

EDUCATION PLUS

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Albert P'Rayan

Are you taking the UGC-NET?" I asked a young man who had completed his Master's in English Language Teaching (ELT) a year ago.

"I'm not sure I can crack it," he said hesitantly. "The subject I've specialised in – English Language Teaching (ELT) – isn't even on the list of prescribed subjects. So, I'm forced to choose something related, like English Literature. It's not just me; many of my classmates who specialised in ELT have chosen not to take the exam at all..."

The UGC National Eligibility Test (NET) determines candidates' eligibility for Junior Research Fellowships (JRF) and Assistant Professorships by assessing their knowledge in a specific subject. According to the National Testing Agency, the June 2025 session will include 85 subjects, yet ELT remains excluded.

When the UGC-NET was introduced in 1989, ELT was not well-established in India and was, therefore, not included. However, according to S. Mohanraj, retired professor from EFLU, Professor Tharu of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad, had recognised the importance of the field and advocated for its inclusion even at that time.

Candidates for the exam are expected to select a subject based on their

Beyond English literature

In India, where English is a second language, ELT plays a vital role in the education system and deserves to be recognised as an independent discipline



ature began to incorporate language components.

Eventually, dedicated Master's programmes in ELT were introduced that trained students in second language acquisition, teaching methodologies, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), technology-assisted learning, and applied linguistics, making graduates more suited to teach English language skills than literature graduates.

ELT has now gained significant traction in India and universities increasingly offer programmes at postgraduate and doctoral levels, and student enrollment is steadily rising. Yet, ELT remains absent from the UGC-NET subject list, 35 years after the exam's inception.

There are several compelling reasons to recognise English Language Teaching (ELT) as a distinct academic discipline and to include it in the UGC-NET list of prescribed subjects to recruit ELT specialists to teach English in colleges.

Fundamental differences

In India, where English is a second language, ELT plays a vital role in the education system, as English is integrated into the curriculum at all levels and is essential for the professional development of individuals who need to communicate effectively in the language.

Over time, the academic landscape evolved and Master's programmes that once focused solely on lit-

ries allows them to understand how learners acquire language and to adapt their teaching using diverse methods such as the communicative approach, task-based learning, and technology-enhanced instruction.

As a result, they are well-equipped to prepare students not only for academic achievement but also for success in professional and international contexts.

Given the global status of English and its significance in India, it is imperative that language teaching be led by professionals with formal training in ELT. This can only be possible if ELT is recognised as a distinct subject in UGC-NET.

Institutions such as the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) and professional bodies like the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) should actively campaign for the inclusion of ELT in the UGC-NET subject list. Xavier Pradeep Singh, National President of ELTAI, has stated that the association has already launched a signature campaign and is planning to submit a petition to the UGC.

It is time for ELT to be acknowledged not as a subset of literature, but as a vital, independent discipline deserving of its rightful place in India's academic and professional landscape.

The writer is an ELT resource person and education columnist. Email: rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

postgraduate specialisation. Since ELT is not on the list, many ELT graduates are compelled to opt for English Literature, which focuses heavily on literary content and literary theory, making it a poor match for ELT specialists.

Evolving academic landscape

Traditionally, English teachers at the tertiary level held qualifications in

English Literature. Consequently, instruction in General English and other language-based courses often lacked grounding in second language acquisition and pedagogy.

However, some educa-

tors pursued additional qualifications in ELT and gained expertise in language teaching methods.

Over time, the academic landscape evolved and Master's programmes that once focused solely on lit-

Showcase your expertise

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help



OFF THE EDGE

Nandini Raman

I am pursuing B.Ed. Social Science. My UG degree was International Relations, and Master's Political Science. What are the potential career options in teaching in India and abroad? What kind of skills do I need to develop?

