

INNOVATION AND STARTUP POLICY

(Approved in the 4th Governing Body Meeting held on 25th May 2024)



GIRIJANANDA CHOWDHURY UNIVERSITY

GUWAHATI, ASSAM - 781 017

This policy shall be called the Girijananda Chowdhury University Innovation and Start up Policy 2023 which extends to all the faculty, staff and students of Girijananda Chowdhury University during their period of association with the university and shall come into practice by official notification after the approval of the Governing Council/Management on 25th May 2024.

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1. Preamble

Girijananda Chowdhury University hereafter referred to as GCU or university in this document is committed to creating a nurturing and fostering environment to promote research and innovation within the university. GCU encourages all its students, faculty and staff to actively engage in research leading to innovation and entrepreneurship. This policy on Innovation and Startup shall be a guiding framework to facilitate the process of innovation. The basis of this policy is from the National Innovation and Startup Policy 2019, notified by the Innovation Cell (MIC) of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (Ministry of Education) and the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE). The Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP), Government of India has also provided insights while framing this policy. The innovative ideas emerging from within the university shall thereby be converted into startups to make significant contribution to the betterment of society.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. Entrepreneurship –refers to the process of creating or starting a new organization at GCU.
- 2.2. Faculty – shall refer to a regular faculty member of GCU
- 2.3. Incubation– refers to the unique combination of business development processes, infrastructure and people, designed to nurture and grow new businesses by providing support in the initial stages of developing their business.
- 2.4. Innovation –refers to the creation and implementation of a new product, service, a process that helps in improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery by the students, staff and faculty of GCU.
- 2.5. Institutions Innovation Cell (IIC) – refers to GCU’s IIC established as per the MHRD guidelines for HEIs. The IIC at GCU shall be the nodal agency to provide support needed in implementing this policy.
- 2.6. Policy – means GCU’s Innovation and Startup Policy
- 2.7. Pre-incubation – refers to the process with entrepreneurs at GCU who are in the very early stages of setting up their company with an idea of early prototype of their product or service that can graduate into a full-fledged incubation program.
- 2.8. Staff Member – shall refer to any regular employee of GCU other than faculty member.



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- 2.9.Startup – shall refer to an entity that develops a business model based on either product innovation or service innovation and makes it scalable, replicable and self-reliant and as defined in Gazette Notification No. G.S.R. 127(E) dated February 19, 2019. (An entity shall cease to be a Startup on completion of ten years from the date of its incorporation/ registration or if its turnover for any previous year exceeds one hundred crore rupees.)
- 2.10. Student – shall refer to a full-time student at the UG, PG or PhD programme studying at Girijananda Chowdhury University
- 2.11. University – shall refer to Girijananda Chowdhury University (GCU).

3. Scope

- 3.1.GCU Innovation and Startup policy emphasizes on promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship among the students, faculty and staff thereby creating a strong and nurturing ecosystem. This policy shall focus on strengthening of the overall innovative environment and encourage participation of the grassroots levels.
- 3.2.It envisions collaboration with grassroots innovators, scientists through joint research projects, fellowships and scholarships. The university shall encourage grassroots innovators in this process and shall also integrate Traditional Knowledge Systems (TKS) and use advanced technology in the curation, preservation and maintenance of knowledge.

4. Objectives

The following objectives shall govern the Innovation Policy of GCU:

- 4.1.The policy shall provide a framework to guide, encourage and support faculty and students to innovate and develop entrepreneurship activities.
- 4.2. It shall provide the guidelines for GCU to develop entrepreneurial activities, manage IPR ownership, technology licensing and equity sharing in startups.
- 4.3. To bring about cultural and attitudinal change in the culture of innovation and startups.
- 4.4. To create an ecosystem to promote research and innovation and develop a robust system for planning, implementation and evaluation.



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5. Strategies for Implementation

5.1. Governance

- 5.1.1. For the purpose of effective governance and management of all activities related to innovation and entrepreneurship, the Institution's Innovation Council of GCU shall handle all the decisions related to it with the requisite support and guidance from the university. IIC shall develop monitoring and reporting guidelines for all the innovation and entrepreneurial activities at GCU. The IIC shall work in coordination and consultation with the Research and Development Cell of GCU in all matters related to research, innovation and startups.
- 5.1.2. GCU shall develop and implement the innovation policy for the entire university to integrate the entrepreneurial activities across all departments, centres and faculty.
- 5.1.3. Promotion of innovation and entrepreneurship shall be one of the major objectives of GCU. The Deans of respective schools of GCU shall be responsible to bring in required commitment within the schools across different departments along with a good understanding of the industry.
- 5.1.4. Widespread awareness should be initiated across GCU during academic programmes such as conferences, workshops and seminars about importance of innovation.
- 5.1.5. International partnerships can be developed using different strategies like promoting international exchange programmes, internships, engagement of international faculty in teaching and research activities.
- 5.1.6. GCU shall create an appropriate research and development ecosystem that shall promote innovation keeping in focus the remote villages of Northeast, indigenous communities and far flung island areas. The university shall initiate establishing research and innovation centres in such areas to involve local participation.

