Ashoka University, Sonepat, Haryana



Annexure-II

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR MARG NEW DELHI-110 002

PROFORMA FOR SUBMISSION OF EXPERT COMMITTEE REPORT

STATE PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES

Part - I - Preliminary

)	Constitution of the Expert Committee				
S. No.	Name & Address of the Member	Contact details	Remarks		
1.	Prof. Lakshman Chaturvedi Former VC, Guru Ghashidas University, Bilaspur B-30/2A-6-1, Ganga Bag Colony, Lanka, Varanasi – 221 005	(M) – 09827122551 laksh44@rediff.com	Chairman		
2.	Prof. V. K. Jain Vice- Chancellor Doon University, Motharawala Road, Kedarpur, PO: Ajabpur, Dehradun	(M) - 09868585788 (O) 0135-2533102 / 2533114 vkj0400@hotmail.com vcdoon@gmail.com	Member		
3.	Prof. G.Ravindran Department of Journalism and Communication, University of Madras, Chennai – 5	(O) 044-25399767 / 25399544 gopalanravindran@gmail.com	Member		
4.	Prof. Anup Beniwal Dean, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, GGS Indraprastha University, Sector – 16C, Dwarka, New Delhi – 110 078	(M) 9810710937 (M) 9873055044 (O) 011-25302500 / 2530 2502 anupbeniwal@gmail.com	Member		
5.	Prof. M. Syamala Devi Department of Computer Science & Applications, Panjab University, Chandigarh.	(M) 09815831588 (O) 0172-2534070 syamala@pu.ac.in syamala1@rediffmail.com syamalamandalika@gmail.com	Member		
6.	Ajay Kumar Khanduri Deputy Secretary, University Grants Commission Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi – 110 002	(M) – 9868111961 (O) – 011-23236977 (Telefax) Khanduri.ugc@nic.in	Member Secretary		

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(ii)	Date (s) of visit	4 th & 5 th December 2014
(iii)	Any other information	
	(Non-participation of members, any special factor or situation/difficulties relevant to the report	

Part - II - Introduction

(i) Brief introduction of the University

Ashoka University is a Haryana state private university and is a purely philanthropic initiative founded by distinguished scholars and professionals from India to provide a liberal education, with a focus on liberal arts subjects on par with the best universities around the world. Ashoka University was approved by an amendment to the Haryana Private University Act in May 2014 and started its operations in August 2014.

The Ashoka University campus is located on 25 acres in the Rajiv Gandhi Education City (RGEC), Kundli, Haryana, in the National Capital Region about 50 kms from New Delhi. It is located on National Highway 1 on the outskirts of Sonepat close to the intersection with the proposed Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway (connecting National Highways 1, 2, 8 and 10) and near the Rapid Rail Transit System connecting Delhi, Sonepat and Panipat. It is a fully residential campus.

The land is owned by sponsoring body of the University, M/s International Foundation for Research and Education (IFRE), a non-profit Section 25 company, which has paid the initial cost of land, building and all infrastructure for setting up of the University.

The University has a total build up area of 3,61,063 square feet in Phase 1 consisting of Academic and Administrative Block, Student Hostel, Faculty Block, Dining Block, Service Block and Indoor Sports Block. The campus is designed by renowned New York-based architects Perkins-Eastman. The campus plan is a combination of Indian aesthetics and global design standards, reflecting the intellectual ideology of Ashoka.

The University is presently running Undergraduate (BA, BSc) and PG Diploma in Liberal Studies Programmes with 133 and 197 students, respectively.

One of the distinctive aspects of the university is that it focuses on liberal arts – humanities, social sciences and natural sciences – subjects only, with the additional discipline of computer science. It also follows the pedagogical philosophy of a liberal education which emphasizes a student-centric learning model that liberates students from the confines of a single discipline. Students at Ashoka get a general education

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that covers a broad cross-section of liberal arts subjects and combine that with a specialization in a pure or an interdisciplinary major. Thus, students have the opportunity to combine multiple academic interests into single degree programme. At Ashoka all students, no matter their chosen or preferred area of specialization, will have to complete a set of 12 foundation courses that cover multiple disciplines in the liberal arts. Students will declare their major by the end of the third semester. Major requirements dictate that students then complete 12 to 16 courses in their field of study to earn their degree.

