

UGC's "Professor of Practice" Scheme

Bringing Real World Experiences into Classrooms

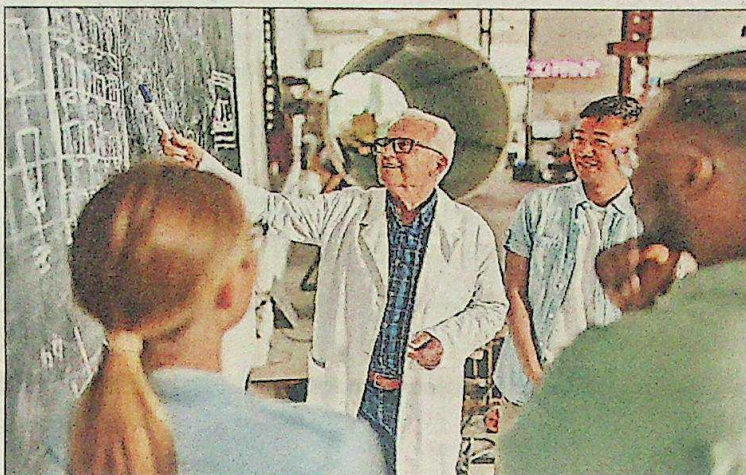
Dr. Rajesh Kumar

The National Education Policy 2020 has envisioned a number of reformatory measures that aims to revolutionise the higher education scenario in India. The recently unveiled 'Professor of Practice' scheme by University Grants Commission (UGC) is a remarkable initiative that will pave the way for bridging the gap between industry and academia and will reshape higher education in India.

National Education Policy Framework emphasises integration of vocational education with general education in order to strengthen the industry-academia interface in the educational institutions with an aim to provide experiential teaching-learning, training, research and entrepreneurship skills. It will ultimately benefit all the stakeholders, contributing to national development.

Bringing Real-World Expertise to Academic Institutions

The Professor of Practice scheme has the potential to bring



real-world expertise to academic institutions, addressing the need for practical knowledge and skills in higher education. The scheme prepares a platform to associate experts from diversified fields such as engineering, science, technology, entrepreneurship, management, chartered accountancy, commerce, social sciences, media, literature, fine arts, civil services, armed forces, legal profession and public administration etc. who have acquired their practice based expertise and skills over the years. Their

association with academic institutions may bring transformation in many ways such as experiential teaching-learning, training, job opportunities, research, innovation and entrepreneurship etc.

It is worth mentioning that the role of a strong industry-

academia interface contributes immensely to the development of any country. In the Global Innovation Index 2023 published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), India occupies the 40th position out of 132 countries. The report highlights that the countries with strong industry-academia collaboration contribute significantly for the development of a robust innovation ecosystem.

According to The World Economic Forum, 97 million new jobs are expected to be created through the advancement in technology such as Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Learning, Machine Learning and Robotics by 2025. It clearly exhibits that the demand for skilled manpower is going to increase manifold in the coming decades. The focal

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EN QUESTION OF THE WEEK

Readers' views elicited on important issues

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UGC's "Professor of Practice" Scheme ...

point of apprehension revolves around the quality of students graduating from educational institutions. Majority of them lack practical exposure and skills and don't meet the needs of industry requirements in today's fast and ever changing information and communication technology scenario. In order to match with the pace of transformation, it is imperative to have a well-connected interface to understand and to meet the requirements of industry and academia.

Industry-Academia Collaboration for Mutual Benefits

Collaboration between industry and academia is fervently endorsed in diverse reports and policy documents issued by both public and private entities. In the global scenario, industries have contributed significantly in the research and development, innovation and entrepreneurship. However, in India, the investment of industry in academic institutions is low. Around 60% of total investment for research and development comes from the government sector.

The Professor of Practice initiative serves as a valuable mechanism for both the industry and academia to realign their priorities and invest in areas that

are crucial to ensure seamless integration of skilled manpower to meet the long-standing concerns in workforce requirements.

Teaching, Learning & Course Curriculum: In the swiftly evolving landscape of information and communication technology, it is crucial for both academia and industry to adapt. However, many academic institutions are lagging in updating their teaching methods and curricula to keep pace with the rapidly changing trends in the industry. So when a student steps forward to become a working professional, he has to face several challenges adapting to the dynamic setup. While students strive to eventually catch up with the industry's pace, enhancing academic programmes to align with contemporary industry trends and methods would be more beneficial.

Valuable insights from industry leaders would serve as the linchpin of curricula recalibration.

Training, Placement & Entrepreneurship: Industry has a huge role to play in providing assistance in training, placement and entrepreneurship. It works as a laboratory for practical exposure and at the same time guiding institutions for job and entrepreneurship prospects. Therefore, it is imperative for both industry and academia to

prepare a platform for more interactions and collaborations in order to fulfill each other's requirements. In today's scenario, it is essential for the students to interact and get practice-based exposure on a regular basis with the industry. This training will pave the way for their future prospects by providing a job or starting their entrepreneurship. The engagement of experts through the Professor of Practice scheme may promote dialogues at various levels, which will provide a plethora of opportunities to the students, faculty members and industry professionals.

Research & Development:

According to the Department of Science and Technology Report 2022-23, the Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD) in India has increased during the last one decade. It has more than doubled from Rs. 60,196.75 crore in 2010-11 to Rs. 127,380.96 crore in 2020-21. Significant strides are yet required to align ourselves with the dynamic pace of the global landscape. It is noteworthy that research and development investment from the government sector stands at 60%, while the private sector contributes a modest 36%. This figure pales in comparison to developed economies, where the private sector plays a substantial role in research and development. Collaboration with the private sector, particularly industry, and academic institutions holds the potential for substantial contributions through research, development, and consultancy. Such collaborative platforms can furnish essential resources, funding, and manpower, thereby aiding in the realisation of national goals. In this context, initiatives like the Professor of Practice scheme emerge as pioneering efforts.