5.2. Resource Mobilization

GCU shall plan resource mobilization for supporting pre-incubation, incubation infrastructure and facilities with a clear entrepreneurial agenda to sustain finances.



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- 5.2.1. The university shall also invest in the entrepreneurial activities as part of the universities' financial strategy and shall constitute a separate 'innovation fund' for funding and supporting innovation and startup related activities.
- 5.2.2. Efforts shall also be made to raise funds from other sources to reduce dependency on the university like external funding through government such as DST (Department of Science and Technology), DBT (Dept of Biotechnology), MHRD (Ministry of Human Resource Development), AICTE (All India Council for Technical Education), TDB (Technology Development Board), TIFAC (Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council), DSIR (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research), CSIR (Council of Scientific & Industrial Research), BIRAC (Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council), NSTEDB (National Science & Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board), NRDC (National Research Development Corporation), Startup India, Invest India, MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology), MSDE (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship), MSME (Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises), etc., and non-government sources.
- 5.2.3. GCU may also raise funds through sponsorships, donations and involve the alumni network for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship and ensure that there is long-term sustainability.
- 5.2.4. Private and corporate sectors can also be approached as part of CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) to generate funds for supporting incubators.

6. Enabling Institutional Infrastructure

Incubation is generally done by institutions or HEIs which have experience in the business and technology sectors. Incubation support includes providing technological facilities and advices, initial growth funds, network and linkages, co-working spaces, lab facilities, mentoring and advisory support.

6.1. Creation of pre-incubation and incubation facilities: Innovation is linked with incubation and hence such incubation facilities should be created for nurturing innovation in the university. Main goal should be innovation linked to enterprises leading to financial gains.



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- 6.2. The Institution Innovation Cell (IIC) of GCU established as per guidelines of MHRD, shall facilitate the pre-incubation and incubation centres by mobilizing internal and external resources.
- 6.3. Pre-incubation facilities may or may not be a separately registered entity, but it is recommended that 'Incubation cum Technology Commercialization Unit' (ITCU) should be a separate entity registered under Section-8 of Company Act 2013 or 'Society' registered under Society Registration Act with independent governance structure. This will allow more freedom to Incubators in decision making with less administrative hassles for executing the programs related to innovation, IPR and Startups.
- 6.4. **Pre-incubation** – the emphasis in this stage is on the formation of idea and the person with the innovative idea shall be provided with a working space.
- 6.4.1. The entrepreneur will work on the idea, evolve it into a concept and plan on implementation of the innovative idea.
- 6.4.2. He/she shall submit an application along with documents relating to the name and members of the enterprise, a tentative plan of operation, letters of recommendation, registration and financial documents etc.
- 6.4.3. Application shall be screened by members of the IIC – on aspects such as financial, academic backgrounds, the appropriate documents submitted to check the credibility of the applicant and the skills of the team.
- 6.4.4. After a process of screening, shortlisting by expert panels and interviews, an agreement is signed and the person selected is taken into the incubator to start functioning.
- 6.5. **Incubation**–During this stage, provision of basic infrastructure and linkages with marketing and business establishments become crucial.
- 6.5.1. Workspace, access to communication technology, equipment, library shall ease the startup to focus on their production.
- 6.5.2. Emphasis shall be on providing other support needed to establish network and linkages with industries, markets, financial support, etc.
- 6.5.3. This would help in enabling the new startup in its initial stage of existence.
- 6.6. **Post-incubation**–This is the process when incubation is complete which calls for different implications. There shall be certain guidelines on sustainability of the venture after incubation.



6.6.1. The talent from the incubator once graduated shall represent the incubator to the outside world, to the industry and be active in reaching out to others in the industry.

7. Nurturing Innovations and Start ups

7.5. GCU shall establish processes and mechanisms for creation and nurturing of startups by students (UG, PG, Ph.D.), staff and faculty in the following ways.

7.6. Provide incubation support through pre-incubation and incubation facilities for a definite time frame as discussed in section 6.1 to 6.6. In the absence of the incubation centre in the university, the nearest incubation facilities can be approached.