Ashoka University has recruited high-quality faculty all of whom have PhD degrees from reputed universities around the world. Ashoka faculty are very focused on teaching and creating an inspiring environment in the classroom. They are actively engaged in research and have a strong record of publications in top journals. Funds are made available to faculty for their research and also to travel for participation in national and international conferences. Ashoka University has academic collaborations with world-class institutions like The University of Pennsylvania, University of California (Berkeley), University of Michigan, Carleton College, King's College London, and Sciences Po for student and faculty exchange, and also support in development of curriculum and course structures.

The university has state-of-the-art ICT infrastructure comprising of Juniper Router/Core Switches/Switches/Firewall, Radware Link Load Balancer, Ruckus Wi-Fi Units in high availability mode. Apart from that university is using HP Blade Servers, Canon Multi-functional devices (MFD), Polycom VC Solution, Alcatel EPABX Solution with analog/digital/IP/VOIP features. The University has set up ICT infrastructure for providing wired (using Juniper/Molex) and wireless (using Ruckus) connectivity in the entire 25 acres of land connecting each segment through Fiber Optic infrastructure using latest 20 Gbps backbone scalable up to 40 Gbps on Ring Topology. The University has 100 Mbps of bandwidth from multiple ISPs to maintain redundancy and round the clock connectivity. The entire campus is controlled by NMS integrated with Juniper for seamless wireless connection and around 22 IP cameras for Security. Every critical device has been designed in high availability mode keeping failover in mind. Classrooms are equipped with latest AV technology like Wi-Fi enabled, Acoustically planned, HD/Short Throw Projectors, Creston touch panels, Creston schedulers, PA Systems, and Smart boards with recording facilities.

An ICT-based customised Learning Management System (LMS) has been designed for Ashoka University students and faculty members to interact beyond classrooms. This particular LMS has various features like:

- 1. Member registration
- 2. Student Course Booking
- 3. Content Management

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- 4. Email Notification on assignments
- 5. Discussion Forum
- 6. Time Table
- 7. Reminders
- 8. Leave Module
- 9. Event Management

The Ashoka Library is equipped with 12,000 books, Journals (JSTOR and Science Direct). The library is open twenty-four hours a day, so that students can work according to their own schedules.

The University has started various co-curricular, sports and cultural activities. The sports and fitness facilities are reasonably good and the participation of the students is encouraging. The University has already constituted various bodies like the Governing Body, Board of Management and Academic Council, which are all functioning.

In short, the University has made commendable progress since becoming a University and has initiated various innovations in academic, teaching pedagogy, focus on research and development, library and IT infrastructure.

	Date of establishment of the University	Leg. 24/2014 (dated 2 nd May, 2014). Ashoka University is a philanthropic initiative founded by distinguished scholars and professionals from India to provide a liberal education on par with the best universities around the world. Ashoka University has been established
		founded by distinguished scholars and professionals from India to provide a liberal education on par with the best universities around the world. Ashoka University has been established
(iii) U	Brief description of the University and its aculties/courses	under Haryana Private Universities Act, 2006 vide notification no. Leg. 24/2014 dated 2nd May, 2014. Schools at Ashoka: School of Arts and Humanities School of Social Sciences School of Natural and Applied Sciences Programmes Ashoka: Undergraduate Programme (BA and BSc degrees) PG Diploma in Liberal Studies
(iv) T	Brief description of the Trust/Society that governs the University	The International Foundation for Research & Education (IFRE) is a not-for-profit (Section 25) Company that has been established with the vision

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to set up a world-class liberal arts university. Over the last three years, various academic and nonacademic members from across the world have joined in to build an incomparable team of accomplished and committed individuals driven by the motivation to give back to the country.

The Directors of IFRE are Mr. Ashish Dhawan, Mr. Puneet Yadu Dalmia, Mr. Sanjeev Bikhchandani, Mr. Kapil Kapoor, Mr. Sanjiv Kumar, Dr. Pramath Raj Sinha, Mr. Ashish Gupta, Mr. Siddhartha Yog, Mr. Rakesh Jaggi, Mr. Pranav Gupta, Mr. Hitesh Oberoi, Mr. Vineet Gupta and Ms. Anita Manwani Bhagat.

Part – III – Summary Report

A. Legal Status

University the established under the law and UGC the required as Regulations? (refer 1.10 and 1.11 of the format)

Yes, Ashoka University has been established by the Haryana Private Universities (Amendment) Act, 2014. The University has been established under compendious act (Haryana Act No. 21 of 2014) vide notification no. Leg. 24/2014 dated 2nd May, 2014.

