

Minutes of the Third Meeting of the Empowered Committee

Date: 17th May, 2006
Time: 1100 Hrs
Venue: IISc., Bangalore

The third meeting of the Empowered Committee was held on May 17, 2006 at Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. Following were in attendance:

Prof. M.M. Sharma	...	Chairman
Prof. Goverdhan Mehta	...	Member
Prof. S.P. Thyagarajan	...	Member
Prof. P. Rama Rao	...	Member
Prof. Kota Harinarayana	...	Member
Prof. Mool Chand Sharma	...	Member Secretary

Dr. (Mrs.) Renu Batra, Joint Secretary UGC and Co-ordinator of the Committee also attended the meeting.

The minutes of the second meeting held on 13th April, 2006 was confirmed and approved with the modification that the word "Research Scientist" should be replaced with "UGC Lecturer / Reader / Professor".

Chairman of the Committee welcomed the members and expressed his gratitude for making it convenient to attend the meeting.

Before taking up the formal agenda for discussion, Prof. Mool Chand Sharma, Secretary, UGC shared with the members the interim report submitted by the Mungekar Committee which has recommended (a) So far as the postgraduate level teaching is concerned, the candidates having Ph.D degree should be exempted from acquiring NET qualifications for being considered for the post of lecturers; (b) As regards the undergraduate level teaching, the candidates having M.Phil or Ph.D degree should be exempted from acquiring NET qualifications for being considered for the post of lecturers. He also informed the members that the Chairman, UGC has expressed his desire to place before the Empowered Committee for the identification of the process and methodology for awarding the doctoral degrees to ensure its quality. The Committee members also expressed their concern for the quality of Ph.D. degrees and desired that further discussion on this issue can be taken up in the next meeting.

He further shared that the Ministry of Human Resource Development in response to the UGC's request for separate earmarking of funds for the implementation of Task Force recommendations has informed that the additional allocation given to UGC for the year 2006-07 should be used for the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force.

The Committee was informed about the communication received from Prof. Deepak Pental, Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi commenting on the recommendations of the Task Force. Prof. G. Mehta informed the Committee that he had a detailed discussion with Prof. Pental on this issue and he suggested that the letter written by him may be treated as withdrawn.

The formal agenda for the meeting was then taken up for discussion.

Item No.1: To finalize the scheme of filling of 1000 positions of UGC Lecturers/Readers/Professors in the university system.

The concept note prepared by Prof. G.Mehta on **Operation 'Faculty Recharge' A UGC initiative for augmenting the research and teaching resources of universities** was deliberated in detail and was approved with minor modifications. Detailed guidelines of the scheme needs to be prepared accordingly.

Members of EC expressed their concern that *Faculty selections are an intense, time consuming and insightful exercise. Its execution on such a massive scale would be an extremely challenging endeavour. Without adequate diligence and utmost care, such 'talent hunting' expeditions can eventuate in more harm than good. It can be orchestrated on a suitable basis only through an innovatively designed and properly delegated mechanism. It is, therefore, recommended that UGC may consider creating such mechanism in-house or approach organizations such as CSIR for collaboration for this purpose.*

Item No.2: To discuss and deliberate the document prepared by Prof.S.P.Thyagarajan, Member, Empowered Committee with regard to:

1. A draft MoU to evolve under the scheme of providing the positions of Research Scientists.
2. Draft norms for the Universities to be evolved as Resource Networking – Centres in Basic Sciences.
3. Draft Guidelines for Summer & Winter Schools.

It was decided to take up this in the next meeting. However, it was decided that instead of 'Memorandum of Understanding' the term 'Agreement' would be used.

Item No.3: Women participation in basic science research should be enhanced by way of removing age bar and introducing flexi-time approach.

Members were apprised that as per the existing UGC guidelines for Junior Research Fellowships, the age of eligibility for JRF is 28 years in respect of General Category with five years relaxation offered in the case of women candidates. However, it was pointed out that no further relaxation is given to women once they join the fellowship. The Committee felt that appropriate provision may be made in the guidelines providing for an 'intermittent break' for a maximum period of 2 years during the entire fellowship period. Accordingly, the break period availed should not be counted towards the tenure of the fellowship and thus effectively the total period of fellowship should remain the same. It was also suggested to add provision for 'flexitime'.

Item No.4: With regard to Research Fellowship award as recommended in the recommendation number 8 of facilitating recommendations a list of departments supported under Special Assistance Programme (SAP) and programme and departments supported under Fund for improvement of S&T infrastructure in Higher Education Institutions (FIST) of DST has already been circulated to the members.

It was decided that a list of departments / institutions which have been supported under both Special Assistance Programme of the UGC as well as the FIST programme of DST may be prepared. Information on the no. of Ph.D's produced in the last 5 years by these departments may also be sought to facilitate the Chairman of the EC and the Chairman, UGC to select the departments/institutions for research fellowship awards.

