

Report on B.Voc Courses in State Universities

Introduction:

The UGC introduced B.Voc scheme in 2013 with an aim to align higher education with the emerging needs of the economy so as to ensure that the graduates of higher education system have adequate knowledge and skills for employment and entrepreneurship. The B.Voc. Programme is focused on universities and colleges providing undergraduate studies which would also incorporate specific job roles along with broad based general education. The University Grants Commission launched this scheme on skills development based higher education as part of college/university education, leading to Bachelor of Vocation (B.Voc.) degree with multiple exit options such as Diploma/Advanced Diploma under the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF).

It aims to incorporate the requirements of various industries in curriculum, in an innovative and flexible manner. The UGC stipulates that in order to “create ‘industry fit’ skilled workforce, the institutions recognized under Community Colleges/B.Voc Degree programme, and Deen Dayal Upadhyay KAUSHAL Kendras offering skill based courses will have to be in constant dialogue with the industry and respective Sector Skill Council(s) so that they remain updated on the requirements of the workforce for the local economy.

Objective:

The objectives of the scheme as stipulated by the UGC are the following:

- To provide judicious mix of skills relating to a profession and appropriate content of General Education.
- To ensure that the students have adequate knowledge and skills, so that they are work ready at each exit point of the programme.
- To provide flexibility to the students by means of pre-defined entry and multiple exit points.
- To integrate NSQF within the undergraduate level of higher education in order to enhance employability of the graduates and meet industry requirements. Such graduates apart from meeting the needs of local and national industry are also expected to be equipped to become part of the global workforce.
- To provide vertical mobility to students coming out of 10+2 with vocational subjects.

Levels of Awards:

The certification levels will lead to Diploma/Advanced Diploma/B. Voc. Degree in one or more vocational areas and will be offered under the aegis of the University, as outlined in the table below:

Award	Duration	Corresponding NSQF Level
Diploma	1 Year	5
Advanced Diploma	2 Years	6
B.Voc. Degree	3 Years	7

Each award is expected to specify in parenthesis the specialization of the course. For eg:
B. Voc. (Renewably Energy Management)
B. Voc. (Retail Management)

B.Voc. (Retail Management and IT)
Advanced Diploma (Food Processing) etc.

Financial Assistance for the Scheme:

The UGC allocates financial aid within an overall ceiling of Rs. 1.85 crores for a period of three years under different heads as given below:

- Start-up assistance: A one-time start-up assistance of Rs. 50.00 lakh for setting up of laboratories/workshops facilities, procurement of teaching and learning materials, machineries/equipment and renovation. This shall not cover any new construction.
- Faculty: One Associate Professor and Two Assistant Professors – Rs. 75.00 lakh for three years (purely on contractual basis during XII Plan period). Rs. 25.00 lakhs per annum X 3 years = Rs. 75.00 lakh - to be reimbursed on actual basis within the total allocation.
- Visiting/Guest Faculty: Rs. 5.00 lakh for first year and Rs. 10.00 lakh for second and Rs. 15.00 lakh for third year.
- The operative yearly cost: The operative yearly cost shall be Rs. 10.00 lakhs per annum.
- Existing Faculty: Rs.500/- per lecture
- Visiting/Guest faculty Rs.2,000/- per lecture

Infrastructure and Faculty for B.Voc.programme:

University/college needs to have adequate laboratory /workshop facilities for face to face delivery of skills and hands-on practice either owned or arranged through tie-up with the partner industry or any institution recognized by the certification agency.

The university/college should use its regular faculty for the conduct of general education component and also for the skills components, if existing. Additionally, they may hire faculty on contractual basis and guest faculty in the core trades only as per UGC norms.

There is a provision of One Associate Professor and Two Assistant Professors (purely on contractual basis during XII Plan period), under this scheme.

Current status of B Voc courses in State Universities

The Kerala State Higher Education Council gathered information from the affiliated universities in the state , including the Guidelines of B.Voc. courses issued by UGC, details of B.Voc. courses run under various affiliating Universities, issues related to students enrolment and outcome of the programme in terms of employment and skill development.

The Council received status reports from four Universities namely, the University of Kerala, University of Calicut, Kannur University and Mahatma Gandhi University. There are no B.Voc courses under Kannur University.