Dheeraj

Dear Dheeraj,
Your academic background is a strong asset. Potential career options in India teaching in government and private schools (the latter could be affiliated to Indian or international boards), universities and colleges, coaching or tutoring, and curriculum development or creation of educational content. Abroad, you can teach at schools if you complete specific certifications that are pre-requisites in those countries.

Work on becoming a subject expert and stay updated on current events. Understand and apply pedagogical skills such as lesson planning, delivery, classroom management and differentiated instruction. Work on your verbal and written communication and active listening.

Use technology to create digital content and build a skillset in software proficiency. Develop interpersonal skills, research and analytical skills and a deep understanding of

cultural sensitivity. Also, explore online teaching, work with NGOs and think tanks and build an online presence by creating a professional website or blog to showcase your expertise and teaching philosophy to help you stand out.

I am in the final year of B.A. Economics. I want to do a PG in Economics and Econometrics. Are there any good institutions for this? Also will it help to do courses in computers?

Sethu

Dear Sethu,
Some of the top institutions in India known for their Economics and Econometrics programmes are Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Delhi and Kolkata; Delhi School of Economics (DSE); Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai; Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU); Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) Delhi, Kanpur, and Kharagpur; and Madras School of Economics (MSE), Chennai. Computer skills are essential for Econometrics (as it relies on statistical software like R, Python, and Stata).

Proficiency in these tools is crucial for data analysis and model building and will broaden your job prospects.

I have completed BBA but

am not sure what to do next. I'm interested in stock market trading. Are there any courses on stock market, especially futures trading and option trading? Viswa

Viswa,

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) Academy offers a range of courses, including futures and options trading, and provide industry-recognised certifications. The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Institute also offers courses related to the stock market, including derivatives trading that cater to different levels of experience. The National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) offers certification exams that are mandatory for certain roles in the securities market.

Online platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and edX offering a variety of courses on finance, investing, and trading. Zerodha, a popular brokerage platform in India, provides free educational modules on various aspects of the stock market, including futures and options. Investopedia is another valuable online resource to learn about financial terms and concepts. Many brokerage firms offer educational resources and seminars on trading.

However, be cautious

and ensure that the information is unbiased and genuine.

Before trading with real money, practise with a demo account to get a feel for the market and test your strategies. Start small and gradually increase your investment as you gain experience. The stock market is constantly evolving and very dynamic, so it's essential to stay updated with the latest trends and developments. Futures and options trading involves significant risk, so understand the potential losses before you start trading. Be wary of 'get-rich-quick' schemes, scams and unrealistic promises.

I completed B.Sc. (Hons) Agriculture and worked in an e-commerce supplier. Now I'm looking after operations and finance in two retail shops in my family business. This has got me interested in finance, and I took up a certification in Investment Banking. Should I look for entry-level jobs in the investment sector or try for CFA Level 1?

Raghul

Dear Raghul,
Entry-level jobs in the investment sector will help you gain practical experience, build a professional network and

learn from experienced professionals. However, these positions are highly competitive, and your non-traditional background may require you to put in extra effort to showcase your skills. But the CFA Level 1 is a globally recognised qualification and will significantly enhance your credibility and showcase a strong commitment to finance, thereby increasing your chances of landing better jobs. However, it will require significant time and effort for preparation and does not guarantee a job.

Start preparing for the exam while actively seeking entry-level jobs. Leverage your experience in managing finances and operations in your family business, and highlight your ability to analyse financial data and make informed decisions. Connect with professionals in the investment sector.

Customise your resume to highlight relevant skills and experience. Emphasise your analytical skills, financial acumen, and ability to learn quickly. Gain proficiency in financial software and tools, and improve your communication and presentation skills. Consider internships to gain relevant experience and make connections.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge



Finance gets a makeover

New programmes and industry-academia partnerships are crucial to help students navigate the changes in the finance industry

Rajesh Dedhia

The rapid growth of fintech has completely reshaped the financial services industry and created an urgent demand for professionals equipped to navigate a new, increasingly global financial landscape.

