

Proposal for introduction of a *Semester Away Programme* under the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework (UGCF-2022) in collaboration with Foreign Higher Education Institutions.

Background:

The Executive Council considered the proposal for introduction of a Semester Away Programme under the Undergraduate Curriculum Framework (UGCF-2022) in collaboration with Foreign Higher Education Institutions and after detailed deliberations, resolved to constitute a Committee to examine all academic, administrative, financial and regulatory aspects of the proposal, under the Chairmanship of Prof. Balaram Pani, Dean of Colleges.

The committee deliberated upon the matter and after detailed discussion, recommended the following:

Recommendations:

Semester Away Programme in a Foreign Higher Education Institution

The transformation in Higher Education includes providing academic choices to students to opt for courses and institutions which shall enhance his/her knowledge, skills and exposure to a different learning environment to enable them to develop their academic paths. The University has provided multiple exits to students pursuing undergraduate programmes in the Departments/Centres /Colleges, after completion of specific Levels of study. However, it is also equally important to allow a semester away to students of the Departments/ Centres/Colleges in between a programme to a Foreign Higher Education Institution (FHEI). Such students shall be able to take advantage of the exposure to the FHEI, account for the credits earned from there for the purpose of grant of degree/ qualification and still get the degree from the University of Delhi. Accordingly, the University has formulated the following modalities for Semester Away Programme.

1. Definitions

- i. **Credit** – a credit is a unit by which the course work is measured. One credit is equivalent to one hour of teaching (lecture/tutorial) or two hours of practical/practicum/fieldwork per week.
- ii. **Colleges** – means those institutions which are covered under section 2(a) of the Delhi University Act, 1922 (reproduced below)

2 (a) 'College means an institution maintained or admitted to its privileges by the University and includes an Affiliated College and a Constituent College;

Explanation I. 'Affiliated College' means an institution recognised by the University in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the Statutes in which instruction is provided in accordance with the provisions of the Statutes and Ordinances up to the Bachelor's degree, but exclusive of Honours and Postgraduate degrees;

Explanation II. 'Constituent College' means an institution recognised as such by the Executive Council in accordance with the provisions of this Act and the Statutes.

- iii. **Departments** – means departments which are listed under Statute 9B of the Statutes of the University of Delhi.
- iv. **FHEI** – Foreign Higher Education Institute – means (i) a higher education institution duly established or incorporated or recognised in a foreign country and (ii) offering academic research programmes at the undergraduate and/or higher levels, with whom the University has signed Memorandum of Understanding.
- v. **Host institution** – refers to the FHEI which receives an exchange student for a semester who otherwise is enrolled in a degree programme of the University of Delhi or its Colleges.
- vi. **Learning agreement** – is an agreement between the student, parent institution and the host institution detailing the courses, credits, duration, and other attendant matters related to the semester away programme.
- vii. **Parent institution** – refers to the University of Delhi where the student is enrolled in a degree programme.
- viii. **Semester away programme (SAP)**– it is a collaborative arrangement whereby students enrolled with the University (i.e. in a Department/Centre/College of the University of Delhi) may undertake a **semester away** of their programme of study in a FHEI. The credits earned by the student from the FHEI shall be accounted for the purpose of grant of Diploma/Degree, provided the credits are not earned from overlapping course contents/curriculum.
- ix. **University** - means the University of Delhi as incorporated by the Delhi University Act, 1922.

2. Operationalization

The University shall initiate SAP whereby students enrolled in any programme offered in the university departments or colleges may undertake their programme of study partly in India and partly in the Foreign Higher Educational Institution, complying with relevant UGC Regulations, 2022, for a period of one semester. The aim of the SAP is to provide

wider exposure, range of multidisciplinary approaches, pedagogy, research, internships, projects and global connect.

The SAP between the two universities shall be implemented through an MoU and benefits /facilities to the students shall be extended on bilateral basis as per the MoU. These MoUs must be signed prior to the start of academic session so that courses can be mapped and announced to benefit interested students for such semester away programme.

