

Group Discussion Format

We will be creating teams for the GD based on similar themes suggested by different colleges. Each group will be presented with a problem statement / theme similar to their problem statement. Each GD will have 7-8 members.

Format:

Step 1: Orientation & Theme Brief (5 minutes)

At the start of the session, the moderator formally welcomes the participants and clearly states that this is not a conventional group discussion or debate. Participants are told that they are entering a simulated policy-formulation environment similar to what is used by governments, think tanks, and research bodies.

The moderator then introduces the assigned theme (for example: Barriers faced by student-led startups in India). This theme is framed as a policy problem. The moderator explains:

- What the theme broadly covers
- Why it matters at a national level
- What kind of thinking is expected (system-level, not personal anecdotes)

Next, the moderator explains the expected output. Participants are told that by the end of the session, the group should arrive at 2–3 clear policy recommendations that are **feasible, implementable, and relevant** to India's startup ecosystem.

Finally, the moderator lays down basic rules:

- Speak concisely
 - Avoid interrupting
 - Anchor points in logic, experience, or data where possible
 - Focus on what policy should do, not who is right
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Step 2: Individual Policy Thinking Time (7 minutes)

All participants are asked to ***mute themselves*** and ***keep cameras on***. During these seven minutes, ***no discussion takes place among any other teams*** (internal discussion between team members is ***allowed***). Instead, each participant independently thinks through the theme and structures their ideas.

They are asked to reflect on three things:

1. One key solution related to the theme
2. The root cause of that problem
3. A policy-level intervention

Step 3: Collaborative Policy Discussion (15 minutes)

Solution Mapping

Participants begin by sharing the solutions they identified during individual thinking time.

The group collectively tries to answer:

- What are the most recurring or impactful solutions?
- Who is affected? (students, universities, startups, investors, government)

The moderator plays an active role here by:

- Preventing repetition
- Asking clarifying questions
- Nudging participants to move from surface issues to structural causes

By the end of this phase, the group should have 2–3 clearly defined policy solutions that ***everyone/majority agrees*** are important.

Step 4: Feasibility & Impact Review (10 minutes)

This step separates good ideas from usable policy.

The group now evaluates the proposed solutions ***through a practical lens***. Participants discuss:

- Who will implement the policy (central government, state government, universities, incubators)
- Whether it is financially and administratively feasible
- Time horizon (short-term vs long-term impact)
- Scalability across regions and institutions

By the end of this step, weaker or impractical ideas naturally drop off, and the strongest 2–3 recommendations remain.

Step 5: Policy Summary & Wrap-Up (5 minutes)

In the final stage, one participant (voluntarily or selected by the moderator) presents a clear *verbal summary of the discussion*.

This summary includes:

- The key problems identified
- The final policy recommendations
- A brief note on expected impact