



REDEFINING PARAMETERS TO ENHANCE CAMPUS PLACEMENT: A HOLISTIC APPROACH

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Abstract: Gone are the days when priority was given to knowledge about the subject pursued by the candidate, understanding about the basic concepts and its application in future. The corporates, nowadays, are giving more stress upon the aptitude and overall smartness of the candidates as a measuring tool at the time of selection for the vacancies they have for various job roles. With the advent of New Education Policy (NEP), the Universities and Educational Institutions have also changed their priorities and preferences from providing best knowledge about the subject matter and stream to providing best platform for Holistic development for their students. A lot of efforts are made to cultivate the required vocational skills in the students so that highest packages from various corporates, both domestic and international, are offered to their enrolled students. Campus placements have become the most significant yardstick to measure the performance of the Educational Temples. Nevertheless the higher ranking of these Institutions is a consequence of average package which they are able to grab through organizing successful campus placement drives. There are various means adopted to have big corporates in the bucket list and to get big salary figures for the students. This article will throw light on various parameters to be considered to enhance Campus Placement of Educational Institutions.

Key words: Campus placement, employability, Cost to Company, TPO, and Training and Placement cell

Objective: As I have been at various roles in Training and placement cell of various Institutions and Universities, I have observed various factors affecting the percentage of students placed and the average CTC (Cost to Company). There are various issues related to Campus placement scenario, which I would like to raise and discuss so that a better output in terms of students placed can be achieved and practices adopted for better placements can be improved. As a large number of private universities are mushrooming in field of education and research, my article may provide an organized way of creating and functioning of TP Cell.

This article will also discuss various methods used commonly for selection of students and the basic requirements as far as knowledge and skills present in the candidates to compete with their batch mates and to create employability so that the candidates can fulfill the expectation of the employers of their choice. It will help them to debut their career with the Dream Company.

In this competitive corporate world, to become best choice for recruiters is a big accomplishment. It's not only the best academic record which the recruiters are looking for in a candidate, but a perfectly groomed personality, with required skills and an aptitude to get the work done efficiently are most sought after characteristics while selecting a candidate. Apart from these, there are plentiful factors which contribute towards selection and recruitment of candidates from Educational Institutions. The higher placement ratio can help institutions fetch a better ranking and can contribute towards building up its reputation in the academic world.

Listed are the various parameters institutions should adopt to improve Placement ratio:

1. Academic journey

For the purpose of Internship and Placements, an Undergraduate candidate should disclose the grades or percentage secured in their Senior Secondary and Higher secondary Examinations. As academic performance is a reflection of learning proficiency of a candidate, it can be one of the selection criteria for the corporates. Now a days students are not able to score good in their higher secondary due to preparations for competitive exams like NEET, JEE etc, it is always better to mention senior secondary scores. Next to this to be mentioned are the Semester scores till pre-final year for internships and till pre-final semester for placements, of that course.

2. Academic Gap

After their higher secondary exams many students take a Drop for a year or two to qualify some of the competitive exams. This period can be treated as Academic Gap. In some cases after UG Degree also some students take a job for a year or two and then proceed for pursuing higher degrees. This will also be treated as an Academic Gap, but can be compensated with the experience certificate.

3. Backlog

If students are not able to clear any paper in the ongoing course, it will be treated as Backlog for that semester unless it is cleared by reappearing that exam. It can be a temporary phase for pre-final year students, which can be cleared in coming academic year.

4. Professional/Technical Skills

Working knowledge of Computers is the most seeking feature in a candidate of any stream. One should have an average typing speed and compatibility with MS Excel. Along with this preparing Power Point Presentations and presentations skills are also a must for candidates. It fulfills the requirement as per NEP 9.1.2

5. Certifications

Over and above these basic requirements, one should have some professional certifications also as required by the domain of their area of study. These certification can be acquired during the academic year or during academic breaks, summer or winter. It gives coverage to NEP 9.1.1

6. Specializations

Every stream of study has got few fields which students can select as their area of concentration of study. Selection of this area and its combination with other areas should be done as per the interest, scope and level of difficulty. The field of specialization helps employers to select the suitable candidate, among all, as per the job role.

7. Projects/Researches/Paper Published

The teachers and mentors should motivate students to conduct research and get the research work published in some reputed journal. In some courses it has been made a compulsory part of curriculum. It improves the statistical and research skills along with writing, drafting and editing skills of the candidates. It also make their research work recognized. This activity is covered under NEP 9.3

8. Co-curricular activities

Activities and programs that take place outside of the traditional classroom but in some manner complement academic learning from classroom curriculum are considered as co-curricular activities. The inter-college and intra-college competitions related to a particular field of study like Moot Court for Law, Business Quiz and debate for Management, Hackathons for CS & IT are some co-curricular activities where students should participate actively to become employable.

9. Extra-curricular activities

Activities organized outside of the regular college day, curriculum or course intended to meet candidates' interests comes under Extra-curricular activities. Such activities can help students become more involved in their institution or community and can help them to develop social and soft skills and consequently their overall personality. This will help in enhancing Holistic Development of the students and will be registered under NEP 11.1

10. Internships/projects

The most important part of learning is an Internship or a project in some organization outside the Institution, where one can get working knowledge of the organization and its work culture. For beginners it can be General and later on one should take up a specialized internship as per ones' own specialization. Internships can be short or running during the session. Once a candidate is selected by an Employer, they can be given Long Internship with PPO (Pre-Placement Offer). The more number of Internships or projects undertaken by a candidate, the more he becomes 'employable', as companies will have to incur less cost to train him. A relevant internship helps one to remove the 'Fresher' tag as soon as possible.

