GRADE
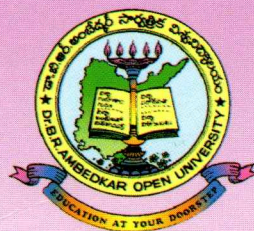Prof. G RAM REDDY RESEARCH ACADEMY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

GRADE

Planning and Design of Academic Programmes

by
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QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL

Prof. G. RAM REDDY RESEARCH ACADEMY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION (GRADE)

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University
Hyderabad (AP)

FOREWORD

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University established GRADE in 2001 to promote system development in Open Distance Learning (ODL). As a system development agency, GRADE, in addition to undertaking/promotion of research, has other objectives such as conducting seminars, workshops and training programmes, collaborating with institutions and agencies for networking in India and abroad, offering international fellowships and conducting system evaluation studies. Creating an exhaustive database on ODL in the regions /countries and providing researchers access to this data is yet another important objective of GRADE.

The development and effectiveness of the ODL system depends on quality assurance processes in place in the different subsystems of ODL. The Quality Assurance Cell was established as a consequence, with a view to create a nodal agency to promote quality assurance.

GRADE has identified important areas that focus on the various operations in ODL and has developed performance indicators and performance ensuring measures for the same. It is felt necessary to publish these performance indicators as a series and disseminate the information for the benefit of the different functionaries engaged in this new system – the ODL system.

This series on **Planning and Design of Academic Programmes** is highlighted by the following parameters:

- o Identification of a new programme/course to be developed
- o Programme feasibility
- o Programme planning
- o Programme approval

This will be of reference value to all those engaged in Open Distance Learning in general and those who are involved in the planning and design of academic programmes in particular. Further, this document will be useful as a guide to practitioners and also as a tool for evaluators.

Prof. V. S. PRASAD
VICE CHANCELLOR
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University

QUALITY ASSURANCE

"Quality, like excellence, is not a destination as much as it is a never ending journey". Peter Cookson

In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to the issue of quality in higher education, non-formal education and in open distance education. The migration to a distributed learning environment significantly heightens the need to assure quality. Distributed learning brings the potential of increased volume of students, increased staff reliance on technology, and increased partnership with external organizations. There are, quite simply, far more stakeholders in the mix. A robust distributed learning programme will typically involve instructors, programme administrators, and instructional designers familiar with the new media, technicians, evaluation specialists, student support staff and local facilitators.

Distance education takes a learner-centered approach rather than the traditional content-centered approach of textbooks. The key is the student. Learners need to become involved and motivated by the material and to take ownership of the skills and knowledge that they acquire.

Without guidelines and procedures designed to assure quality in the design, development and deployment of the learning material and the management of all processes towards that end, an organization runs the risk of disseminating courses that are, at best, effective but which do not serve the organization's mission. Poorly designed and delivered courses reflect badly on the organization's learning and assessment outcomes.

The Mission of Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University is:
- ❑ Enrichment of on-going academic programmes;
- ❑ Competency building through education and training programmes;
- ❑ Interactive individual based teaching learning processes;
- ❑ Reliable and credible student evaluation systems;
- ❑ Result oriented, accountable and transparent administrative and logistic support systems; and
- ❑ Research, innovation, training and networking for system development and staff development.

Towards this end the Quality Assurance Cell, GRADE, has developed the **Quality Assurance Series** as guidelines for:
- ❑ Planning and Design of Academic Programmes;
- ❑ Development of Curriculum and Learning Material;
- ❑ House & Print Style Manual ;
- ❑ Learner Support;
- ❑ Student Assessment and Evaluation;
- ❑ Governance; and
- ❑ System Evaluation and Research.

Open Distance Learning has been undergoing a rapid transformation in recent years. ODL centres have recognised the need to create an egalitarian society providing relevant quality education and training programmes for diverse sections of society, with a focus on using modern technologies in the teaching and learning process. There are a number of quality concerns with regard to Open Distance learning like planning, documenting, reviewing and evaluating:

- ❑ Standards of performance and products;
- ❑ Quality aspects in the processes of course design, development of learning material and the production and deployment of the same;
- ❑ User friendly media and technology towards enhancement of the quality of different learning inputs;
- ❑ Reforms in teaching-learning methodologies by "knowing your learner" and the concept of "learning to learn";
- ❑ Learner needs, learner services and the institutional response by establishing links between them;
- ❑ Performance ensuring measures for quality management and administrative practices; and
- ❑ Research and development systems and the established benchmarks/guidelines therein for all processes and products in Open Distance Learning.

The Information and Communication Technologies have thrown many challenges before the ODL institutions. One of the major concerns before the ODL system is 'Quality' in distance learning. Experts have now turned their attention towards improving quality and are striving for excellence in the ODL system especially at Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University.

