

Edexcel London Examinations launches new qualifications—Primary Curriculum, International Diploma and Qualifications & Credit Framework



Premila Paulraj

Edexcel, the international qualification which has a student body of 1.1 million spread across 85 countries and over 5000 entrants sitting examinations across 200 schools and Edexcel HND Centers in Sri Lanka, added more facets to its already extensive scope of qualifications and curricula. Launching the International Diploma and introducing the Primary and Lower Secondary curricula to the syllabi accessible to students as preparation for the expansive higher education options available, the Edexcel's Sri Lanka Country Office aligns Sri Lanka with the new trends and modes being introduced worldwide by Edexcel.



Paul Hilder - Deputy Director, British Council

As Territory Manager for Edexcel in India Subcontinent Premila Paulraj explained, "Edexcel is all about equipping students with the apt foundation to face the challenges in the workplace. We already have our IGCSE and GCE Ordinary and Advanced Levels well in place for over 35 years, but with the introduction of the Primary and Lower Secondary curricula, we are ensuring that these young pupils gain that foundation in their early education years." She also briefly touched on the Edexcel International Diploma, a composite qualification that helps students gain a competitive advantage in studying for A/levels, the BTEC Extended National Diploma or even in applying for university. Elucidating further, the Head of Stakeholder Relations of Edexcel, David Davies stated that the International Diploma, which is fully accredited by Ofqual, (UK's educational standards and regulations authority) is recognised by universities and employers across the globe, setting students apart for success in this very competitive 21st century. "It is equivalent to four A Levels and caters to students who have different aspirations and styles of learning, honed through a unique package of well recognised and respected qualifications. The idea is to develop holistic global citizens equipped with a rigorous knowledge base, which forms the foundation for building further skills specific to their individual areas of interest. There is a definite need for the current day student to differentiate themselves from their peers, whether it's in university or when applying for employment. We are in a global marketplace and in most cases, students are competing for limited places eyed by large numbers of applicants. Employers therefore, are looking for individuals who demonstrate employability skills as well as economic, cultural and social values.



Dr. David Davies - Head of Stakeholder Relations for Edexcel



Suriya Bibile - Regional Development Manager



Launch of the Primary and Lower Secondary Curriculum by Preeti D'mello - Regional Director

The International Diploma is constructed on a triad of knowledge, skills and behaviour. "A variety in choice of subjects is available in terms of developing knowledge levels in their chosen career path, while we hone skills such as communication, research, independent learning, problem solving, project management, presentation and critical thinking. Behavioural skills are introduced through economic awareness, cultural sensitivity, career mindedness and self motivation."



A token of appreciation being presented to Preeti D'Mello - Regional Director for Edexcel by Premila Paulraj - Territory Manager for Edexcel India Sub continent and Suriya Bibile, Regional Development Manager Sri Lanka and Maldives. Pix by M.D.Nissanka

The Qualifications Credit Framework (QCF) being introduced by Edexcel aims to provide more flexible routes to gaining full qualifications and enables qualifications and progression to be achieved in small steps. Learners are thus able to accumulate and transfer credits enabling a 'pick and mix' within a framework of Rules of Combination (RoC). The objective is to ensure that students are empowered with a wider range of achievements that are recognized within a more inclusive qualifi-

cations framework and establishing a simpler qualifications system that is more responsive to employer and individual needs.

Davies also explained the rudiments of the primary and lower secondary curricula being introduced by Edexcel to the audience, which had among them the Deputy Director Paul Hilder and other officials from the British Council, Edexcel's Regional Director for the Indian Sub-Continent Dr. Preeti D'Mello, principals,



Premila Paulraj Lighting the oil lamp

teachers and renowned academia. "Our IGCSE and GCE programmes have previously been aligned to pupils of 14 plus, but having talked to schools, we realised the real need for an international curriculum being introduced to younger pupils that will prepare them from secondary level. At primary level, we have brought together a framework of three subjects, English, Mathematics and Science, which permeates throughout to the Lower Secondary level, to give students from the ages of 7 to 11 a head start in an easy to implement framework, instituting a solid foundation for life long learning. These are undoubtedly international benchmarks of achievement, as with the tests being externally marked, the certifications enables an ease in transition to the next step of learning, in a very engaging and creatively embedded knowledge framework. It forms a natural follow on from step to step, leading to improved results and excellent preparation for IGCSE or GCE A Levels or its equivalent." Davies adds that resultant to these new curricula, students gain a seamless and cohesive learning experience, preparing them for the higher education milieu from early years.