Undergraduate students of the University of Delhi, enrolled from the academic year 2022-23 onwards, may be allowed to opt for semester away in a FHEI under the semester away programme only in the IIIrd, Vth and VIIth semesters, to ensure that the student should complete the relevant qualification from the parent university, which shall award it.

2.1 Eligible FHEIs: The eligibility criteria of a FHEI to be considered for collaboration for SAP shall be -

- a. Foreign Higher Educational Institutions with comparative or higher QS World ranking/ Times Higher Education (THE) ranking to that of University of Delhi; [FHEIs of comparable ranking to that of University of Delhi means those FHEIs whose ranking in any of the last three years is within the range of 50% lower than the rank of the University in that year].

OR

- b. In case the FHEI's ranking is not within the range prescribed at (a) above, the QS world ranking of a discipline of a FHEI to which a student seeks to opt for SAP should be comparative or higher than the QS world/ Times Higher Education ranking of that specific discipline of the University; [Discipline of the FHEIs of comparable ranking to that of University of Delhi means those disciplines of FHEIs whose ranking in any of the last three years is within the range of 50% lower than the discipline rank of the University in that year].

OR

- c. The FHEI is ranked within 1000 QS World Ranking/Times Higher Education Ranking and has signed an MoU with the University of Delhi with provision for exchange of students in the MoU.

2.2 Nodal Office – (a) The International Relations office shall be the nodal office for initiating the SAP. It may identify the FHEIs with whom the University has active MoUs with SAP provision which satisfies the above eligibility.

- b) The College/Department which already has MoU(s) with FHEI(s) may be requested to submit existing signed MoUs to the International Relations Office so that the University can endorse those MoUs for the purpose of initiating the SAP with those FHEIs that fulfil the eligibility mentioned at Clause 2(4). The College/Department shall act as the facilitator of the SAP.

2.3 Process of initiation of SAP –

- 2.3.1. The eligible FHEI with which the University has signed an MoU, shall specify certain number of seats in one or more programmes run by that FHEI for the students at this University to avail the SAP with the provision for earning and transferring credits.
- 2.3.2. IR office shall notify the number of seats which are identified by the eligible FHEIs under SAP for the students at the University/Colleges.
- 2.3.3. Applications shall be invited by the IR office stating clearly the eligibility criteria as well as the parameters based on which the students shall be selected for SAP.
- 2.3.4. Selection of students shall be made by a duly constituted Committee chaired by the Chairperson, IR, which will take into consideration the maintenance of students' diversity.
- 2.3.5. It is desirable that there be an alignment between the academic calendars of the FHEI and the University for the successful execution of the SAP

2.4. Standard Operating Procedure

2.4.1. Eligibility (minimum conditions)

- a) Students currently pursuing Semester II & IV are eligible to apply for the Study Abroad Program for Semester III and V, respectively.
- b) Eligibility of a student will be subject to passing all the papers without any essential repeat (ER) in Semester I for mobility in Semester III. Similarly, the eligibility of a student will be subject to passing all the papers of Semester I, II, and III for mobility in Semester V. (If the results are not available, students are advised to upload their transcripts at the earliest).
- c) Minimum attendance criteria (66.67%) should have been met by the student.
- d) Academic Record (CGPA of 8.0 and above for UR category and CGPA of 7.0 and above for SC/ST/OBC categories)
- e) Candidates should possess the requisite language proficiency.
- f) **Candidate should possess a valid Passport (with a minimum available validity of 2 years)**
- g) **Candidate should not have availed any prior mobility under the program.**

2.4.2. Selection Procedure (as per the following rubric weightage):

- a) Academic record (CGPA of 8.0 & Above) – 50% (as per the table),

Academic Record (CGPA)	Weightage (%)	
	UR	SC/ST/OBC
7	-	40
8	40	45
9	45	50
10	50	50

- b) Statement of Purpose (clarity of academic objectives & course alignment) — 5%.
- c) Faculty recommendation (on a prescribed Proforma) and degree plan fit — 5%.
- d) Research / Value Addition / Contribution to College/Department — 10%**.
- e) Attendance (Minimum 66.67%) – 10% *
- f) Interview — 20%***.

