Self Learning Materials Policy

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I.   PURPOSE

The purposes of formulating the policies for self learning materials are to prepare framework for developing self learning materials according to the need of the learners, who are generally enroll in the sambalpur university.

II.   OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of the policies for the self learning materials are as follows:-

(i) To cater the expectations of common men of the geographical areas that are under the jurisdiction of Sambalpur university;

(ii) To provide the scopes for further development of the self learning materials as per the competitive knowledge horizon.

(iii) To provide a standardized format for varying subject in such a manner that learners can have most convenient accessibility.

III.   COVERAGE

Self learning materials of Sambalpur university covers the summarized but core theme of all subjects of the syllabi that the university offers including all four levels of higher education such as under-graduate, post-graduate, MPhil., and PhD. Also it covers three forms of higher education such as regular courses, self-financing courses, and private education courses.

IV.   WHAT IS SELF LEARNING MATERIAL ?

Self Learning Materials (SLM) are carrying the basic properties like self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self - motivating and self-evaluating. Appropriate planning process is undertaken to development of these self learning materials. For development of SLM, a learning-need assessment is usually done by analysing backgrounds of learner, the learners' experiences, and mental readiness. The very nature of self learning material carries the considerations of flexible learning system. So, the self learning materials (soft copies) are having the provision of being changed looking at the hidden talent or potentiality.

V.   CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-LEARNING MATERIALS

Self-learning materials perform the functions of an effective teacher who guides, motivates, explains, discusses, asks questions, assesses progress, suggests appropriate remedial measures, and provides advice to learners. Self-learning materials emphasize pedagogical dialogues with the learner. While reading the course units, the learners interact with an invisible teacher (in a

simulation situation since the teacher is simulated in the materials) and feel as if they are being taught by him/ her. The materials also provide questions for self-check and thus increase curiosity of the learners. The success of self-learning depends on the quality of the learning materials. Self-learning materials follow learner-centered approaches. They are designed and developed as per the needs of the learners. The following are some of the characteristics of self-learning materials:-

Self-contained
Efforts are made to make the text self-sufficient so that a learner does not hunt for the additional sources, or even a teacher. For this the scope of the content of the unit 'is visualized in detail. While avoiding what is redundant only the essential details are presented so that the unit can cover information required by the learners and keep away all that is superfluous or redundant.

Self-explanatory
The content is presented in a style so that a learner can learn from the material without much external support. The concepts are explained to the extent such that majority of the learners are able to comprehend them. Therefore the content is self-explanatory and conceptually clear. To make concepts self-explanatory the content is analyzed and presented logically considering the mental and lingual background of the learners1 target group. A few may not be able to comprehend the contents fully and may therefore need additional help and guidance by teachers through correspondence and at study centre .tutorials.

Self-directed
The learning materials aim at providing necessary guidance, hints and suggestions to the learners at each stage of learning. The self-directed material is presented in the form of easy explanations, sequential development, illustrations, learning activities, etc., thus performing the role of a teacher who for instance guide, instruct, moderate and regulate the learning process in classroom situations.

Self-motivating
In distance education systems, the learners remain off the campus for most of their study time. The study materials, like a teacher in the classroom, should be highly encouraging for the learners. The materials should arouse curiosity, raise problems, relate knowledge to familiar situations and make the entire learning meaningful for them, providing reinforcement and feedback at every stage of learning. Self-evaluating As the learners remain separated from the distance learning institution as well as the teachers, the study materials should make provisions for feedback as well. To ensure optimum learning, the learners should know whether they are on the right track. Self-evaluation in the form of self check questions, exercises, activities, etc. provides the learners with the much needed feedback about their progress, reinforces learning, and motivates them for self-learning. The course writer should develop a built-in evaluation system by giving an appropriate number of self-check exercises, activities and questions in the course units.

Self-learning

Self-instructional materials are based on the principles of self-learning. So, a unit, besides information, provides the learners study guide - directions, hints, references, etc. to facilitate their independent learning. To make the content comprehensible, it is supported by simple explanations, examples, illustrations, activities and so on. In other words, the materials are designed and, developed in such a way that the learners can undertake learning by oneself with occasional help from others including the teachers.

VI. PLANNING PROCESS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SELF LEARNING MATERIAL

Step-1: Learners' need assessment

Step-2: Division and classification of tasks

Step-3: Analysing the tasks with relevant personnel

Step-4: Assigning the task(s) according to mutual understanding.

