

FULL POLICY BRIEF

Avoiding Curriculum Duplication: A Case for Waiving GST302 and GST402 in Specialized Programmes

A policy concept for institutional consideration

Entrepreneurship education helps prepare graduates to create opportunities and respond to a competitive job market. Courses such as GST302 and GST402 aim to introduce students to enterprise development, business planning, and basic management principles.

However, making these courses compulsory for every faculty can lead to duplication in programmes where similar training already exists within the core curriculum. Professional programmes such as engineering already include courses that develop many of the same skills the GST entrepreneurship courses are designed to teach.

Introducing a waiver system based on academic equivalence would allow universities to maintain the goal of entrepreneurship education while avoiding unnecessary repetition in programmes that already meet these objectives through their disciplinary training.

The Case for Academic Equivalence

Curriculum overlap

Engineering students already study courses such as Engineering Economics, Engineering Law, and Engineering Management. These subjects address financial analysis, project evaluation, legal awareness, and resource management within a technical and industry-specific context.

Recognizing equivalent training within a student's discipline would allow entrepreneurship education to remain part of the university experience without repeating content already covered in professional courses.

Academic workload

Students in professional programmes typically carry demanding course loads and high credit requirements. Reducing overlapping requirements would allow them to focus more effectively on core professional training.

Mentorship alignment

The current mentorship structure is often general. Students in specialized programmes may benefit more from mentorship linked directly to their field, such as industry practitioners, professional engineers, or sector-specific entrepreneurs.

Practical impact

Some requirements, such as mandatory business registration, may be completed mainly to satisfy course requirements rather than to support a long-term enterprise plan. Aligning these activities more closely with professional practice may increase their real value.

Example from an Engineering Perspective

Engineering programmes already expose students to enterprise and management concepts through several components:

- Economics and finance – Engineering Economics (FEG312, MEE312, CIE516, CIE526, MEE514)
- Operations – Production Planning and Control, Plant Management, Procurement Systems
- Professional practice – Engineering Law (FEG522, MEE526) and Engineering Management (MEE515, CIE516, CIE526)
- Experiential learning – Industrial training (SIWES I and II) and final year projects (599A and 599B)

These components develop financial decision-making, project management, legal awareness, innovation, and technical problem solving. Many of the ideas covered in GST entrepreneurship courses are therefore already addressed within the context of engineering practice.

Proposed Waiver Criteria

One possible solution is a waiver system based on academic equivalence. Under this model, students could be exempted from GST302 and GST402 if their programme already covers key entrepreneurial competencies.

A waiver could be granted where coursework includes training in at least four of the following areas:

1. Financial analysis – cost-benefit evaluation, for example Engineering Economics
2. Operations management – workflow planning and resource allocation, for example Engineering Management
3. Business law – regulatory compliance and professional contracts, for example Engineering Law
4. Innovation and product development – design projects or prototypes, for example final year projects

GST302 (Mentorship)

The SIWES or industrial training period could serve as the mentorship phase. Students would submit a structured report on the operational and business aspects of their host organization.

GST402 (Assessment)

Instead of a general business plan, students could include a commercialization or market analysis section within their final year project.

CAC registration

Business registration could remain part of the programme, with students encouraged to register professional service entities related to their discipline.

Implementation Safeguards

To ensure that entrepreneurship education remains part of the university experience, any waiver system should operate under clear academic safeguards.

- Waivers should apply only to programmes where equivalent entrepreneurial competencies are already covered within the approved curriculum.
- Faculties or departments should submit documented course equivalence for review and approval through the appropriate academic bodies.
- Students in programmes that do not demonstrate equivalent training would continue to complete the standard GST entrepreneurship courses.
- The waiver system should be subject to periodic review to ensure that programme curricula continue to meet the intended learning objectives.

These safeguards ensure that the policy reduces duplication while preserving the purpose of entrepreneurship education across the university.

Benefits of a Waiver System

1. A waiver system would reduce curriculum duplication and allow students to focus more on discipline-specific innovation.
2. It would also preserve the purpose of entrepreneurship education by ensuring that students who do not receive similar training within their programmes continue to benefit from the GST courses.
3. At the same time, it encourages more specialized enterprise development. Engineering students may explore engineering ventures, medical students may focus on healthcare innovation, and other disciplines may develop enterprises related to their professional fields.

Conclusion

Entrepreneurship education remains important for national development and graduate self-reliance. However, a uniform requirement that does not consider differences between academic programmes can lead to unnecessary repetition.

Allowing waivers where clear academic equivalence exists would maintain the goals of entrepreneurship education while respecting the depth of professional training in specialized disciplines.