*85% and Above: 10% weightage; 80-85%: 8%; 75-80%:6%; 70-75: 4%; >66.67%: 2%

** For Example –

- 1) Demonstration of initiatives in assisting the organisation of departmental or University programmes/events
- 2) Participation in editorial committees of student magazines/publications
- 3) Participation in student-led committees/societies
- 4) Participation in social outreach programmes of the Department/University
- 5) Demonstration of exemplary research acumen/performance
- 6) Initiative in assisting the Department in undertaking administrative tasks like NAAC, IQAC, internships, and placements-related work.

*** Interview will be based on –

- 1) Subject Knowledge
- 2) Communication Skills
- 3) Overall personality/attitude
- 4) Clarity of thoughts
- 5) What he/she tends to achieve through the exchange program

2.4.3. Process flow (step-by-step):

There are two pathways for the application process. Applications under the college-administered MoUs will be submitted to the Colleges for initial processing, while those pertaining to the University of Delhi-administered MoUs will be submitted to the International Relations, University of Delhi.

Pathway I

Application Process for Mobilities under MoUs administered by the International Relations, University of Delhi

Step 0 — Before filling up the Application Form, students are advised to check the following

- a) Website of the International Relations, University of Delhi for the live “List of Eligible FHEIs for the Semester Abroad Programme”.
- b) Profiles of the Eligible FHEIs to select the universities of their choice.
- c) Disciplines and number of available mobilities announced by each FHEI for the Semester Abroad Programme (SAP) during the year under consideration.
- d) Discipline-specific and inter-disciplinary courses offered under the discipline by the FHEI in the specific semester under consideration.
- e) Fees and other charges to be paid by the applicant

Step 1 — Application to the International Relations Office

- A. Students are required to fill up an Online Application Form provided on the International Relations Portal (Link to be provided).
- B. Applications will only be open for the disciplines announced for the specific year under consideration.
- C. Upload the following documents on the Portal within the specified timeline:
 - a) SAP Application Form
 - b) Transcripts for previous completed semesters
 - c) Statement of Purpose
 - d) Passport Copy
 - e) Faculty Recommendation Letter
 - f) Attendance Proof
 - g) Institutional Contribution Certificates/Proofs
 - h) Proof of Family Annual Income
 - i) NoC from the Principal/ Head of the Department

Step 2 — Screening of Application and Selection by the Academic Expert Committee (AEC).

This will entail the following steps:

- a) Eligibility of applicants as per Host FHEI criteria
- b) **Screening and selection based on rubric as explained under Point no. 2**

Step 3 - Selection Result

- a) **A list of students selected by the University of Delhi will be put up on the IR website on the scheduled date. It may be noted that the final result shall be announced only after the completion of due formalities and acceptance of the candidate by the FHEIs.**
- b) **Names of the selected students will be sent to the respective Partner FHEIs.**
- c) **FHEI will send the Letter of Acceptance to the student/International Relations office.**
- d) Final results of the accepted students will be announced on the IR website.

Step 4 — Final Course Mapping and Finalization of Learning Agreement (LA)

The selected candidates will be required to choose the courses that they wish to attend from the list of courses being offered by the FHEI in the specific discipline within the semester (for a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 26 credits)

The suggested courses will be examined by AEC for:

- a) Learning Objectives/Outcomes
- b) Equivalency of Credit

The following steps are to be followed for the Learning Agreement

- a) Prepare LA in consultation with College/Department
- b) Upload duly signed LA by Student and Principal/HoD
- c) Final Learning Agreement approved by AEC will be sent to the Host FHEI for approval.

Step 5 — Host University Admission and Visa.

- a) The student shall complete the FHEI's admission requirements and submit/upload all requisite documents.
- b) Pay fees as per the MoU/FHEI requirements
- c) Make necessary arrangements for Insurance and Visa.

Step 6 — Mobility and Mid-Term Changes.

- a) If courses change mid-semester, AEC approval for the change and mapping must be made through the International Relations office.