Regional Development Manager Sri Lanka and the Maldives Suriya Bibile in his concluding remarks mentioned that Edexcel has a pragmatic 'Work-ready' qualification, which has proven its worth due to over 100 professional bodies and institutions around the world granting exemptions on their professional examinations or presenting Edexcel HND qualifiers with professional membership in those bodies. "With this qualification, a student can gain entrance into the final year of a university degree in the UK or several other countries which is a considerable cost advantage to a Sri Lankan student," he concludes.



Students of St. Thomas' Mt. Lavinia



Suriya Bibile, Preeti D'Mello, Paul Hilder, Goolbai Gunasekera

Move to help students planning to study in varsities abroad that insist on four-year graduation as eligibility for joining a PG course

The newly established Vijayanagar Sri Krishnadevaraya University in Bellary appears to be among the first few universities in the State to be off the block in reintroducing the Honours degrees.

The four-year bachelor's degree course leading to an Honours degree had been discontinued a couple of decades ago following the introduction of Master's degree courses. The University of Mysore was among the universities that used to offer Master's degree courses.

The Vijayanagar Sri Krishnadevaraya University, which came into being in August 2010, is all set to offer Honours degrees from the current academic year to its students.

Vice-Chancellor Manjappa Hosamane told The Hindu EducationPlus that the new Honours degree will be of help to students planning to study in universities abroad that insist on four-year graduation as eligibility for joining a post-graduation course.

The University has already sent a proposal in this regard to Governor H.K. Bhardwaj, who is also the Chancellor of Universities in the State, and is optimistic of securing a clearance in time for introduction of the course by August this year when the academic year starts.

The State Higher Education Council has issued general guidelines for all universi-

ties in the State to consider offering Honours degree courses. Dr. Hosamane said, "This is in line with the 12 (+) (+) Plan of the University Grants Commission (UGC) insisting on introducing the Honours degree."

"Students interested in pursuing higher education after completing their Bachelor's degree will have to join the post-graduate course at the University. If they prefer to discontinue the studies after completing the first year, they will be awarded the Honours degree," he said, adding that from the next academic year, the four-year Honours degree will be introduced at the graduate level itself.

The University will also introduce Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) syllabus in the post-graduate courses. Graduates of all streams, including science, arts and commerce, can opt to study one subject of their choice along with the regular subjects.

Valuable skills

Citing an example, Prof. Hosamane said

For an Honours degree

Vijayanagar varsity awaits nod from Governor to implement proposal



Manjappa Hosamane

that a student preferring to do postgraduation in Kannada can opt to study one subject from among computer science, physics, economics, mathematics, history, political science and management, which will help in developing skills and additional knowledge and provide scope for easy employability.

He said that the CBCS syllabus will be introduced from August this year for Management studies, M.Com, Industrial Chemistry and Kannada. The syllabus has been prepared.

Mysore Universities. But the difference between the CBCS proposed by Sri Krishnadevaraya University and the syllabus of the two other universities was with regard to placement of the student in a company/firm. "Unlike in the two other universities, the CBCS syllabus offered by our university will have both theory and practicals and continuous evaluation of the students' performance through the semester system. During the third semester the student should work in any company/firm and submit a project report," he said adding that the new system will help the students to develop additional skills of their choice and expand the scope of employability.

The university, which came into existence last year after being carved out of Gulbarga University and having jurisdic-

tion over 84 degree colleges in Bellary and Koppal districts, has plans to introduce post-graduate courses in micro-biology, chemistry, physics, computer sciences and the like, in addition to the existing 10 courses - Kannada, Mineral Processing, Economics, Maths, M.Com, MSW, History, Management, English, and Industrial Chemistry - being offered on its campus in Bellary city and at the Nandihalli PG centre in Sandur.

All the 10 departments are being managed with skeletal teaching staff and guest faculty. "We are awaiting the clearance from the Government to recruit teaching staff and only after that can the new courses be introduced." Approval has been sought to appoint 67 teaching and 150 non-teaching staff.

The University is housed in the PG centre building and has been allotted 140 acres of land to develop the infrastructure. The Government had sanctioned Rs. 10 crore for construction of buildings on the Bellary campus.