

IIT Indore will start English screening test

Students required to take language test for IIT Bombay

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INDORE: Clearing IIT-JEE is not enough for engineering aspirants who are heading for Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay. Now, the students will have to take an English proficiency test before their first semester classes. It has been noticed that some IIT-JEE entrants are weak in English, which in turn affects their academic performance and professional life as students come from various backgrounds and different parts of the country. This is the first time that an IIT will test the students' knowledge of English on the lines of American and European universities.

All JEE entrants to IIT Bombay in 2011 will therefore undergo an elementary test on English proficiency at the start of the semester. Students who will score less than 20% in this test and who further have a total score in physics, chemistry and mathematics of less than or equal to 150 will be put in a semester-long intensive programme in English, physics, chemistry and mathematics immediately. Students registering for courses in this programme will be evaluated only with passed/not passed (PP/NP) grades.

Director IIT-Bombay Prof Devang Khakhar said, "Over the years, we have realised that some

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remedial action was needed for the students who had low understanding of English, as it affected their career. Later, the course becomes cumulative, so we decided to include this test at the start of the semester so that the students are benefited. We don't want the students to fail for any extraneous reason."

"The format of the test is not decided but it will be an elementary test. The students will be taught basics like English conversation, understanding of the language etc. It will be a remedial course for the students. Additional tutorials for all the subjects will be given to the students who will undergo this course as their lectures will go half the pace from the other students," said IIT-Bombay dean academic programme Prof Shiv Prasad.

However, if the aspirants fail to clear the English test, they will have to undergo a full-time, semester-long bridge course,

which will push them six months behind schedule to complete their graduation. During the second semester, such students will undergo those courses that they would have registered for in the first semester. It is only after the end of this six-month course that regular engineering classes will begin for these students. So, while one set of students will enter the last leg (second semester) of their first year, another batch will start its engineering lectures only after the bridge course. Such students will not be allowed to simultaneously register for advanced courses in physics, chemistry or mathematics until they pass the bridge course. The test will be elementary and the students are not required to take additional coaching for it.

IIT-Indore director Dr Pradeep Mathur, while talking to *Hindustan Times*, said that they have also faced the same problem as IIT Bombay. They are opening an English lab which will be functional in a few days and will help students improve their language skills. There will be computer systems and microphones that will help the students learn better pronunciation. Special English classes will be conducted; this matter will be discussed in the academic council in a few weeks. Some sort of screening test will also be

Continued on page 2

IIT INDORE TO...

Continued from page 1

started at IIT Indore, in which the students below a certain benchmark will have to take the special English course so that they can comprehend and understand English. "It is good that IIT-Bombay has started an English proficiency test and all the other IITs should also start it. It will help us in our career as the students coming from remote areas are able to make it to IITs but don't have basic understanding of English which becomes an obstacle in their career," said Ankit Jain who has recently cleared IIT-JEE and is aiming to get into IIT-Bombay. The only disadvantage will be those students will be six months behind the others, which might be a problem during placements, he added.