11. General Awareness

Along with the subject knowledge, Internships, technical skills and soft skills, candidates are expected to be aware of the currents affairs of the world, at least which are related to their own stream. It shows how attentive and sensitive they are towards society and the world as a whole. It shows their level of understanding about various issues also.

12. Communication skills

A great emphasis is given on communication skills of the candidates, may they be of any stream. It is the ability to express, explain and convey something effectively to another person and also to understand and respond effectively. It means it is a two way process, where, not only speaking but listening and understanding is also important. This skill cannot be developed in a few days. It requires continuous learning and practice. The more one practices, the more perfect can be the communication. Voice quality and clarity along with proper use of right words at right place is very important.

Here both speaking and writing skills should be developed to become an employable candidate.

13. Appearance

A candidate with professional appearance is always preferred by any organization. A grooming workshop is also required to be conducted so that candidates can learn to carry a professional and pleasing personality. A neat and clean formal dress along with confidence is a great combination before appearing for an interview.

14. Presentation skills

A very much looked-for skill, which is vital for the selection of a candidate is how flawlessly he can present any topic in front of a few audience. The ability to speak confidently, strong hold on language, flow of the topic, selection of words, posture of the candidate etc. are few of the parameters on the basis of which they are judged. Use of technology to make the presentation attractive and impressive is the key requirement of this skillset.

15. Responsiveness

It's not only the ability to speak and present but also to give response to the audience and interviewer which leaves an impression. Being confident while answering to queries with proper use and framing of sentences is judged in a candidate.

16. Aptitude

The big Giants and MNCs stress upon aptitude ability of a candidate which includes Logical reasoning, Quantitative skills, and verbal ability and data interpretation skills. These skills are developed through repetitive guidance, coaching and practice. There are many colleges and Universities which provide free aptitude training to their students, so that they can be placed in Dream Companies with big packages.

17. Role of Department heads

Role of Departmental heads is very crucial for getting the maximum students of their department placed. The academic support provided at the time of Placement drive, rescheduling the classes and internal exams if required, assigning duty of Nodal officer for Placement to an efficient Faculty member are few of the supporting activities rendered by Departmental heads which motivate candidates and staff as well.

18. Role of Nodal Officers

Nodal Officer is a person, either teaching or non-teaching staff of a department, who plays a Pivotal role between the Training & Placement Office and the students of that stream. The person should carry a very strong relation with the students and the TPO. The

roles and responsibilities of a Nodal officer are most crucial and extensive. NEP 13.1 illustrates the importance of Teachers and Nodal officer. Important roles are listed below:

- Maintaining data of all the batches of students in all the programmes run by the department.
- Planning T&P activities specific for the department.
- Making Students coordinators in each batch
- Downloading them the T&P activity to be performed by the complete batch.
- Assessing the skills of the students
- Work upon their weaknesses.
- Identify the job roles as per the specialization and strengths of the students
- Arrange training sessions for students
- Arranging Mock Selection process for them
- Coordinate with TPO and the Company Officials
- Coordinate with TPO in arranging placement drives

19. Availability of Technical support

Most of the Corporates design selection process where candidates have to appear for multiple rounds including technical tests, aptitude tests, case studies, hackathons etc. For the smooth conduction of such placement drives, the institute must have a strong technical team to look after all the technical matters. It should also have well developed computer labs with sufficient number of computer systems so that online exams can be conducted smoothly.

If there is a requirement of conducting a virtual drive, then also there should be availability of strong data network in the campus may be a wi-fi campus is appreciated.

20. Infrastructure facilities

There should be a separate Placement cell block in the institutions where placement drive can be organized without any outside disturbance from other institutional activities. There should a Chamber for TPO, an office for administrative work, an auditorium for pre-placement presentation and talk, few halls to conduct written tests, few rooms for Group discussions, few cabins for face to face interviews, a dining hall with facilities and other required amenities. It gives a good impression about the institution to the corporates and visitors

21. Hospitality & Relationship management

The TPO and other supporting staff should be very cordial, highly dignified and sophisticated, well groomed in corporate etiquettes. Professional relations once made with Recruitment team of corporates pays in future times to come.

The arrangements with respect to the travel and stay of the team must be hassle-free and comfortable. A visit to the attractive destinations of the city can be arranged for them. A token of gratitude can be offered in the form of a beautiful gift. A memento presented to HR on behalf of the institution head is an essential part of the completion of drive.

Conclusion

With an ever-increasing world of competition, it is getting difficult for institutions to get the right students placed in the right company. With a large number of layoffs trending in the corporate world, it is very tough to get Off-Campus jobs. If proper effort with methodical approach is applied, the probability of getting placement for most of the potential candidate increases.

An adequate mix of all the above parameters may result into improved placement outcome. To adopt a systematic approach data of students of pre-final and final year batches should be maintained with the TPO. A sample of Excel sheet exhibited here can be used as reference.

S.No	Name	Mobil number	Email ID	Permanent Address	Courses	Specialization	10th	12th	Aggregation %	Graduation course	Graduation %	Graduation University	Academic Gap	Current Backlog	Professional Skills/Achievements	link of resume	Require Campus Placement (Y/N)	

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