

New IITs Have Better Faculty-Student Ratio

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Mumbai | New Delhi: The new IITs are largely faring better than the older ones in faculty-student ratio, primarily due to the advantage of smaller batch sizes.

The ideal faculty-student ratio for the Indian Institutes of Technologies is considered to be 1:10. Against this, the ratio for IIT Mandi is 1:8 — arguably the best across all IITs — with 104 faculty members for 810 students. IIT Ropar has 90 teachers for over 800 students, putting the faculty-student ratio at 1:9. At IIT Gandhinagar, it is about 1:10 while at IIT Indore and IIT Hyderabad the ratio is about 1:12.

In comparison, the older IITs have a lot of catching up to do. IIT Bombay, for instance, has a faculty-student ratio of about 1:14 while for IIT Delhi and IIT Kharagpur, it is about 1:16 and 1:19, respectively.

According to Rohin Kapoor, director at Deloitte, the older IITs have an estimated faculty shortage of 30-40% which is adversely affecting their PTRs (pupil-teacher ratios). "Newer IITs, on the other hand, have reported positive PTRs due to a variety of reasons, including planned faculty allocation, comparatively better physical infrastructure and lack of pressure on increasing intake capacity," said Kapoor.

ON NEW FACULTY

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SK DAS

Director of IIT Ropar

More the Merrier



Despite their more comfortable situation at the moment, the newer IITs are not slackening pace. "As we are growing, the need for faculty is growing too. We are aggressively trying to meet the demand for new faculty without compromising on the quality," said SK Das, director of IIT Ropar, which increased its faculty strength by 50% to 90 in the last 18 months.

Next summer, IIT Ropar will have over 1,200 students and plans to launch two departments. To tackle this, it has prepared a three-pronged strategy. Besides the normal screening of applications from candidates within India, it is also getting into online searches of candidates based out of India and a recruitment drive focused outside the country.

"This spring (March), we are heading to Singapore, Japan, Australia and Korea. In the summers, like last time, we will visit Europe (France and Germany), Canada and the US," said Das. Last year, the institute sent a delegation on a talent hunt to the UK, Canada and northern part of the US.

IIT Mandi, too, is going all out to attract and recruit faculty members from across the globe. According to Bharat Singh Rajpurohit, dean (faculty) at IIT Mandi, the institute director and other faculty members ta-



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ke part in forums, especially in North America and Europe, to interact with researchers/postdoctoral fellows, who can be potential faculty. The institute has already hired several faculty members working abroad by conducting interviews/presentation through video-conferencing.

Others are equally proactive: IIT Indore has 91 faculty members, and spokesperson Nirmala Menon said they are on the lookout for world-class researchers and scholars in diverse disciplines.

The director, functionaries and faculty members of IIT Indore look for the best researchers in different fields during their trips for conferences and meetings at different universities around the world. The institute also organises research talks and presentations besides

offering state-of-the-art labs and facilities.

IIT Gandhinagar has various methods of recruiting teaching talent, such as adjunct faculty, scholar-in-residence, visiting faculty, and so on.

Deloitte's Kapoor, however, said that given the remote location of some of these new IITs, hiring and retaining quality faculty will be a challenge. "Funding research, exchange programmes, corporate secondments and other ways of engaging the faculty will be required in order to maintain their current above-average PTR," he said.

The newer IITs are already working on this aspect. IIT Mandi, for instance, offers a unique academic culture involving inter-disciplinary research and project-oriented teaching that attracts some of the brightest young faculty, said Rajpurohit, besides having amenities like a well-equipped residential campus, childcare centre and campus school.

"We have visiting researchers, short-term faculty visits from the best universities in the world. Last year, IIT Indore hosted 26 international faculty for short-term courses under the GIAN scheme," said Menon.

IIT Mandi has designed an academic structure that allows it to invite and accommodate short-term faculty from industry and research organisations. For this, it is utilising the National Knowledge Network and video-conferencing to offer specialised courses, including a few from foreign universities.

UB Desai, director of IIT Hyderabad, said the institute does not have a shortage of faculty, given that it has 170 faculty for 2,069 students. He stressed on the need to be proactive in contacting Ph.D. students close to graduation as also having frequent selection committee meetings.

"Fundamentally we are looking for excellence. After all we are an IIT," Desai said.