

AICTE announces good news for naturally gifted students

The scheme offering supernumerary seats for high potential learners with low academic grades will help in discarding the rote culture

Rajlakshmi Ghosh
@timesgroup.com

With the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) announcing two supernumerary seats per institute for gifted and talented students, it is time for the innovative minds to take pride in their achievements and pursue mainstream education. Without the barriers of high scores in board and competitive exams, these high potential learners can seek a seat in a reputed college that is expected to provide a stimulating learning environment for their holistic development.

statement of purpose and three letters of recommendation. Following the document scrutiny, the candidate may have to appear for the interview in front of a panel of experts appointed by the institutions to gauge their eligibility for admission. The selected students will be entitled to a complete tuition fee waiver from the institution that may however levy exam fees, hostel, library transportation and laboratory charges.

Scores unimportant

Talking about the scheme, Anil D. Sahasrabudhe, chairman, AICTE, says, "The concept was prevalent from July 2021, but this year, we are trying to implement the scheme across all AICTE institutions. While they will have full freedom to select the deserving candidates, AICTE will guard against the provision's possible misuse, and ensure the promising talents fit the bill. The criteria for selection will not place undue emphasis on scores.

While earning degrees, the students will be engaged in the innovation cells of their institutes

oe the students could have passed class XII with just 35% in aggregate.

Catching them young

The scheme, adds Sahasrabudhe, is a welcome departure from the rote learning culture that compels students to chase marks and national and state level entrance exams. "This leaves them with little time for out-of-the-box thinking. The current initiative, drawn from NEP 2020 with its emphasis on skilling, honing and encouraging creativity, will help in identifying the gifted students early. While earning their degrees, the students will be engaged in the incubators and innovation cells of their institutes, that can help hone their innate potential.

There are as many as 3000 AICTE institutions

that have innovation centres to help meet this need," Sahasrabudhe says. He explains that such students will be in high demand across industries but would do well to embark on their own entrepreneurial journey.

Set guidelines

"The AICTE provision, if acted upon with zeal and fair judgement, would result in future leaders and holistic premier institutes, says Abhay Bansal, head, Amity School of Engineering & Technology, pointing out that since the criteria would be through standardised judgment of the innovative skills of the student through national and international events, hackathon or journal publications which already follow set guidelines, chances of any misuse of the provision will be low. Moreover, AICTE reserves the right to keep a track on the credibility of the selected candidates which makes it more trustworthy and secure," he adds.

Tracking talent

KNB Murthy, vice-chancellor, Dayananda Sagar University (DSU), Bengaluru, feels AICTE's concept of the initiative is promising, but identification of such students can be a challenge. "If too many students qualify as per the same eligibility criteria, how do institutes zero in on just two. What yardstick should be used to measure talent and compare one student with the other."

"Institutes need to have a special track for these students, in addition to faculty mentors who can guide and challenge their approach to ideas. Attempts should also be made to offer credit-based projects rather than confining the students to regular classrooms, Murthy adds.



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Higher Education SKILL BUILDING CRUCIAL TO MEET FUTURE DEMANDS OF INDUSTRY

Educationists are working on skill-development techniques to prepare young individuals for career prospects

Gaurav Bhagat

With the advancement of digital technology and the advent of automation in business operations, upskilling and reskilling have become more important to prepare students for the future and make them ready for industry. As per World Economic Forum (WEF) analysis, over 85 million jobs are estimated to be displaced by 2025 due to rise in automation. However, WEF also speculated that 121 million new roles are expected to open up—which will be entirely driven by advanced technology and rapid digital transformation.



new skills to do a different job. Reskilling provides a lateral experience and is mostly equipping people to switch into new roles. Upskilling is focussed on making someone more knowledgeable by developing new competencies. Upskilling has become more popular in present times due to cut-throat competition in the business landscape. Skill up-gradation is as imperative as the upgradation of system and equipment in the organisation.

als to develop new skills matched with technological advancement. While automation is expected to push many out of the job market, it will also open up new roles, which will require new skill sets, and upskilling and reskilling come into play. As we navigate through the pandemic and more importantly, move into a more digitised world, businesses are focussing more on exploiting technologies like AI, augmented learning

and block chain for exponential growth with the help of competent and highly skilled personnel. Hence skill-building strategies and initiatives should be a continuous process to cope up with the pace of the changing ways of doing business.

MEETING FUTURE DEMANDS

Skill building is crucial for meeting future demands and organisations often target to identify the skills already available in its workforce to further work on the development of other key skills in the future. For students, the current situation has made it inevitable to think of innovative solutions and adopt multiple new skills or re-acquire and modify their existing skills. Good technological skills, strong concepts, ideation and application come into play. Creativity and originality are some of the attributes students will require to shape their career.

Contact: dipi.srivastava@timesgroup.com

BRIDGING THE GAP
Both upskilling and reskilling are strategies used to bridge the skill gap with proper career mapping. While automation has always been relevant, in recent times, as we move towards a new wave of industrial revolution with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation, reshaping the way we work, it has become more important for individuals to develop new skills.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO
While the terminologies of upskilling and reskilling refer to skill-building—either honing the existing skill or learning new skills—there is a slight difference between the two. Upskilling is learning and upgrading new skills or teaching others new skills, while reskilling is learning new skills to do a different job.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Upskilling is learning and upgrading new skills or teaching others new skills, while reskilling is learning new skills to do a different job.
- According to the World Economic Forum, over half of the existing workforce globally will require significant reskilling by the end of 2025

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