Chairman then took up the issue of progress made on the decisions taken in the previous meetings. The point-wise discussion on the progress made is as follows:

Facilitating Recommendation	Decision taken	Action reported
The eligibility qualifications for a Lecturer in the University Science Departments should be Ph.D. However, in the departments of engineering and medicine, initially a lecturer may be appointed with M.Tech./MD or MS qualifications respectively with the stipulation of acquiring Ph.D. within 7 years of appointment.	Chairman of the Committee to write a letter to Education Secretary requesting him to issue appropriate directions to various agencies.	Copy of the letter sent to the Edn. Secretary, Govt. of India was circulated by the Chairman.
Teachers guiding research scholars should be given credit in terms of their work load. For every research scholar, the teacher should be credited 2 hours per week in the prescribed work load.	UGC to write a letter to all the Universities and State Education Secretaries with regard to implementation of the same. If need be, this may be placed before the Commission.	The committee was informed about the work load as prescribed by the Rastogi Committee, and it was pointed out that no separate demarcation of time is made for teaching and research by the Rastogi Committee. The Committee desired that an Advisory Note from Chairman, UGC may be sent to all concerned.
The age of retirement of University teachers must be uniform all over the country.	As concerned bureau of the UGC has already written to all the universities / state governments in this regard, it was decided to wait for some time for receiving responses. Based on the responses received, Chairman, UGC	It was informed that as the responses are still awaited and suggested to wait for some more time.

	may consider taking up the matter with the Chief Ministers of the States.	
Women participation in basic science research should be enhanced by way of removing age bar and introducing flexi-time approach.	Dr. (Mrs.) Renu Batra, JS, UGC to prepare a status note with regard to existing provisions under UGC schemes of JRF/SRF along with the suggested amendments to facilitate this recommendation.	It was placed and discussed as Agenda Item No.3.
Five-year integrated M.Sc programmes for higher secondary students and Integrated Ph.D programmes for graduates should be introduced in select central and state universities.	It was decided to start these programmes in selected areas in selected departments / institutions. However, the areas/departments / institutions will be identified through a rigorous process.	It was decided that Prof. S.P. Thyagarajan will prepare a concept note.
All post-graduate programmes pertaining to science and technology should have an inbuilt component of research.	UGC to issue necessary advisory to the institutions in this regard.	Decided to do it expeditiously.
The present system of National Eligibility Test (NET) for determining the eligibility for Lecturer and for award of Research Fellowship ought to be revisited with a view to bringing about qualitative improvement in the selection procedure.	Government of India has already constituted a separate committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. Mungekar, Member, Planning Commission to consider this issue.	No action required.
In addition to Research Fellowship awarded by different National Funding Agencies, every university shall be provided, for pursuing Doctoral research, 50 fellowships in Basic Sciences based on past performance of Departments. Post-doctoral Fellowships should be introduced for a maximum period of two years on a highly selective basis.	Dr. (Mrs.) Renu Batra, JS to circulate the list of departments supported under <i>Special Assistance Programme</i> (SAP) of the UGC and <i>Fund for improvement of S&T Infrastructure in Higher Education Institutions</i> (FIST) of the DST, Government of India, to all the members of the Committee.	It was placed and discussed as Agenda Item No.4.
All UGC-SAP Departments, DST-FIST Departments and the research centres funded by national agencies should be conferred complete autonomy with academic, administrative and financial powers. The Acts of the State Universities may have to be revisited to bring about necessary amendments to this effect.	UGC to take up this issue with appropriate authorities.	It was pointed out that in the UGC guidelines governing the Scheme, there is a clause directing the parent institution to delegate sufficient authority to the SAP department for its effective functioning. However, the Committee desired that a letter from

		Chairman, UGC may be sent to all the concerned for providing full autonomy to these departments.
Every Institution of higher learning should earmark 5% of its non-plan budget for the furtherance of research in basic sciences. 10% of the capital grant allocated to each University should be provided as annual maintenance grants towards spare parts, annual maintenance contracts, some add-on facilities and repairs, etc. The overhead charges provided to the Universities should be made uniform at 15%.	This issue to be taken up to the Commission for its consideration.	It was informed that action is being taken up in this regard.
<p>The number of Ph.Ds from Indian Universities should increase five-fold within a span of ten years with proper standards. This should be seen in the context of extremely low fraction of Ph.Ds in India in relation to M.Sc/B.Tech., as compared to what it is in USA, UK, Germany, Japan, etc.</p> <p>The emphasis for research will clearly emerge if we have Universities with only Departments and separately Universities having affiliated colleges.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairman of the Committee to address a letter to the Education Secretary, Government of India with regard to the second part of the recommendation. - It was also decided that Prof. M.M. Sharma and Prof. P. Rama Rao will jointly prepare a concept paper which will subsequently be discussed in the full CABE Committee meeting. 	Letter written by the Chairman, EC to the Education Secretary, Government of India was circulated.

It was decided to hold the next meeting of the Committee on **27th June, 2006 at 11.00 a.m at UGC Headquarters, New Delhi.**

The Committee also placed on record its appreciation to the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore for the logistic support and to Dr. Manju Singh, Deputy Secretary, UGC-SWRO, Bangalore for all necessary help in the successful conducting of the meeting.

Meeting ended with vote of thanks to the Chair.