Is the Trust/Society involved in University promoting sufficiently focused on and activities educational (ii) independent of their business or any other interest, if any?

The Sponsoring Body of Ashoka University International Foundation for Research & Education (IFRE) is a not-for-profit (Section 25) Company. The land and infrastructure of the academic buildings, hostels, staff residences, dining, sports etc. and all the other infrastructure necessary for running the University has been made possible through the funding by Sponsoring Body (IFRE). The funding of the day-to-day operations are met from fees that are collected from the students. If the University has excess of expenses over income in the first 2-3 years it will be met through the funding from the Sponsoring Body by way of gift. The IFRE is completely independent from the business of the promoters. The business activities of promoters are

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Ashoka University, Sonepat, Haryana not at all overlapping with the activities of IFRE and Ashoka University. B. Organization Description Does the University abide by Regulations off-(i) Not Applicable campus centres Yes No Not applicable (refer 2.4 of the format) Does the University abide by UGC Regulations on off-Shore campus centres Not Applicable Yes No Not applicable (refer 2.5 of the format) Does the University offer courses under distance mode with the approval of competent authority of the Government of Not Applicable India? Not applicable Yes No (refer 2.6 and 2.7 of the format) C. Academic Activities The courses presently being run at Ashoka University are diverse in nature with very high Are the courses offered by the multidisciplinary content covering several University narrowly focused or (i) different traditional subjects of Humanities and adequately diverse? Social Sciences with fair inputs from Science disciplines also. Are the list of courses for the award of degree as per the (ii)Section 22 of the UGC Act. 1956? The actual intake is less than the approved intake. the sanctioned intake is as Undergraduate (BA, BSc): per the norms/intake sanctioned Approved Intake – 350 (iii) by the concerned Statutory Current Intake – 133 Postgraduate (PG Diploma in Liberal Studies): Council (s)/UGC? Approved Intake – 200 Current Intake - 197 Page 6 of 15

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(iv)	Whether courses run are approved by concerned Statutory Council (s)?	
		Yes, the University provides financial aid and scholarships to the students based on academic merit and the need assessment based on gross family income.
	Are there adequate support facilities for students, especially for disadvantaged students? (refer 4.5 of the format)	Educational Loan assistance through tie-ups with various banks
(v)		Fully Wi-Fi enabled campus with high-bandwidth connectivity
		Fully residential campus with good residential and mess facilities for the students in general
		Lift facilities are available
		Documentation Centre is available
		Library is open 24X7
		The campus is safe and well-guarded
/:\	Are the students adequately informed? (refer 4.7 and 4.8 of the format)	Yes. The website is regularly updated and carries all the latest information in a transparent manner. www.ashoka.edu.in
(vi)		The Student Centre offers various services to the students including the counselling.
(vii)	Is there a Grievance Redressal Mechanism and is that working Properly?	
		An Online Portal is also available.
(viii)	Is the University following proper procedure for formulation and revision of curriculum on periodic basis?	Formulation of the curriculum has been done with care by the existing faculty and the distinguished Academic Council. Since the University became

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		Ashoka University, Sonepat, Haryana operational in August 2014, it is too early to expect		
		the revision of curriculum at this stage.		
		The objective of University's evaluation system is to keep each student continually informed of his/her performance in relation to their learning and academic achievement.		
(ix)	How regular, fair and transparent is the examination system? (refer 5.7 to 5.14)	The University assessment and grading is based upon continuous evaluation based on internal assessments (assignments, field work/projects), mid-semester and end-semester exams etc.		
		The answer sheets of all examinations are shown to the students.		
		Since the University started its operations only in August 2014, the first end-term examination will be held in December 2014.		
D. A				
	dmission Process			
(i)	Does the University follow fair and transparent procedure for admission?	Yes, the University is following a fair and transparent process for admission as per its laid down admission policy.		
	Does the University follow fair and transparent procedure for admission? (refer 6.1 and 6.7 of the format)	transparent process for admission as per its laid		