Step 7 – Return and Credit Transfer

- a) Official Transcript from the Host FHEI will be submitted by the student/ Host FHEI to the International Relations Office for further processing

Pathway II

Application Process for Mobilities under MoUs administered by colleges of the University of Delhi

Step 0 — Before filling up the Application Form, students are advised to check the following

- a) Website of the college and the International Relations, University of Delhi for the live “List of Eligible FHEIs for the Semester Abroad Programme”.
- b) Profiles of the Eligible FHEIs to select the universities of their choice.
- c) Disciplines and number of available mobilities announced by each FHEI for the Semester Abroad Programme (SAP) during the year under consideration.
- d) Discipline-specific and inter-disciplinary courses offered under the discipline by the FHEI in the specific semester under consideration.
- e) Fees and other charges to be paid by the applicant

Step 1 — Application to the International Relations Office of the college

- A. Students are required to fill up an Online Application Form provided on the College Portal (Link to be provided).
- B. Applications will only be open for the disciplines announced for the specific year under consideration.

C. Upload the following documents on the Portal within the specified timeline:

- a) SAP Application Form
- b) Transcripts for previous completed semesters
- c) Statement of Purpose
- d) Passport Copy
- e) Faculty Recommendation Letter
- f) Attendance Proof
- g) Institutional Contribution Certificates/Proofs
- h) Proof of Family Annual Income
- i) NoC from the Principal/ Head of the Department

Step 2 — Screening of Application and Selection by the Academic Expert Committee (AEC) of the college including a representative from the University of Delhi.

This will entail the following steps:

- a) Eligibility of applicants as per Host FHEI criteria
- b) **Screening and selection based on rubric as explained under Point no. 2**

Step 3 - Selection Result

- a) **A list of students selected by the college will be put up on the College and IR website on the scheduled date. It may be noted that the final result shall be announced only after the completion of due formalities and acceptance of the candidate by the FHEIs.**
- b) **Names of the selected students will be sent to the respective Partner FHEIs.**
- c) **FHEI will send the Letter of Acceptance to the student/International Relations office.**
- d) Final results of the accepted students will be announced on the IR website.

Step 4 — Final Course Mapping and Finalization of Learning Agreement (LA)

The selected candidates will be required to choose the courses that they wish to attend from the list of courses being offered by the FHEI in the specific discipline within the semester (for a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 26 credits)

The suggested courses will be examined for:

- a) Learning Objectives/Outcomes
- b) Equivalency of Credit

The following steps to be followed for the Learning Agreement

- a) Prepare LA in consultation with College/Department
- b) Upload duly signed LA by Student and Principal/HoD
- c) Final Learning Agreement approved by the AEC will be sent to the Host FHEI for approval.

Step 5 — Host University Admission and Visa.

- a) The student shall complete the FHEI's admission requirements and submit/upload all requisite documents.
- b) Pay fees as per the MoU/FHEI requirements

- c) Make necessary arrangements for Insurance and Visa.

Step 6 — Mobility and Mid-Term Changes.

- a) If courses change mid-semester, AEC approval for the change and mapping must be made through the International Relations office of the College.

Step 7 – Return and Credit Transfer

- a) Official Transcript from the Host FHEI will be submitted by the student/ Host FHEI to the International Relations Office for further processing

2.4.3. Mandatory documents to be submitted after selection to College/Department/IR Office

1. Medical Fitness Certificate
2. Student undertaking on code of conduct / academic integrity (Draft to be uploaded).
3. Undertaking by Parents (Draft to be uploaded)

2.4.5. Credit and Grade Conversion

- a) To be undertaken by AEC
- b) **Failed/Incomplete credits or programme requirements:** AEC recommends remedial options or DU replacement credits. Any degree-level shortfall will be handled as per DU Examination rules.

2.4.6. Financial & Fee Considerations

- a) The selected candidates are required to pay tuition and other fee/charges applicable for the specific semester at the College/University of Delhi.
- b) The candidate will be required to pay the requisite fee/other charges of the Host FHEI for the specific semester within specified timelines.
- c) Students can apply for external or institutional scholarships and mobility grants before departing; they must present documentation to the IR office of the college/university.
- d) Financial Support from the College/University of Delhi may be given on need cum merit basis, based on the availability of funds.

