report. Master Trainers will pilot such teaching in their respective HEIs immediately after training at Regional Centres by the UGC Expert Group.
6. A separate one credit MOOC can be prepared using the contents developed above, which students can take on their own in self-study mode.
7. The new course on Community Engagement and Social Responsibility shall be rolled out during the duration of the UG or PG programme. HEIs may decide on the semester in which the course will be offered to the students.
8. Each regional centre will maintain and update a learning platform which includes teaching/learning materials as resources in the region. Practical experiences of teachers from the field can be documented, especially in local languages, and shared widely from such platforms.
9. Regional Centres can also maintain data-bases of courses, field-teaching, partnerships with local agencies, teachers trained as Master Trainers such that the course can be scaled-up systematically, based on annual reviews of teaching experiences.
10. As per recommendations of NEP, internships with local agencies can become a method of earning credits while undertaking locally useful field research by students, as a part of their academic achievement. Internships can be undertaken in partnership



with Panchayati Raj Institutions (at the village, block and district levels), district administration, Nagarpalika/Municipality and other ULBs departments, local business associations, local NGOs and other development partners.

- 11.** Support needs to be provided for a national knowledge platform on Community Engagement and Social Responsibility, which can periodically synthesise and systematize field case studies and create primers, manuals and collections of teaching aids. UGC can begin to contribute to the development of a field of study on Community Engagement and Social Responsibility in Higher Education through organizing periodic national conferences, publications of books and encouraging/supporting focused research in this field, based on rich Indian experiences.
- 12.** National accreditation agencies like the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) should include explicit indicators and weightage of community engagement in teaching and research, as proposed in this document. This will encourage HEIs to undertake community engagement seriously.
- 13.** The Statutory Professional Councils to take urgent note of the recommendations in these guidelines for fostering social responsibility in HEIs and align curriculum and pedagogy of those professional courses to these recommendations soon.
- 14.** Faculty assigned to operationalise and implement these recommendations should be provided additional API scores to sustain their motivation and professional progression. Community engagement activities in teaching and research, as recommended in this national framework, should be given sufficient weightage in professional evaluation of teachers, researchers and administrators.

## Acknowledgement

UGC acknowledges the contribution of the following UGC subject expert group members in providing their valuable inputs for Guidelines for Fostering Social Responsibility and Community Engagement in Higher Education Institutions in India 2.0.

<b>1.</b>	<p><b>Dr. K. K. Aggarwal</b>  Chairman, National Board of Accreditation (NBA) A-3/512, Milan Vihar,  Apartments  IP Extension, Delhi  Email: kkarwal48@gmail.com</p>	Chairperson
<b>2.</b>	<p><b>Dr. B. K. Kuthiala</b>  Chairman, Haryana State Council for Higher Education, Chandigarh  Email: kuthialabk@gmail.com</p>	Member
<b>3.</b>	<p><b>Prof. Raj Kumar</b>  Vice-Chancellor  O.P. Jindal University  Sonipat Nerala Road, Sonipat (Haryana) Email: vc@jgu.edu.in</p>	Member
<b>4.</b>	<p><b>Prof. S. Natarajan</b>  Former Vice Chancellor  Gandigram Rural Institute, Dindigul (TN) Email: vc@ruraluniv.ac.in/  vco_gri@yahoo.com</p>	Member
<b>5.</b>	<p><b>Prof. Rajan Harshe</b>  Former Vice-Chancellor Allahabad University, Allahabad Sri Aurobindo  Marg  Hauz Khas, New Delhi Email: rgharshe@gmail.com</p>	Member
<b>6.</b>	<p><b>Prof. Rajesh Tandon</b>  Co-Chair, UNESCO Chair in Community Based Research and Social  Responsibility in Higher Education  Founder President, PRIA  Dean, PRIA International Academy 42, Tughlakabad Institutional Area  New Delhi  Email: rajesh.tandon@pria.org</p>	Member
<b>7.</b>	<p><b>Prof. Anand Mohan</b>  Registrar  Dayalbagh Educational Institute Dayalbagh, Agra  Uttar Pradesh  Email: registrar.dei@gmail.com</p>	Member