E. Fee Structure

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(i)	}	The Committee observed that the students are properly informed about the fees and other charges and it is well explained in prospectus as well as displayed on University website. There are no hidden charges. The same was confirmed During the interaction with the students.
(ii)	any fees or charges or are the	It was brought to the notice that the University is not collecting any fees and charges over and above the publically announced fee and the same was
(iii)	Is the mode of fees collection transparent or are there complaints of payments without receipts?	Yes. The mode of fees collection is transparent.
(iv)	compared to costs involved in	Ashoka University has been established under the Haryana Private Universities Act, 2006 amended on 2 nd May 2014. The University has submitted the assessment report regarding authorization to commence the courses wherein the fee structure of the courses is mentioned.
(v)	Is the fee structure based on a policy or guidelines laid down by the Government?	The fee structure has been decided by the University thorough its appropriate bodies.
(vi)	Is there any indication of the University being run solely or primarily for commercial gains?	No. The University follows a transparent system of accounts. The audited system of accounts of income and expenditure is present at the University. The University does not have any management quota.
F. Fac	culty	
(i)		No, but the University is paying a consolidated and fixed salary higher than the UGC pay.

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G. In	I Ara tha tallawing I	e examination of records, visit to the campus and all and discussion with authorities it was observed that:
(iv)	Has the University followed due process for recruitment of faculty?	2. Personal interviews by select members of
(iii)	Is the proportion of permanent faculty adequate or is the	For the present, the University has adequate permanent faculty to run the current academ programmes. The permanent faculty to student ratio is about 1:20 and about 1:9 for the undergraduate programme. Visiting faculty / gue faculty / contractual faculty assist in teaching programme.
(ii)	· · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	The faculty is well qualified. However, out of total 15 permanent Faculty, two Assistant Professor are neither Ph. D. nor NET qualified.

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- Land and buildings
- > Class Rooms
- Laboratoriesandequipment
- Library
- Sports facilities
- Residential accommodati on including hostels

Yes, the current land processed by the University is 25 acres. The current super build up area is 25,946 Sqm comprising of Academic and Administrative, Student Residential, Dining, Faculty Residential and Service Blocks.

Class Rooms

Yes. The University has 6 rooms of 25 seater capacity (area per class room 36.54 Sqm), 5 rooms of 50 seater capacity (area per class room 75.89 Sqm) and 2 rooms of 100 seater capacity (area per class room 150.45 Sqm). All the rooms are air conditioned with latest audio visual aids to provide a high quality learning experience.

Laboratories and equipment

Given the courses being run at the university the following laboratories are in operation:

Computer Lab (60 computers)

Centre for writing and communication

Library

Total Space (all kinds)	Computer / Communication facilities	Total No. of Ref. Books (Each Department)	Books All Research Journals subscribe on a regular basis				
			1. Lis	t of Magazines/	Journals:		
			S. No.	Name of the Magazine	Periodicity		
			1.	Art India	Bi Monthly		
			2.	Business Economics	Fortnightly		
		12,000	3.	Data Quest	Fortnightly		
			4.	Delhi Diary	Weekly		
			5.	Economic and Political Weekly	Weekly		
	Desktop – 3,		6.	Economist	Weekly		
	Laptop – 3 (these		7.	Femina	Fortnightly		
332	Desktops and		8.	Frontline	Fortnightly		
Sqm	Laptops are being		9.	India Today	Weekly		
	used by Library		10.	Life Positive	Monthly		
	Staff)		11.	Outlook	Weekly		
			12.	The Week	Weekly		
			13.	Pratiyogita Darpan	Monthly		
			14.	Competition Success Review	Monthly		
			15.	Carvan	Monthly		
			16.	Harvard Business Review	Monthly		
			17.	Digit	Monthly		

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CONFIDENTIAL Ashoka University, Sonepat, Haryana Forbes Fortnightly 2. List of Newspapers subscribed in the Library: The Times of India The Hindustan Times The Hindu The Economic Times 3. List of Databases: 1. JSTOR 2. Science Direct (On Trial Basis). 4. Institutional Membership: 1. DELNET 2. Daisy Forum 3. American Centre Library **Sports Facility**

Open Play Ground(s) for outdoor sports (Athletics, Football, Hockey, Cricket, etc.)		Football – 43,594 Sqft, Cricket – 22 yard pitch	
b)	Track for Athletics	200 m	
(c)	Basketball courts	1 (Playing Area – 4,520 Sqft)	
d)	Squash / Tennis Courts	2 Courts (5,616 Sqft)	
(e)	Swimming Pool (Size)	Under Construction – 82 ft. by 82 ft.	
f) Indoor Sports Facilities including Gymnasium		Under Construction Gymnasium – 12 ft. by 22 ft.	
g)	Any other	 Table Tennis (2 tables) Badminton Court – 1 Outdoor Volleyball Court – 1 Outdoor Yoga Room – 605 Sqft (presently happens in lawn outdoor) Squash Court (Under Construction) – 1606 Sqft Games Room – 2177 Sqft – 2 (one in each residence) 	

Residential Accommodation

University has provision for both boys and girls residence.