Higher education institutions are also recognising the need to update their educational programmes to ensure that students are adequately prepared to manage modern finance, understand evolving financial regulations, and apply data-driven strategies in their future careers.

Bridging the gap

Specialised programmes and certifications that address key financial competencies such as financial modelling and risk management are being offered to equip students with a deep understanding of the mechanics that drive today's financial systems. Institutions are also providing practical learning experiences, giving students ex-

posure to the tools, techniques, and strategies shaping contemporary financial markets. All this helps bridge the gap between traditional financial education and the needs of a fintech-driven world.

One of the most significant trends in global finance education is the development of courses that provide students with in-depth knowledge in areas such as financial data analysis, market research, and risk-management strategies. With the increasing importance of data in decision-making processes, students have to be trained to interpret vast amounts of information and apply it effectively to their financial analyses.

As financial markets become more interconnected and reliant on real-time outcomes, understanding how to interpret and apply data is essential.

Partnerships

In addition to this, universities should also partner with industry leaders who can use their experience to help students navigate the complexities of the finan-

cial sector and challenge traditional systems. By cultivating strong industry relationships and incorporating emerging technologies into their programmes, universities can position students to lead the modern finance revolution.

Focusing on ethical and regulatory aspects is another essential aspect of preparing students. As innovations transform traditional systems, they raise complex legal and ethical issues around data privacy, security, financial inclusion, and transparency. By offering courses on these topics, universities can help students grasp the importance of responsible financial practices and effectively navigate the regulatory challenges posed by new technologies.

As the finance landscape rapidly evolves, these evolving programmes will be instrumental in preparing the next generation of finance professionals to drive innovation and foster growth.

The writer is Founder and CFO, Vantage Knowledge Academy.

SCHOLARSHIPS

UQ International High Achievers Award - India

Offered by the University of Queensland, Australia

Eligibility: Students who hold a valid Indian passport and have received an offer for a full-time UG or PG course and have English language

proficiency, relevant programme entry rank, and competitive scores.

Rewards: 20% reduction in tuition fees per semester

Application: Online
Deadline: Round the year
www.b4s.in/edge/UQII

Education Future International Scholarship
Offered by the Education

Future organisation

Eligibility: Indian nationals with a valid passport who are pursuing a UG or PG course in a recognised institution outside India and have secured a minimum of 60% marks in Class 10 and 12, and can prove the absence of any means for education funding.

Rewards: Between ₹200,000 and ₹10,00,000

Application: Online
Deadline: Round the year
www.b4s.in/edge/EFIS5

Robert Gordon University GREAT Scholarships
Offered by the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen, the U.K., in partnership with the British Council and GREAT Britain Campaign.

Rewards: Indian citizens

who have been accepted for a full-time, on-campus PG programme starting this September and classified as international fee-payers.

Rewards: £10,000 towards tuition fees

Application: Online
Deadline: June 22
www.b4s.in/edge/GUG1

Courtesy: buddy4study

Md. Sajid Khan

Technology is a significant disruptor in many professions, and the accountancy career path is also evolving in response. Today's accountants think beyond the traditional roles of bookkeeping and financial reporting and take the opportunity to modernise their own capabilities by becoming technologically proficient.

Communication skills

Modern accountancy requires both technical knowledge and soft skills. AI and automation will reshape the profession, not replace it. This means accountants now work on projects that involve interpreting complex data points, offering strategic insights, and building advisory services that provide an overarching sense of the business outside the numbers. Accountants must reinvent themselves as trusted business advisors,



making well-informed decisions to drive financial growth.

Accountants are no lon-

ger number crunchers. They must be able to convey key financial insights clearly to clients, stakeholders, and their teams. In a tech-dominated world, the ability to cut through the noise and simplify com-

plex data, build trust, and present fresh ideas effectively separates top professionals from the rest. A

mindset for continuous learning and adaptability also adds value.

