



Birla Institute of Technology & Science, Pilani

Pilani | Dubai | Goa | Hyderabad



December 11, 2017

On the Work Integrated Learning Programmes of BITS Pilani

To All Stakeholders

We are aware that the Supreme Court in its recent judgement of November 03, 2017 in the matter of Orissa Lift Irrigation Corp. Ltd vs Rabi Sankar Patro & Ors (**Judgement**) has suspended the engineering degrees awarded by certain deemed to be universities and also restrained all deemed to be universities to carry on any courses in distance education mode from Academic Session 2018-2019 onwards, until it is permissible to conduct such courses in distance education mode and specific permissions are granted by concerned regulatory authorities.

The Judgement though was delivered on the facts of the case before the Supreme Court, but we are mindful of the apprehensions it may cause amongst our students with respect to the validity of the degrees awarded by Birla Institute of Technology and Sciences, Pilani (**BITS Pilani**) under its 'work integrated learning programmes' (**WILP**).

It is important to share again with you background and the genesis of WILP for better understanding of the Judgment and its implications to WILP.

About WILP:

WILP are specifically focused on the higher education and up-skilling needs of industry professionals, integrated with the work environment, and are conducted with the same rigour as campus based programmes, with a very high component of synchronous instruction, and use of the latest educational technologies.

BITS is the pioneer of WILP and till date the model of WILP is one of its kind in India. BITS Pilani started its WILP in the year 1979 and evolved it in accordance with the objectives of the National Policy on Education, 1986 (amended in 1992) i.e. to increase width of higher education in India. Over a period of more than 40 years, we believe, WILP has been well received and accepted by everybody concerned. BITS take great pride and satisfaction in achieving the objectives of National Policy on Education by extending the reach of higher education to larger population through its WILP without in any way compromising on the standards of quality of education.

The WILP of BITS Pilani, is therefore different from traditional open & distance or correspondence learning programmes due to the reasons stated hereunder:

- Enrollment is permitted only to suitably qualified, employed professionals having specified educational qualifications, with adequate and relevant work experience, to programmes that are closely aligned with their work profiles.
- Enrollment also requires endorsement of the employer, and a commitment from the employer to provide necessary support (including that of a qualified mentor) and facilities to enable effective work integrated learning. The rationale is on the one hand to achieve more effective integration between the academic content and the activity at work, and on the other that the skill and knowledge enhancement attained by the employee through these programmes would ultimately benefit the organization by increasing productivity.



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- c) These programmes use a judicious combination of synchronous and asynchronous modes of delivery, for regular and effective interaction between the students and faculty members of our Institute, to maintain the necessary academic rigour and standards of instruction.

WILP are akin to programmes offered on campus, in terms of academic credits, curriculum, content, pedagogy, assessment methodology, and programme completion requirements. WILP represent an educational innovation that adapts to new demands for continuing education at the work place, that integrates work with education, and promotes continuous learning.

The Judgement:

The aspect of the Judgement, pertaining to the validity of degrees, is specific to the degrees awarded by the institutions named in the Judgement, for the period specified, and not to others.

It is pertinent to point out that in the said Judgement, the Supreme Court has distinguished between two kinds of Deemed to be Universities. It states:

“39.

The matter can be considered under two categories: -

a. The first category could be of a Deemed to be University which was conferred such status for its excellence in a field of technological subject, is now desirous of introducing courses or programmes integrally connected with the area-in respect of which it was conferred Deemed to be University status.....

b. The second category could be of Deemed to be University which was conferred such status for its excellence in subjects which are completely un-related to the field in which new courses are sought to be introduced.....

We are concerned in the present cases with the second category of Deemed to be Universities. In the present cases, none of the Deemed to be Universities was conferred such status for its excellence in the field of Engineering. Their field were completely un-related.....And yet, they started courses in Engineering through distance education mode without the approval of AICTE.....”

“40.

The affidavit of as referred to hereinabove as well as the stand of UGC and submissions made by Mr. Maninder Singh, learned Additional Solicitor General make it clear that such Deemed to be Universities in the second category mentioned above are not entitled, as a matter of right, to introduce courses leading to degrees in Engineering without approval of AICTE.

Therefore, with the above background, BITS firmly believe that the Judgment has no implications to its WILP since it falls in the first category of deemed to be universities.

We would like to reassure students, the industry and all well-wishers alike that there is no cause for anxiety. We will continue to offer programmes through WILP.

We reiterate that BITS has been always, and is committed firmly to upholding the highest standards in education, and unimpeachable integrity in its practices. We trust that this communication will have answered many of the questions you might have. We will keep you abreast of all developments in the matter. If you do have any specific questions, you may address them to connect@wilp.bits-pilani.ac.in.



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