Step-5: Preparation and submission of assignment

Step-6: Assessment of self learning materials by IQAC of the University and decision for preparation of final self learning materials is taken by the authority

Step-7: Feed-back and revision

Learners' need assessment

Learners' assessment is done by considered level of literacy language proficiency, age group, information communication technology skills, aim of study, personal background and home situation, prior knowledge, prior skills, learning situations, etc.

Division and classification of tasks

All the tasks relating to development of self learning materials are segregated on the basis of similarities and then are classified according to level of efforts required to make the materials with respect to the level of courses and forms of education.

Analysing the tasks with relevant personnel

The classified tasks are analysed by internal experts and sometimes the suggestions of external experts are taken like the industry practitioners, research consultants, and professionals. By this way the skeleton / structure of the self learning materials for the concerned subjects are defined keeping in view the levels of courses and forms of educations offered by Sambalpur university.

Assigning the task(s) according to mutual understanding.

After obtaining the output of analyses in the form of structure or skeleton of the self learning materials, the relevant faculty members (both of the PG departments of university and affgiliated colleges) are identified. They are briefed by the IQAC of the university and by the board of studies of the concerned subjects for preparation of the self learning material.

Preparation and submission of assignment

All three sources of information are used to prepare the self learning materials like primary sources, secondary sources, and tertiary sources. Primary sources include the first hand knowledge (by his/her own analytical capabilities) of faculty member(s), who is/are preparing the self learning material. Secondary sources include the references to the books, journals, magazines, and the like. Tertiary sources include the logical analyses made by the consultants or experts of the industry. Time to time the IQAC of the Sambalpur university is guiding or making follow-up of the material preparation till submission.

Assessment of self learning materials by IQAC of the University and decision for preparation of final self learning materials is taken by the authority

After submission of the self learning materials, the IQAC has the important role to play for the finalization of the materials. With subject experts, the IQAC is making a review of the self learning materials. If any changes or modifications are required, the faculty member, who is/are in the responsibility of the preparing the materials are asked to do so within a time frame. Finally, the full fledged self learning materials of the specified subjects are printed.

Feed-back and revision

Continuously the feed-backs are taken from the learners and from course instructors in some cases. These feed-backs are analysed by the committee of experts under the supervision of IQAC of the Sambalpur university, so that either the plan will be modified or the structure of the self learning materials will be modified or the content presentation will be modified for the subsequent academic years.

VII. PRINCIPLES TO BE FOLLOWED TO PREPARE AND EXECUTE THE SELF LEARNING MATERIALS

Apart from the basic properties (self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self - motivating and self-evaluating), the preparation of self learning materials generally follow the below mentioned principles.

(i) The self learning material must have the potentiality to draw the attention of the learner and maintain the flow of reading & learning.

(ii) The learning material must ensure that the previously acquired knowledge (by recalling the basics and drawbacks) is accommodated in the present material

(iii) The learning material must guide the learner through-out, then only the real meaning of self learning material will be fulfilled. That means the SLMs should provides 'clues or hints' to the learners.

(iv) The self learning material should have the provision of acquiring the feedback from the learners and in some cases from the course instructors. Simultaneously the learners also need the feed-back regarding his/her learning pace, for which provisions must be there in SLMs.

(v) The self learning material should establish appropriate conditions of learning. That means effective SLMs should provide situations to remember and transfer the learning.

(vi) In the regular intervals of the material, SLMs should provide relevant questions of the concerned section, so that the inquisitiveness of the learner will wake-up and the flow of learning will continue.

(vii) The outcomes of learning need to be assessed in regular interval. Hence, the self learning material must provide the structured assessment questions/assignments both at the end of every sections/chapters and at the end of the material.

(viii) Self learning materials should provide appropriate nonverbal aids (picture/photos/hypothetical maps, etc.) as it complements the verbal language along with burden-free learning process.

(ix) SLMs should provide the glossaries wherever necessary to ensure better comprehension of learning points on the part of learners. Glossaries in the SLMs are either preceding the reading passage with the aim of preparing the learner before hand or can appear at the end of the text being called as 'reference glossaries'.

(x) Self learning material must sum-up at the end of every unit so that the take-away of the preceding unit will be helpful for the subsequent unit. SLMs should sum-up at the end of the material also, because it will be helpful to integrate the matters of that subject to form a whole gamete of learning.

(xi) Self learning materials should be prepared in such a manner that the learner can feel that they are interacting with a virtual teacher. So, the SLMs should be prepared with conversational or narrative style

(xii) Simple and clear language should be used in the self learning materials. If it is not that much of urgency or bare necessity, the jargons or technical terms should be avoided. If such like terms are used, then the simple meaning should be reflected in the glossary.