In the University of Kerala there are only two B. Voc courses namely Software Development & Tourism and Hospitality Management. Mar Ivanios College Thiruvananthapuram and St. Micheals College, Cherthala have both these programmes. The number of students enrolled in these courses is below the sanctioned capacity of 60 students which varied from a low intake of 40 to a high intake of 51 students but the pass percentage in Kerala University Colleges ranged between 31.25% and 85.10%. (Table -1)

In the case of University of Calicut, the B. Voc course is conducted in 7 aided affiliated colleges. They include B.Voc Information Technology, Automobile Auto Electricals

and Electronics, Multimedia, Software Development, Jewellery Designing, Jemmology, Broadcasting and Journalism, Software Technologies, Digital Film Production, Medical Laboratory technology, Pharmaceutical Chemistry, Tourism & Hospitality Management. As per the details furnished by Calicut University, out of the 14 B.Voc courses offered in its affiliated colleges, 5 of them have been discontinued while 7 of them have been converted to self-financing mode. (Table -2).

Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam is offering B Voc courses through its 11 affiliated colleges. Here again the courses ranged from fashion Technology, sports Nutrition and Physiotherapy, Retail Management and IT, Animation and Graphic Design, Broadcasting and Journalism, Logistic Management and Renewable Energy Management. All these courses are conducted by aided colleges and now they are being run in the Self Financing stream as UGC funding has dried up. The number of seats in these courses are fixed at 50 with vacancies occurring periodically. (Table -3).

General Observations on the B. Voc courses

- 1) It is to be specifically noted that Clause 9 of UGC Guidelines stipulates that “student fee should be decided as per the prevalent mechanism for fee fixation for aided courses in the university/college”. It then implies that the B.Voc courses can be started only in University/Government/Aided colleges.
- 2) The affiliated colleges were forced to either stop the B.Voc programmes or convert them to self-financing courses after three years of UGC funding.
- 3) The fact that some of the courses had to be discontinued without even converting them to self-financing mode is an actual pointer to the low employability/skill development of these courses.
- 4) As regards the University of Kerala, it is seen that the pass percentage of B.Voc courses is often abysmally low. Here, the pass percentage of B.Voc ‘Software Development’ is as low as 42.22% in affiliated colleges while the same in the Autonomous College that offered the course is just 31.25%. B.Voc ‘Tourism and Hospitality Management’ in the same Autonomous College has witnessed a low pass percentage of 50%. These instances amply testify to the failure of B.Voc programmes in empowering the youth of the state.
- 5) It may also be noted that most of the sectors and specializations identified by the UGC are already taken care of in the present Engineering and Management education system in Kerala. For example, a course like ‘Hotel Management and Catering Technology’ under B.Voc scheme has nothing new to offer since this is already offered by a number of Hotel Management/Catering colleges/Institutions across the state.
- 6) Moreover, since the UGC would provide financial assistance only for the initial three years in terms of faculty remuneration and setting up of workshops/labs, the initial enthusiasm generally dies out after the funds are expended. It will also be a huge financial burden on the part of the state government to run the courses after three years, since the fee structure stipulated by UGC is in line with the aided stream.
- 7) It is learnt that many colleges are willingly exploiting this situation by obtaining permission to convert the courses into self-financing mode whereby aspiring candidates are forced to pay huge fees for the course, while at the same time

making no attempt to improve the infrastructure or other facilities for the course. They totally rely on the already built up facilities made possible by UGC funding.

- 8) In addition to the above, since the UGC has fixed an honorarium of Rs. 500 per lecture for the existing faculty (aided stream) who would be used for engaging B.Voc sessions, this practice would seriously affect the quality and functioning of other regular aided courses in the college concerned, as the college would be forced to recruit guest faculty to engage those classes.
- 9) Moreover, since the state's approach in Higher Education sector has been horizontal, with a strong sense of distributive justice and equity, starting such courses in self-financing stream would negate the very purpose of educational policies in the state.
- 10) The report from various Universities shows that after the initial enthusiasm created by UGC funding; there is a tendency for the college to run these courses on self financing mode.
- 11) The falling examination results, among other things, indicate that the teaching-learning process of B. Voc courses are not up to the mark and curricular objectives are not optimised.
- 12) The falling pass percentage testifies the failure of B. Voc programmes in providing gainful employment to the graduates of these programmes.
- 13) The urban bias inherent in the structure and content of the B. Voc programmes has adversely affected the popularity of the programme in remote and rurally located colleges in the state.