University has campus accommodation arrangements for the essential faculty and staff.

H. Financial Viability

				Yes, The financial position of the University was
	Does the	University	have	brought before the Committee by General Manager
(i)	adequate	and indep	endent	– Finance and it was found that the University has
(1)	funds?			more than 8.00 crores independent funds as corpus
•				fund.

I. Governance System

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CONFIDENTIAL Ashoka University, Sonepat, Haryana It was confirmed that various authorities and authorities and responsible for bodies like Governing Body, Board of Management, the governance of the University in and Academic Council have been constituted and place and working regularly and their meetings are held regularly. However, the BOS is not in existence. rate the research profile of the University Research environment, Research programmes are yet to be initiated. comments separately on faculties Yes, the non-teaching staff is adequate, well staff Non-teaching qualified and records and interaction with the staff adequate, well qualified and indicated that they are being paid more than the paid as per the norms of the norms. concerned State Government? Do the academic result show As the University is in its first year of operation, this evidence of independent and rigorous evaluation prior to the is not applicable. Has the University obtained As the University is in its first year of operation, this desirable is not applicable. L. Strength and Weaknesses of the University 1. Faculty have PhDs from some of the best institutions in the world with proven credentials. 2. Ashoka's admission process ensures that only the Strengths of the University most promising and motivated students make the cut. 3. Ashoka University has collaborations with highly respected Universities foreign including

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University

various

would

facilities and output?

terms of

give

you

bodies

properly?

J. Research Profile

How

orientation,

departments)

issue of degrees?

necessary

accreditations?

and

(please

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K. Miscellaneous

(i)

(i)

(i)

(ii)

(iii)

(i)

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<u></u>		Ashoka University, Sonepat, Haryana
		California (Berkeley) and University of Michigan.
		4. Highly credible founders who have purely
		philanthropic intent to create a great institution
		for the country.
		5. The academic architecture of the under graduate
		programme and that of the Post Graduate
		Diploma (Young India Fellowship) is highly
		interdisciplinary and novel in nature.
		6. The pedagogy followed is innovative and is very
		interactive.
		7. Efficient transport system is available on the
		campus.
		8. The University has good physical infrastructure
		consisting of smart class-rooms, seminar rooms,
		library, hostels, sports and canteen facilities. Staff
		residences are also available.
		1. The Academic structure of the University needs to
		be streamlined as per UGC guidelines of having a
		prescribed ratio of Professor, Associate Professor
		and Assistant Professor for each discipline.
		2. Grievance redressal mechanism for Faculty and
	\A/1	non-teaching staff is yet to be established.
(ii)	Weaknesses of University	3. Departmental Board of Studies needs to be established.
		4. The composition of the Academic Council should
		have the representation of more Faculty members
		from the University System.
		5. The PG and research degree programmes are yet
		to start.

Part – IV – Recommendations

General Observations and suggestions

(Please avoid repetitions of the point mentioned above)

1. In order to ensure excellence in teaching and research, an Internal Quality Assurance Cell needs to be established as per UGC guidelines.

2. Well defined Academic Departments need to be set up.

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- 3. The terms and conditions of appointment of Faculty and other staff needs to be in sync with UGC guidelines.
- B. Operations recommendations which require satisfactory compliance by the University before issue of Approval Letter

In the present scenario, the establishment of Liberal Arts University is a welcome initiative and would provide an inclusive platform for the growth of areas like Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities. Though the University is presently running Under Graduate Liberal Arts Programme effectively and has a potential to grow as a Liberal Arts University in particular, it needs to establish academic departments and initiate Masters and Ph. D. programmes which are essential components for any University and which Ashoka University lacks at present.

C. Final Recommendations

(Whether the University should be granted Approval Letter/ Approval Letter subject to compliance/ should not be granted Approval Letter)

Subject to compliance of operational recommendation at B above, the University may be granted approval letter.

(Prof. Lakshman Chatusverli)

Chairman

(Prof. G.Ravindran)

Member

(Prof. M. Syamala Devi)

M. Sy accedance 5/12/2014

Member

(Prof. V. K. Jain)

Member

(Prof. Anup Beniwal)

Member

(Ajay Kumar Khanduri)

Member Secretary