Embrace AI

Like other professionals, accountants face the concern that AI and automation could impact their jobs. However, the spectre of AI replacing people is a bit far-fetched. Instead, AI will help accountants by automating routine repetitive tasks and will allow them to focus on more value-added work. The key is to learn the skill sets that help one use AI-powered tools for sharp financial analysis, advisory services, and predictive analytics.

Those who can integrate AI tools with human judgement will be able to help businesses solve complex financial issues.

Emotional intelligence

While tech is a big factor, emotional intelligence also plays a role in changing accountancy. Technology can process vast amounts of data, cut down redundan-

dances and offer quick solutions, but it will not be able to master core emotions such as empathy or the ability to build solid relationships. Accountants who understand emotions will be able to offer personalised financial advice and develop deeper professional relationships. Emotional intelligence also helps in better workplace collaboration and strengthens trust, making it a valuable skill in the digital-first world.

Cybersecurity

With cyber attacks are seeing an uptick, both in volume and sophistication, accountants have to learn about major cyber threats and understand the tenets of data privacy and risk mitigation strategies to be able to safeguard sensitive information.

Ethical hacking principles, incident response planning, and compliance with global data security regulations are major knowledge areas for accountants.

Policy interpretation
Strong analytical and critical thinking skills to interpret new policies and their implications are crucial. Accountants will be asked for inputs and guidance in multiple areas, including sustainability reporting, environmental, social, and governance (ESG) frameworks and cross-border tax regulations. The ability to offer a detailed analysis will mean accountants will play a bigger role in business strategy.

The future is both promising and demanding for aspiring accountants, who will need to stay abreast of major industry trends, use technology safely and ethically, and communicate well. New-age accountants have to be strategic thinkers, ethical leaders, and technology-savvy professionals rolled into one.

The writer is Director-India, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA).

Greening the grid

Prasanta Sarkar, Co-founder and CEO, Newtrace, a green hydrogen electrolyser company, on his domain



FUTURE PERFECT
Ananya Ganapathy

The next in the series featuring conversations with entrepreneurs, technologists and researchers about emerging technologies and what students need to know about these fields.

What do you do?

I am the co-founder and CEO of Newtrace, a Bengaluru-based deep-tech start-up focused on green hydrogen technology. Green hydrogen is produced using clean sources such as water and renewable electricity compared to grey hydrogen, which uses CO₂-emitting hydrocarbons.

At Newtrace, we are working on developing technologies to enable production of green hydrogen at the lowest cost from renewable electricity and water. We design, develop and manufacture electrolyzers with improved efficiency and lower cost while aiming to reduce the reliance on rare earth metals.

My background is in Aerospace Engineering. I have a Ph.D. in fluid mechanics and energy engineering. I have worked in Leonardo Helicopters.

Why is your work important?

Green hydrogen is significant because it addresses critical challenges in energy, climate and economic growth. It will play a vital role in reducing emissions from hard-to-abate sectors like steel, refineries, chemicals, cement, aviation, shipping and reduce dependence on fossil fuels, thus enhancing energy security for nations.

Green hydrogen is essential to achieve global net zero emission targets, support cleaner industrial processes and foster innovation, job creation and investments in renewable energy infrastructure.

What is exciting about your work?

What makes our work truly exciting is its profound impact on the future of energy and climate. We work at the



intersection of technology development along with solving for mass scale manufacturing and reliability of the systems – all with the single goal of delivering green hydrogen to our customers at the lowest cost.

Any experiences in college that led you to become an entrepreneur?

Until college, I had been driven primarily by my curiosity. In college, I landed among a group of not only curious and intellectually smart individuals but also bold decision makers. That experience was transformative for me – to be able to make decisions independently with limited information, to counter self-doubt yet choose the path less taken. That framework provided the foundation to embrace risks and chart my unique path as an entrepreneur.

What should students know about your field?

Students should understand the massive changes and opportunities associated with the transition from fossil fuels to clean energy. Clean energy refers to energy sources that produce little to no greenhouse gas emissions, thereby helping combat climate change.