Specific Recommendations Related to Starting of B. Voc Course in Snehacharya Institute of Management and Technology, Alleppey

- 1) Snehacharya Multipurpose Educational Trust is an Educational Trust registered under the Indian Trusts Act, 1882 on 02/08/2002. The Trust established SNEHACHARYA INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY, Approved by All India Council of Technical education, affiliated to University of Kerala & recognized by Government of Kerala. They have affiliation for bachelor degree in Hotel Management and Catering Technology (4 Years) with permission for approved intake of 60 students.
- 2) B. Voc Course in Hotel Management and Catering Technology for which permission is sought by the Snehacharya Institute of Management and Technology is now offering the same course as a 4 year degree programme with annual tuition fee of Rs. 60000/-. The BHMCT course is affiliated to the University of Kerala.
- 3) There are several institutions offering the same or similar courses in the State. It is offered as B.Voc programme in Tourism and Hospitality Management in other affiliated colleges in Kerala University and other affiliating Universities.
- 4) B. Voc programmes, as per UGC guidelines, are given to Government/Aided colleges and after the initial funding by UGC, student fee should be decided as per the relevant, mechanism for fee fixation for aided courses in the University/ College. This clearly indicates that B. Voc courses are intended to supplement or strengthen Aided or Government Courses/Colleges.

- 5) Snehacharya Institute of Management and Technology obtained a letter of approval from All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), not from the UGC as in the case of other colleges, for the B. Voc Course in Hotel Management and Catering. The affiliating Universities are following the UGC guidelines for the conduct of B. Voc courses. The AICTE letter of approval is a new development completely out of tune with the hitherto existing procedure for starting B. Voc courses in the State.
- 6) Snehacharya Institute of Management and Technology is a self financing institution. The proposed B. Voc course is not based on UGC guidelines which is followed by other Institutions and Universities. The starting of such a course in a self financing institution is not in line with the declared policy of the state government.

Prepared by The Kerala State Higher Education Council

Table – 1 - Details of B.Voc. Course in the University of Kerala

Sl.No.	Name of College	District	Category of College	Type of College	Type of UG/PG	Name of Course	Type of Course	Number of sanctioned seats
1	Mar Ivanios College	Thiruvananthapuram	Arts & Science	Aided	B. Voc	B. Voc Degree in Software Development		
2	Mar Ivanios College	Thiruvananthapuram	Arts & Science	Aided	B. Voc	B. Voc Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management		
3	St. Micheals	Cherthala	Arts & Science	Aided	B. Voc	B. Voc Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management		

Source . University of Kerala

Table – 2 - Details of B.Voc. Courses in the University of Calicut

Sl.No.	Name of College	District	Category of College	Type of College	Type of UG/PG	Name of Course	Type of Course	No. of sanctioned seats
1	Farook college	Kozhikode	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B. Voc Information Technology (Stopped) B. Voc Automobile Auto Electricals and Electronics	SF	
2	Sr. Mary's College	Thrissur	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B. Voc Multimedia B Voc Software Development	SF	
3	Carmel College	Thrissur	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B. Voc Multimedia B Voc Software Development	SF	
4	St. Aloysius College	Thrissur	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B. Voc Jewellery Designing B. Voc Jemmology	SF	
5	Sullamussalam Science College		Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B. Voc (Broadcasting and Journalism) B. Voc Software Technologies (Stopped)	SF	
6	St. Thomas College	Thrissur	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	Digital Film Production (Stopped) B. Voc Medical Laboratory technology (Stopped)		
7	Little Flower College	Thrissur	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B. Voc (Pharmaceutical Chemistry) B. Voc (Tourism & Hospitality Management)		

Source . University of Calicut

No. of students registered for final examination – 269
 No. of students appeared for examination – 228
 No. of students passed -212

Table 3, Details of B. Voc Course in the Mahatma Gandhi University

Sl.No	Name of College	District	Category of College	Type of College	Type of UG/PG	Name of Course	Type of Course	Number of sanctioned seats
1	Alphonsa College	Kottayam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Fashion Technology	SF	50
2	Alphonsa College	Kottayam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Sports Nutrition & Physiotherapy	SF	50
3	Kuriakose Elias College	Kottayam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Retail Management & Information Technology	SF	50
4	Kuriakose Elias College	Kottayam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Marketing Management & Information Technology	SF	50
5	St. Thomas College, Pala	Kottayam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Sustainable Agriculture	SF	50
6	St. Thomas College, Pala	Kottayam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Food Processing Technology	SF	50
7	M.E.S. College, Marampally	Ernakulam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Animation & Graphic Design	SF	50
8	M.E.S. College, Marampally	Ernakulam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc. Logistic Management	SF	50
9	Sree Sankara College	Ernakulam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc- Renewable Energy Management	SF	50
10	Sree Sankara College	Ernakulam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc Tourism & Hospitality	SF	50
11	Sree Sankara College	Ernakulam	Arts & Science	Aided	B Voc	B.Voc Broadcasting & Journalism	SF	50

Source . Mahatma Gandhi University

In the aided colleges affiliated to Mahatma Gandhi University, all the 11 courses which are offered now are run in the self-financing mode.