Professor of Practice: Aligned with the National Education Policy 2020

The 'Professor of Practice' initiative aligns with the National Education Policy 2020. The policy framework primarily focuses on a flexible but robust system which allows all the stakeholders for holistic development by integrating theory, practice and research in a balanced manner.

One of the basic characteristics of this scheme is that a

formal academic qualification is not essentially required for this position, if the experts/professionals have proven expertise and have contributed remarkably in their profession with at least 15 years of service/experience, preferably at a senior level. Further, these experts are also exempted from the essential requirement of publications and other eligibility criteria, which is essential for becoming a Professor. University Grants Commission has fixed the strength of this position, which should not be more than 10%, at any point of time, of the sanctioned positions in a higher educational institution.

However, their engagement as Professor of Practice will be for a maximum duration of three years, which may be extended by one year in exceptional cases. The total service should not exceed four years under any circumstance. The scheme will not affect the number of sanctioned positions and the recruitment of regular faculty members. It is also to note that the position is not open for those who are associated with teaching profession-serving or retired.

Placing More Premium on Expertise

The Professor of Practice scheme exempts experienced professionals from traditional academic qualifications, which an individual acquires during his academic journey such as undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes. The scheme emphasises major shifts by valuing professional experience and skills which an individual acquires in industry and society through his contribution over the years. The initiative will attract many experienced and skilled professionals in their respective fields from across the country who have contributed remarkably but couldn't acquire their formal academic qualifications in an academic institution. The scheme integrates skilled and practical experiences into the classroom teaching, which is essentially required in today's scenario.

Duties and Responsibilities

An experienced industry professional may contribute in the same manner in which a Professor contributes for the institution. It primarily includes

development and designing of courses and curriculum, delivering lectures as per the policy of academic institutions. They may plan various activities for more and more industry and academia collaborations so that students may benefit through innovation and entrepreneurship related projects. A Professor of Practice may plan and conduct research projects, consultancy services, workshops, seminars, and other training programmes in association with regular faculty members of the concerned higher educational institutions.

Categories of Engagement and Selection Process

Professor of Practice may be engaged in an academic institution in three ways:

1. Funded by Industries: Engaging experienced professionals from industry in academia will benefit both the stakeholders. For this category of engagement/ association, higher educational institutions may collaborate with the industries to support the Professor of Practice position.

2. Funded by Higher Educational Institutions: Higher educational institutions may assess the required gap as per their needs in various fields and engage industry experts working in higher positions accordingly. In this position, the higher education institution will pay the remuneration for this position from their own resources. The nature of engagement shall be Part-time/Full-time and a consolidated amount will be paid, which should be mutually agreed between the institution and the expert.

3. Honorary Basis: Experts fulfilling the eligibility criteria for this position may contribute on an honorary basis by teaching and training in an institution. Such professionals may be engaged on an honorary basis and their services may be utilised for the benefit of the students. The institution will pay the remuneration for this position from their own resources.

Selection Process

The selection process is conducted on nomination basis. The Vice Chancellors/ Directors may invite nominations from eminent experts for this position. The interested professionals from industry and society may send their nominations to the Vice Chancellors/ Directors with a detailed biodata and brief write-up about their potential contributions to the educational institutions. Such nominations will be considered by a selection committee consisting of two senior Professors from higher education institutions and one eminent external member. Based on the recommendations, their engagement may be done after approval of statutory bodies.

(The Author is Assistant Professor (Sr.) & Coordinator, Department of Mass Communication, Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat, Central University of Jharkhand, Ranchi. Feedback on this article can be sent to feedback.employmentnews@gmail.com).

Views expressed are personal.

**Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology**

(An Autonomous Institute under Department of Science and Technology, Govt. of India)

Paschim Boragaon, Garchuk, Guwahati-781035

Recruitment Notice

Advt. No.: 450

Date : 28/11/2023

Applications are invited for recruitment of **3 positions of Associate Professor-II (Scientist E/equivalent)** at the Institute of Advanced Study in Science and Technology (IASST), Guwahati, Assam. Interested candidates may visit IASST website (www.iasst.gov.in) for detailed information and procedure and **submit their applications online within 30 days from the date of publication of the advertisement.** The date, time and venue of interview will be intimated to the shortlisted candidates in due course of time.

Registrar, IASST
EN 39/101

CBC 36117/12/0007/2324

कृषि अर्थशास्त्र संभाग**Division of Agricultural Economics**

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ICAR - Indian Agricultural Research Institute, New Delhi-12

Walk-In Interview

Walk-in interview for recruiting four (4) **Senior Research Fellows (SRF)**, in which, three (3) SRF's under ICAR-NIAP Network Project titled "Ecosystems, Agri-business and Institutions" one each for **Component-1** Impact Assessment of Agricultural Technology, **Component-3** Agricultural Markets Intelligence and Commodity Outlook, **Component-4** Farmers Income Governance impacts and Agricultural Trade and one (1) SRF under DBT Wellcome India Alliance funded project entitled "Characterizing, Reviving, Supporting, Monitoring and Managing Sustainable Food systems to address malnutrition in indigenous tribal communities of India, also known as CARISMMA sustainable food system study", on temporary and contractual basis will be held on **28-12-2023 at 10.00 AM** onwards in the Division of Agricultural Economics, ICAR-IARI, New Delhi-12. The details of the advertisement may be viewed/downloaded from IARI website at <http://www.iari.res.in>.

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Asstt Admn Officer