Most clean energy sources like solar or wind are intermittent in availability. Therefore, it is important to build different forms of energy sources as well as storage and utilisation technologies. The global energy challenges we face today will be solved only through diverse approaches and technologies, and green hydrogen is an important component of that.

The writer is an avid follower of emerging technologies and their applications.

Ankit Sharma

Battery technology has become a crucial factor in an era of technological breakthroughs and drive toward sustainability. From electric vehicles and portable electronics to renewable energy, efficient and reliable energy storage solutions are key to building a sustainable future. The global demand for lithium-ion batteries is expected to touch \$57.4 billion in 2024 and go up to \$98.5 billion by 2030.

New courses

Globally, momentum for battery technology is gathering momentum with universities such as Stanford and MIT in the U.S. establishing courses involving electro-chemistry for manufacturing of batteries. Similarly, in Germany, the Technical University of Munich has included topics such as manufacturing of batteries and their recycling in its curriculum. In India, academic institutions such as IITs and IISc have initiated programmes like Energy Engineering and Battery Materials and Design, which lag

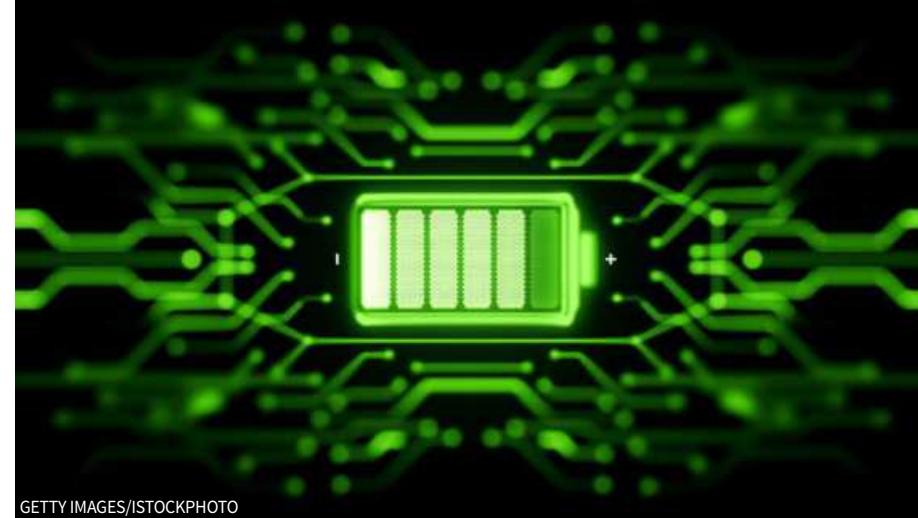
behind their international counterparts in practical exposure and industry collaborations. This area requires strategic partnerships to enhance the quality of education and prepare students by integrating internships, research projects, and hands-on training into the curricula.

The growing adoption of electric vehicles and renewable energy sources underlines the need for innovation in battery chemistries. Advanced chemistries like Lithium Manganese Iron Phosphate (LMFP) and Nickel Manganese Cobalt Aluminium Oxide (NMCA) are leading this evolution. LMFP com-

bines the safety and longevity of Lithium Iron Phosphate with a much higher energy density, ideal for EV applications, while NMCA enhances energy efficiency, reduces cost, and minimises the use of critical materials like cobalt. Another promising development is in solid-state batteries, which are

Green charge

The preparation of the next generation of battery engineers will be critical to meet the surging demand for clean energy and sustainable technologies



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safer and provide better energy density than traditional options, though scalability issues also remain.

The collaboration between academia and industry is critical to the development of battery research, as can be seen from successful examples such as the partnership between Tesla and Dall豪斯ie University or CATL and Tsinghua University. Indian institutions need to initiate research activities that align with real-world applications and industrial demands.

If academic efforts can be aligned with practical needs, India can contribute to innovation in the field of battery engineering and drive the global energy transition.