2.4.7. Contingency Rules & Risk Management

- a) In case of delay of official transcript from the host FHEI, a letter/an email to that effect may be procured from the host FHEI and be submitted to the College/Department/IR Office.
- b) Travel insurance is required for the SAP period. Parents/candidate will undertake responsibility for any unforeseen circumstance.
- c) In the eventuality of health issues/emergencies, if a student is unable to continue/complete the course requirements, the same should be communicated to the College/Department/IR office as soon as possible. Such a candidate will have to complete the due credits at the University of Delhi in the subsequent semesters.
- d) In case the host FHEI apprises College/Department/IR Office of any disciplinary or academic integrity issues, the AEC shall evaluate each case individually, in accordance with DU disciplinary guidelines.

2.4.8. Code of Conduct and Discipline

- a) **Students must follow the laws of the host country and the code of conduct of the host institution.**
- b) **The University of Delhi will not be party to any unruly behaviour (such as use of alcohol, drugs or any other illegal activities) of the student, and such behaviour will lead to disciplinary action as per the University of Delhi guidelines.**
- c) **Students must follow the attendance policy of the FHEI.**
- d) **Academic misconduct (plagiarism, cheating, falsification of records) will invite strict disciplinary action.**
- e) **A regular progress report must be submitted to the College/Department.**

2.5. Learning Agreement

2.5.1. Learning agreements shall be signed between the University of Delhi and the FHEI for each student participating in SAP. Similar steps shall be followed for project and internship engagements in FHEI.

2.5.2. The Academic Expert Committee shall examine the applications for signing the Learning Agreement. The mapping of courses shall be undertaken by this Committee. The Academic Expert Committee comprises of the following:

- A. Dean, Academic Affairs - Chairperson
- B. Chairperson, International Relations or Nominee
- C. Controller of Examinations
- D. Dean of the respective Faculty
- E. Chairperson, Research Council (for research related matters/ Head of Department of the respective applicants (for PG students)/ the relevant Principal of the College (for UG students)
- F. Joint Registrar (Academic) - Member Secretary

2.5.3. Mapping of courses of the degree program of the University with that of the FHEI with which SAP is to be established shall be done prior to initiating exchange of students.

2.6. Provision for financial assistance - SAP may be made accessible to meritorious students from financially weaker backgrounds through the following ways:

- a. Few outstanding meritorious students belonging SC/ST/EWS/PwBD/OBC who are needy shall be supported by the University for undergoing SAP in FHEI.

- b. The University may also tap its alumni base as well as CSR funds from corporates to provide sponsorship for the SAP in FHEIs for such students.
- c. Objective criteria shall be laid down for the purpose of selecting such students from amongst the applicants.

2.7. Flexibility to students

2.7.1. A student may be allowed to pursue one semester in FHEIs with a minimum of 12 credits and maximum of 26 credits.

2.7.2. If a student fails to qualify for a course in a FHEIs, he/she shall earn equal number of credits from the course(s) as recommended by the Academic Expert Committee of this University.

2.8. Award of degree - The Degree shall be awarded by the University where the student is enrolled. The credits transferred from the FHEI shall be reflected in the Marksheet/Transcript issued by the parent institute.

2.9. Role of International Relations Office

2.9.1. The International Relations office shall propose the process for initiation and establishment of collaborations for the purpose of SAP and any other attendant matter pertaining to exchange of students through such arrangements including course content, fee structures, medical, liability and other relevant insurances, as well as accommodation and other logistics.

2.9.2. The International Relations office shall publish prominently on the main website of the University as well as that of the International Relations office, the list of FHEIs along with their collaborating departments/subject domains with whom the students may explore the possibility of pursuing semester away programme. It shall provide all necessary information on their website for the purpose of informing the students of the opportunities available to them.

3. Power to remove difficulties

The Vice Chancellor has the power to remove any difficulty in the implementation of these guidelines for Semester Away Programme, including the interpretation of any of its provisions. The decision so taken or interpretation so given by the Vice Chancellor in this regard shall be final and binding.