



Academic Bank of Credits: An Initiative aimed at Introducing Flexibility in Higher Education

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Abstract: For a long time, flexibility has been a key feature of delivering knowledge in higher education. Flexible learning empowers students by giving them options for how, when, and where they learn. The Academic Bank of Credit is designed around the principles of distributed and flexible teaching and learning, which allows students to learn at their convenience, pause their education, and resume it when it suits them. This approach can help in reducing the number of dropouts and also improving the Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER). The NEP has set a target of achieving a GER of 50% by 2035. The flexibility of the credit system will undoubtedly promote student mobility within the country as well as abroad, as students can easily transfer credits between institutions.

Key Words: Academic Bank of Credits, Flexibility, Major subject.

1. INTRODUCTION:

The Ministry of Education is set to establish and manage an online platform called ABC, which will operate like a commercial bank for students (related to their grades & academic credits). This will include credit accumulation, transfer, and redemption services that will be accessible to all students, including those pursuing education as freelancers. ABC follows the principles of MEME and "anytime, anywhere, and any level learning", and aims to create student mobility within the university system. In addition, ABC will assist in the integration of skills into a credit-based system by offering a credit recognition mechanism. While it will not provide degrees, awards, or certificates, it will allow students to redeem credits for academic degrees.

The Academic Bank of Credits (ABC) provides students with flexibility in earning their degrees from various Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), allowing for multiple entry and exit options. Rather than being confined to one college for three years, students can easily switch between colleges. To obtain a degree, students must accumulate a specific number of credits. The University Grants Commission (UGC) released "The University Grants Commission (Establishment of Academic Bank of Credits in Higher Education) Regulations, 2021" in the Gazette of India on 28th July 2021. In a circular dated January 12, 2022, the UGC announced an amendment made to the regulation on December 28, 2021. Initially, HEIs that received an 'A' grade from the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) or ranked in the top 100 of the National Institutions Ranking Framework (NIRF) were required to register for the ABC scheme. However, the amendment allows any college or university, regardless of their NAAC or NIRF ranking, to participate in the ABC scheme. The IITs, IIMs, and institutes of national importance have also been included in the scheme.

The ABC platform offers students who have a Digi Locker account the chance to register for a unique ABC ID. By doing so, they gain access to an interactive dashboard that enables them to keep track of their credit accumulation and facilitates the choice-based credit transfer process. Essentially, it acts as a virtual repository or credit database that stores the credit scores of students in an online platform. Each student has their own account with a unique ABC ID and a dashboard where they can monitor their credit accumulation, transfer requests, and credit history. In addition, students can use the platform to initiate credit transfer requests and check the status of their requests, much like they would at a traditional bank. Ultimately, the ABC platform simplifies the process of recognising, transferring, and redeeming credits.

2. How Academic Bank of Credits will Work :-



(Source:- <https://images.app.goo.gl/PSp6iEtqwAUXDaye7>)

For example a B.Com. student is studying at a particular college, he/ she have the option to transfer to a different college after completing one year of study. In the meantime, the student's credits earned during that year will be kept in their ABC account for the tenure of 10 years and can be utilized when the student rejoins the same course at the same college/ institution or at a different college/ / institution. While half of the course material consists of core subjects that the student has chosen, the other half comprises of electives that are to be taken from any institution in the country, either online or offline. Ultimately, the final degree will be awarded based on the major subject in which the student has enrolled in.

In order to earn a program credential, courses are assigned a credit value. The program is structured to include a collection of courses from different categories, such as Core courses, Core electives, etc. Each course in these categories is assigned a certain number of credits, indicating the number of hours required to complete it. With ABC, students are free to complete these courses from any institution of their choice as long as the course is available.

3. Conclusion :

ABC aims to enhance the effectiveness of the higher education system by promoting quality, flexibility, and collaboration, while ensuring equitable access for all. This system of academic credit banks is already operational in several developed nations. The primary objectives of ABC are to foster a student-centered higher education system, allowing learners to choose courses and institutions based on their preferences and to study at their desired pace to complete their degrees. By promoting flexibility, equity, quality, access, transparency, and collaboration, ABC intends to enhance the competitiveness and efficiency of India's higher education system. The implementation of ABC can transform the higher education system from a rigid structure to a more flexible one, empowering students to become creators of knowledge instead of mere users, promoting their holistic development, and transforming them into job creators rather than job seekers. The proper implementation of ABC can enable higher education institutions to offer more flexible educational opportunities, thereby expanding access to education anywhere in the world.

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