Battery technology plays a crucial role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, but its production and disposal are serious environmental concerns.

Recycling and closed-loop systems offer promising solutions. For example, recycling lithium-ion batteries can save up to 30% of CO₂ emissions compared to mining new materials and recover up to 95% of valuable metals like nickel, cobalt, and lithium. A circu-

lar system can reduce waste by 60%. Educational institutions must incorporate these sustainability principles into their engineering curricula and prepare future engineers to design batteries that are easier to recycle and reuse so that environmental harm can be minimised while meeting the growing demand for energy storage solutions.

Specialised career paths

The battery industry offers diverse and specialised career paths. Current mainstream options include design engineers, assembly operators, solid-state researchers, and circular economy analysts.

The preparation of the next generation of battery engineers will be critical to meet the surging demand for clean energy and sustainable technologies. It is in the collective efforts of academia, industry stakeholders, and policymakers that a skilled workforce can be built to drive the global transition to a greener, more energy-efficient future.

The writer is the Co-Founder and Director, Vidyuta Materials Pvt. Ltd.

Navigate the Management maze

With an industry-driven approach, curriculum flexibility, and global exposure, a PGDM programme offers a chance for overall development

Curriculum: The PGDM programme has more autonomy in designing the curriculum compared to an MBA programme and is updated every year. Thus students are trained for current and latest industry requirements.

Structure: One example of the PGDM's

structural flexibility is delivering the curriculum as a trimester or semester schedule, which provides a wide range of 40-45 courses spread over six different terms of 8-10 weeks each. In contrast, an MBA programme offers 30-35 courses across four semesters. Another aspect is the assessment design. In a PGDM programme, continuous and end-term evalua-

tion can be rationalised according to requirement. For example, practical courses such as Financial Modelling and Marketing Analytics may go through lab-based assessment, and courses like Organisation Behaviour may be assessed through case study evaluation.

Teaching-Learning: The coursework of a PGDM programme is delivered through a mix of academic and corporate trainers. Academic trainers lay the conceptual groundwork, while corporate trainers build a practical knowledge structure on it. Another aspect is the addition of corporate certificates to the curri-

culum. Industry training is integrated through internships, live projects, guest lectures, industry visits, and consulting assignments, thus ensuring hands-on exposure and real-world learning. These are largely credit-based activities embedded in the curriculum delivery over the tenure of the programme.

Hence, it provides aspirants with sequential learning of content building to practical understanding to gap identification

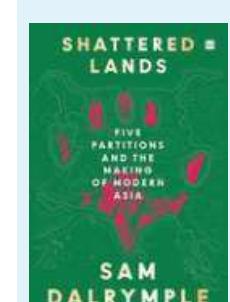
to relearning.

Global integration: In many institutions, the PGDM programmes train students to develop global competencies. There are also programmes that offer a dual certification in collaboration with foreign universities.

These global immersion programmes equip students to compete in business environments across the world.

In a nutshell, a PGDM Programme offers practical learning, greater exposure, innovative teaching-learning pedagogy, and overall development to students.

Views expressed are personal

**ON THE SHELF****■ Shattered Lands: Five Partitions and the Making of Modern Asia**

As recently as 1928, a vast swath of Asia — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, Bhutan, Yemen, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait — were bound together under a single imperial banner, an entity known officially as the 'Indian Empire', or more simply as the *Raj*. It was the British Empire's crown jewel, a vast dominion stretching from the Red Sea to the jungles of Southeast Asia. Then, in the space of just 50 years, the Indian Empire

shattered. Five partitions tore it apart, carving out new nations, redrawing maps, and leaving behind a legacy of war, exile, and division. *Shattered Lands* presents the story of how the Indian Empire was unmade. How a single, sprawling dominion became 12 modern nations and how the map of modern Asia was made.

Author: Sam Dalrymple

Publisher: Fourth Estate

Price: ₹799

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