

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY GANDHINAGAR

NORMS FOR CREDIT TRANSFER FROM ONLINE COURSES

(As approved by the Chairman, Senate on 31st March, 2020)

Objective:

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs), which make university courses available to thousands of students, are disruptive, technology-driven learning platforms that are challenging traditional educational models. With the ability to reach a large number of learners around the world, MOOCs have made a visible and largely positive impact on open education.

Allowing students to learn via these platforms and get credit for it opens up the opportunity for new ways for students to access knowledge and develop their skills. This in turn liberalizes their education and also forces traditional classroom learning to evolve. Numerous companies also recognize the value addition from, say, a Udacity nanodegree or a Coursera Capstone project. Additionally, MOOCs can be leveraged to enhance our own course offerings (e.g., by using flipped classrooms) and add to the richness of our overall catalogue. In this context, the following is proposed.

Features:

1. Students at IITGN may be encouraged to take courses on various online platforms (see “Platforms” below).
2. Up to 16 credits worth of coursework for UG (B.Tech.) students and up to 8 credits worth of coursework for PG students (M.Sc., M.A., M.Tech, Ph.D.), completed via MOOCs, may be counted towards the graduation requirements.
3. The MOOCs will be treated as simply having “Passed” or “Failed”. In other words, credits earned via MOOCs will not count towards a student’s CPI. However, the total number of “Pass/Fail” credits over the entire coursework of a student in a program will be capped at 16 for undergraduate students and 8 for postgraduate students (see “Pass/Fail Considerations” below).
4. Core courses will typically not be allowed; MOOCs will count towards electives only. However, in exceptional circumstances or in case of certain courses (for instance, Computing), the Chairman, Senate may permit that credits earned in core courses (or their close equivalent) via MOOCs be counted towards graduation requirements.
5. MOOCs registered by a student during a semester will not count towards the credit overload. However, a student may *not* register only for MOOCs during a semester; registration for some courses at the institute (with full fee payment) will be required.
6. The institute may consider reimbursing part of the costs incurred by a student towards the MOOCs upon presentation of the original course completion certificate (see Financial Structure below).
7. Students on suspension may register for MOOCs and earn credit.

Details:

1. Types of Courses:

1. Faculty Sponsored: These courses will be shepherded by IITGN faculty, and would be largely in his/her area of interest. The “sponsoring” faculty will be responsible for coordinating course logistics, meeting with students periodically, organizing review sessions, conducting tutorials, solving doubts, coordinating with the original course instructor (when possible) for live interactions with the students, monitoring the conduct of exams for the course, submitting grades, etc.
2. Courses done directly by students: Students are free to choose their own courses on MOOCs (subject to the conditions below). These may be, for example, in areas that are under-represented at IITGN in terms of faculty expertise. The responsibility of completing such courses lies with the student.

2. Platforms:

A. Swayam – NPTEL

1. All Swayam – NPTEL Online Certification Courses will be included.
2. NPTEL MOOCs have the advantage of localization and context, are generally taught by IIT / IISc / IIM / IISER / AIIMS faculty, include an on-site proctored exam, cost much less than other online platforms and provide enhanced interaction opportunities with the actual instructors. The quality of course offerings on NPTEL has significantly improved over the years, more rigor has been added, and this continues to be a focus area for the NPTEL team. Thus, there are clear advantages to NPTEL MOOCs.
3. NPTEL courses are typically 4 week, 8 week and 12 week long, and are offered in slots that are generally aligned with the IITGN semesters. The 4-, 8- and 12-week courses will map onto 1, 2 and 3 credits respectively in the IITGN system.

B. Non-NPTEL platforms

1. There is an extremely high level of heterogeneity in the nature, duration, expectations, format and logistics of MOOCs on other platforms such as Coursera, EdX, Udacity, etc. Yet, for the benefit of the students, MOOCs on these platforms may also be included towards the graduation requirements.
2. The courses (and credits) on non-NPTEL platforms will be approved on a case-by-case basis. A student wanting to include a course from these platforms will provide a justification on how/why a certain course can be mapped to an equivalent course at IITGN. The course and the student’s rationale will be vetted by the student’s Faculty Advisor and he/she will make a detailed recommendation to the Dean, Academic Affairs who will seek approval of the Chairman, Senate. This process must be completed before the student registers for the course.
3. Once a course on these non-NPTEL platforms has been approved, it will continue to remain approved for three years and no fresh approvals will be needed for subsequent students wanting to take the same course.

- C. Additionally, each discipline may identify a set of top quality MOOCs in various domains independent of the platform on which they are offered and seek approval from the Chairman, Senate for this set of courses. Students may then freely register for these courses without having to go through the process mentioned in B2 above.

3. Financial Structure:

1. Enrolment in NPTEL courses is typically free of cost, as is watching the videos and submitting the weekly assignments. However, the registration for the in-person proctored certification examination requires payment of a nominal fee (currently about Rs. 1,000).
2. The cost on other non-NPTEL platforms varies considerably.
3. To begin with, students will be expected to pay the cost associated with the course on any platform. However, for faculty sponsored courses, this cost will be reimbursed to the students upon producing the course completion certificate.
4. For courses that students do on their own, the costs will have to be borne by the students themselves.

4. Pass/Fail Considerations:

1. The institute currently provides students the opportunity to convert up to 2 courses in which they receive a non-fail letter grade to a "Pass" grade. As a consequence, the course still gets counted towards the graduation requirements, but is not included in the CPI calculation.
2. The grades for the MOOCs will also be treated similarly, i.e. the student will be considered as having passed or failed the course. No letter grade will be awarded.
3. The total number of credits that a UG student can claim under the Pass/Fail option will be capped at 16 (combined across courses done online and at the institute).. Likewise, the total number of credits that a PG student can claim for this benefit will be capped at 8 (combined across courses done online and at the institute). However, no student may convert more than two courses done at the institute to Pass/Fail (see examples below).
4. Examples:
 - i. A UG student successfully completes four 3-credit courses online. These, by default will be considered as "Pass" and thus will be counted in the 16 credit limit. The student can then convert a non-Fail letter grade of only one more 4-credit course done at the institute to a "Pass" grade.
 - ii. Another UG student does not take any courses online. This student can convert a non-Fail letter grade to a "Pass" grade in a maximum of two courses done at the institute.
 - iii. A PG student successfully completes one 2-credit course online. This student can utilize the "Pass/Fail" option for two 3-credit courses or one 4-credit and another 2-credit course done at the institute.
 - iv. A PG student does no course online. The student can convert a non-Fail letter grade to a "Pass" grade in a maximum of two courses done at the institute.

The provision for credit transfer from online courses will be made available to all students with effect from Semester II of 2019-20.