<b>8.</b>	<b>Dr. Ujwala Chakradeo</b> Vice Chancellor SNDT Womens University Mumbai	
<b>9.</b>	<b>Dr. Kamal Bijlani</b> Ammachi Lab, Amritapuri Amrita Vishwa Vidyapetham Amritanagar, Ettimadai Coimbatore Email: bhavani@ammachhilabs.org	Member
<b>10.</b>	<b>Dr. Diksha Rajput</b> Deputy Secretary, University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi Email: diksharajput@gmail.com	Co-ordinator UBA
Supported by:		
	<b>Hitesh Manik</b> Assistant (UBA/e.Gov.) University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi Email: hitesh.ug@nic.in	
	<b>Dr. Neelam Kumari</b> Consultant University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg New Delhi Email: neelam140587@gmail.com	

**(Prof. Rajnish Jain)**  
Secretary,  
University Grants Commission

New Delhi  
December, 2022

# Annexure – I: UGC Letter to HEIs to consider Vidyanajali Guidelines



ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

प्रो. रजनीश जैन  
सचिव

**Prof. Rajnish Jain**  
Secretary



सत्यमेव जयते

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग  
**University Grants Commission**

(शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)  
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

बहादुरशाह जफ़र मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-110002  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002

Ph.: 011-23236288/23239337

Fax : 011-2323 8858

E-mail : secy.ugc@nic.in

No. F.9-5/2021(PS/MoE)

17<sup>th</sup> March, 2022

Subject:- Guidelines "Vidyanjali (Higher Education): Scheme for Support to the Students, Faculties and Institutions through Volunteerism. (A Higher Education Volunteer Programme: Share to Uplift and Grow Aspiring Minds)".

Respected Madam/Sir,

As you are aware that "Vidyanjali (Higher Education): Scheme for Support to the Students, Faculties and Institutions through Volunteerism. (A Higher Education Volunteer Programme: Share to Uplift and Grow Aspiring Minds)" published by Ministry of Education (MoE) is an initiative taken by MoE to encourage teachers, students, alumni and general public to contribute for the betterment of higher education through selfless service on one hand, and by helping learners, faculties and institutions overcome their educational, capacity building and infrastructure barriers. In this regard, as per UGC Regulations (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education), 2018, community service is one of the assessment criteria for Universities/Colleges teachers, as details given below:

- Clause 17.0 (Code of Professional Ethics) of UGC Regulations 2018 highlights the participation of college teachers in extension, co-curricular and extracurricular activities, including the community service.
- Appendix-II, Table-I (Assessment criteria and methodology for Universities/Colleges teachers highlights the involvement of teachers in the universities/colleges students related activities/ research activities.(Co-curricular, extension and field based activities such as students clubs, career counselling, Study visit, Student seminars and other events, cultural, sports, NCC, NSS and community services)

You are, therefore, requested to consider the activities mentioned in the Vidyanjali Guidelines and include in the assessment criteria in accordance with the UGC Regulations (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and Other Academic Staff in Universities and Colleges and Other Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education), 2018.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Rajnish Jain)

Encls : Copy of Draft Guidelines of Vidyanajali

The Vice-Chancellor  
All Universities

## **Annexure – II: Regional Centres for Capacity Building of Faculty Members as Master Trainers**

The UGC-SEG in consultation with IIT Delhi, the National Coordinating Institute under UBA has identified Seven Regional Centres for Capacity Building of faculty members as master Trainers for Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR).

<b>S.No.</b>	<b>Name of the University/ Regional Centre/ Coordinator(s)</b>	<b>States/UTs Covered</b>
1.	Dayalbagh Educational Institute, Agra	<b>NORTHERN REGION</b> Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Ladakh and Uttarakhand
2.	Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra	<b>NORTHERN REGION</b> Punjab, Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana
3.	National Law University, Bhopal	<b>CENTRAL REGION</b> Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan
4.	Gandhigram Rural Institute, Dindigul	<b>SOUTHERN REGION</b> Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Puducherry, Andaman and Nicobar, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Lakshadweep
5.	Central University of Odisha, Koraput	<b>EASTERN REGION</b> West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and Sikkim
6.	Tezpur University, Tezpur	<b>NORTH EASTERN REGION</b> Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland
7.	Rashtrasant Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur University, Nagpur	<b>WESTERN REGION</b> Maharashtra, Gujarat, Goa, Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu





**University Grants Commission**  
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi-110002  
Website: [www.ugc.ac.in](http://www.ugc.ac.in)



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