This is highly critical to BRAOU since we adopt a dynamic approach to development. One of the prerequisites for success with this approach is to keep an open mind on all issues of concern. Towards this end maintaining a unified approach to academic operation and standards is crucial.

"The overall quality of a university
must be the concern of everyone who works there"

PLANNING AND DESIGN OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

This category includes those policies and procedures that support and relate to the planning and design of academic programmes and the related curriculum.

Activity /Process objective	Performance Indicators	Performance ensuring measures
1. Identification of a new programme/course to be developed	❖ A well defined policy of identifying the new programme/course is in place	Clearly laid down policy for identifying a programme/course is made available to all those concerned
	❖ An established process for screening ideas related to new programmes based on the suggestions of the: University Authorities/ Faculty/ Public/ Apex Bodies	Process is available, flexible with reference to innovation and is reviewed annually
2. Programme feasibility	❖ Holding discussions with the experts in the field	Recorded minutes of the meeting are available
	❖ Conducting a market study/ demand survey	The need assessment exercise in place that has the norms laid down and documented is accessible to all
3. Programme planning	i) Programme objectives are clearly laid out	All the stages in the planning of the programme are documented and available with the concerned personnel
	ii) Programme structure is clearly indicated	
	iii) A programme's curriculum design and syllabus are clearly indicated including:	
	- Learning objectives & outcomes	
	- Teaching learning strategies	Evidence that all the stages in the documented 'Programme Planning' are available with the concerned personnel
	- Media mix strategies	
	- Resources and constraints	
	iv) Courses in the programme	
	v) Duration/tenure of the programme/course	
	vi) Admission policy and guidelines of the programme/course	
	vii) Fee structure of the programme /course	Minutes of all relevant meetings recorded
	viii) Counselling system for the programme/course	
	ix) Student evaluation/exam regulations for the programme/ course	

4. Programme approval	❖ **Conducting the:**	
	Meetings of the Board of Studies	
	Meetings of the Academic Senate	Minutes of all the relevant meetings recorded
	Meetings of the Planning and Monitoring Board	
	❖ **Approvals from the V.C. and other authorities of the University**	All established procedures complied with

PROGRAMMES OFFERED BY Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR OPEN UNIVERSITY

S.No.	Name of the Programme
1.	Bachelor of Arts **(B.A.)**
2.	Bachelor of Commerce **(B.Com)**
3.	Bachelor of Science **(B.Sc.)**
4.	Bachelor's Degree in Library & Information Science **(BLISc)**
5.	Bachelor's Degree in Public Relations **(BPR)**
6.	P.G. Diploma in Marketing Management **(PGDMM)**
7.	P.G. Diploma in Business Finance **(PGDBF)**
8.	P.G. Diploma in Environmental Studies **(PGDES)**
9.	P.G. Diploma in Writing for Mass Media in Telugu **(PGDWMMT)**
10.	P.G. Diploma in Human Rights **(PGDHR)**
11.	P.G. Diploma in Women's Studies **(PGDWS)**
12.	Certificate Programme in Food & Nutrition **(CPFN)**
13.	Master's Degree in Business Administration **(MBA)**
14.	Master's Degree in Library & Information Science **(MLISc)**
15.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (History)
16.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (Economics)
17.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (Political Science)
18.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (Public Administration)
19.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (Sociology)
20.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (Mathematics)
21.	Master of Arts **M.A.** (English)●
22.	Master of Commerce **M.Com.** (English)●
23.	**M.Phil. in Development Studies***
	(Commerce, Development Statistics, Economics, Pub.Admn. & Pol. Science, Geography, Sociology)
24.	**Ph.D. in Development Studies***
	(Commerce, Development Statistics, Economics, Pub. Admn., & Pol. Science, Geography, Sociology)

● These Two Programmes will be offered from the Academic year 2003 - 2004.

* Offered in Colloboration with CESS.

GRADE

Research is perceived as an essential component of the Open Distance Learning (ODL) environment today. Although distance education has proliferated considerably, it has not been theorized enough nor have practices in distance teaching/learning been validated and made applicable adequately. Having recognised the need for research and development, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University has established Prof. G. Ram Reddy Research Academy of Distance Education (GRADE).

Vision

To become a centre for excellence in Research and System Development in Open Distance Learning.

Objectives

- To carry out research and to promote research activities in the field of distance education
- To conduct workshops, seminars and training programs
- To collaborate with institutions and agencies to undertake distance education research in India and abroad
- To undertake consultancy
- To sponsor research projects
- To disseminate knowledge in the field of distance education
- To establish a data bank in the field of distance education
- To offer fellowships and
- To conduct evaluation studies.

Research Thrusts

- Database creation on ODL
- Learner needs assessment
- Learning environments
- Use of new technologies
- Quality Assurance

Strategies

- Networking and partnership with international research organizations and acting as a nodal agency for the Andhra Pradesh Consortium of Distance Education (APCODE)
- Collaborating with Government and voluntary organizations in the development of multimedia training package