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The UGC's recent draft guidelines to engage Professors of Practice in universities and colleges aims to bring in expertise from industry and other fields such as art, crafts and other professional areas into higher education institutes (HEIs). According to the UGC, a Professor of Practice does not need to have a formal academic qualification, if they possess an exemplary professional practice. This will enable HEIs to create curricula and syllabi that not only meet the needs of industry and society, but also facilitate research projects, experiential learning, skill development and entrepreneurship.

This is a vital move as the expertise and practical approach brought by such professors will make the subject more interesting and relevant. It will also help students select appropriate career paths and boost employment opportunities.

What it means

According to the guidelines, a Professor of Practice can be appointed in addition to the sanctioned strength of faculty in a department/institution. He/she will have a fixed term of one year that can be extended to three years, depending on his/her contribution and performance.

The Professor of Practice will be involved in designing and developing the

course to make it innovative. This also involves creating entrepreneurship projects and providing mentorship. Apart from facilitating industry-academia collaborations, these professors can also organise workshops, training programmes and seminars along with the other faculty. The post can be funded either by the industry and supported by the institution or be an honorary one.

Benefits

This proposal for Professor of Practice has come at a

time when much emphasis is being laid on the need for students to undergo internships and get adequate exposure on the practical side of the syllabus. A Professor of Practice should be able to facilitate and further this development and render guidance to the students in getting the full benefit of the internship.

HEIs are now expected to establish incubation centres, fab labs, innovation and research centres to convert the ideas of students and faculty into worthwhile and tangible

outcomes. The Professor of Practice will be able to ensure a free flow of knowledge and help with the conceptualisation of the research problem and a successful execution. Such interactions are vital to take the collaborations to an advanced stage.

The other aspect where this post will be useful is in honing skill sets. Today, students require practical exposure not just for STEM subjects but also for those from Humanities stream such as English, Psychology, Philosophy, History,

and so on. Language labs will help popularise languages other than English. Each Humanities subject has its own set of practical content that will make it absorbing and exciting for students. Professionals from the respective fields will also be able to make these engaging and riveting and kindle the student's interest in the subjects.

Thus, the proposal to have a Professor of Practice would be both relevant and helpful, as they can play a key role in bringing in up-to-date content in the concerned areas.

The writer is Pro Vice-Chancellor, Hindustan Institute of Technology and Science (Deemed-to-be University), Chennai



A vital move

The introduction of the Professor of Practice in our higher education institutions will help make the courses more interesting and relevant

Make smart choices

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This Q&A column may help



OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I did my B.Sc. (Hons) Chemistry Honours last year and took a gap year. In college, I was involved with some graphic designing and would like to explore the field. But I am unaware of the scope and the courses available. Akshita

Dear Akshita,

There are four types of careers in graphic design: Brand Identity and Logo Design, Packaging Design, Web, Mobile Design and Layout, and Print Design. Job roles are plenty: Creative Director, UX Designer, UI Designer, Production Artist, Product Development, Art Director, Multimedia Artist or Animator and so on. You could do a degree in Graphic Design or a recognised certificate course online. Essentially, you must understand basic designs, work on your portfolio, get some hands-on work experience, and stay up to date with current trends.

I am doing a Triple Major B.A. (English, Communication, and Journalism). I want to do Masters in HR Management

In the U.K. Is this a good career option? Hrithika

Dear Hrithika,

HRM is a great career option and is all about working with people, managing them effectively, and helping maximise employee productivity and performance. Is that something that you would like to do? Other career options are Mass Media, Journalism, PR, Advertising, Event Management, Anchoring, and Corporate Communications.

I have completed my B.C.A LLB (Hons). Are there any PG courses related to psychology and law? Indhu

Dear Indhu,

There are quite a few dual Master's courses and programmes overseas (across Europe, the U.K., and the U.S.) such as Legal Psychology, Forensic Psychology and Law, Mental Health Law and Ethics, and Legal Psychology. Depending on your specialisation, you can work with the police for investigations, at juvenile offender institutions, child protective services, high-security forensic facilities and also get into research.

I am in Class 12 (Biology + Maths). While I want to prepare for NEET UG, my academic performance has

taken a big hit. I am still interested in Science and Medicine and am considering taking the SAT. What is the process of applying to U.S. colleges? Joel

Dear Joel,

Be aware of your distractions and get your focus back! You can do Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Veterinary Sciences, Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Forensic Sciences, Biotechnology, Healthcare Data Mining, Cognitive Neuroscience and AI, Nanotechnology, and a lot more. Narrow down the courses that interest you the most.

The process: First, shortlist the courses and colleges. Then research the college websites thoroughly for detailed information on the requirements. Establish contact and start a conversation with the admissions office. Shortlist your top choices and prepare for entrance exams. Work on your SOPs and LORs and start the application process.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line 'Off the edge'.