7.7. Allow licensing of IPR to students and faculty on the technology developed or co-developed in terms of equity in the venture, license fees, or royalty to avoid the early stage financial cost.

7.8. GCU may allow students and faculty to work on their innovative projects and setting up startups (including Social Startups) or work as intern / part-time in startups (incubated in any recognized University/Incubators) while studying / working. Student Entrepreneurs may also earn credits for working on innovative prototypes/Business Models.

7.9. Students who are under incubation and pursuing entrepreneurial activity in the course of studying shall be permitted to use the address of the university to register their company with due permission from the concerned authority.

7.10. Student entrepreneurs should be allowed to sit for the examination, even if their attendance is less than the minimum permissible percentage, with due permission from the concerned department. They can be permitted to take a semester or year break to work on their startups and then return to their academics to complete their course. Academic credits shall be earned by those students for their entrepreneurship. A review committee shall be established by the university for reviewing these activities from the initial stage and accordingly give them credits. If needed, accommodation may be provided in the university for such entrepreneurs.

7.11. Faculty and staff shall be allowed a break for a semester or more as sabbatical/ earned leave/ casual leave or unpaid leave while involved in startups based on the decisions taken by the review committee established for this purpose. Seniority and other academic benefits during such period may be preserved for such faculty or staff.



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- 7.12. GCU may explore possibility of starting a part-time or full-time program on innovation, entrepreneurship and venture development where one can get a degree while incubating and nurturing a startup enterprise based on AICTE guidelines issued for such programmes.
- 7.13. GCU may take 2% to 9.5% equity/stake in the startup based on brand used, faculty contribution, support provided and use of the university's IPR. For staff and faculty, university can take no-more than 20% of shares that staff / faculty takes while drawing full salary from the university; however, this share will be within the 9.5% cap of company shares (NISP, MHRD, 2019). There can be no restriction on shares that faculty and staff can take as long as they do not spend more than 20% of office time on the startup (as advisory or consultative role) and do not compromise with their academic and administrative duties. If they hold executive or managerial role for more than three months in a startup, then they can go on sabbatical/ earned leave/ leave without pay.
- 7.14. Participation in startup related activities needs to be considered as a legitimate activity of faculty in addition to teaching, R&D projects, industrial consultancy and management duties and must be considered while evaluating the annual performance of the faculty. Every faculty may be encouraged to mentor at least one startup.
- 7.15. Product development and commercialization as well as participating and nurturing of startups are considered as faculty-duties and respective faculty can be evaluated accordingly for their performance and promotion. Accordingly, performance evaluation policies can be updated.
- 7.16. GCU shall promote gender inclusion in innovation and entrepreneurship ventures by creating opportunities and resources for women's participation in such endeavours. For promoting gender inclusion in entrepreneurship, avenues will be created to access resources and opportunities for training and mentoring.

8. Product Ownership and Intellectual Property Rights

Innovation is directly linked with licensing of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). The guidelines and criteria that govern this licensing by the university are discussed in relevant sections of the Policy on Intellectual Property Rights which can be accessed from the University IPR policy.

9. Capacity building and Management of Human Resources



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9.1. GCU shall encourage staff to develop the interest to take up innovation and foster the innovation culture in the university.

9.2. Those faculty who have prior experience, interest and knowledge shall be deputed to train and promote innovation and entrepreneurship. Further, external subject experts can be invited for guest lectures to promote innovation skills of faculty.

9.3. GCU shall evolve a mechanism to promote innovation by developing academic and non-academic incentives and mechanism for all the staff and stakeholders who actively participate in the innovation and entrepreneurship activities.

9.4. Rewards for staff may comprise of sabbaticals from office and lab space for entrepreneurship, reduction of teaching load, awards, trainings and for recognition of stakeholders, GCU can offer them the use of facilities and services, as guest teachers, fellowships etc.

9.5. GCU shall develop a performance matrix for evaluating the annual performance.

10. Creating Innovation Pipeline and Pathways

GCU shall devise the following mechanism to ensure that maximum students get the exposure to innovation and pre-incubation activities from the early stage until the market phase:

10.1. The institutional entrepreneurship agenda shall comprise of creating awareness among students, faculty and staff on the value of entrepreneurship and its role in career development.

10.2. Education on aspects that innovation is the mechanism to solve problems of the society and consumers and the focus should be on the demands of the market.

10.3. Students of GCU shall also be encouraged to develop entrepreneurial mindset through experiential learning by exposing them to training in cognitive skills (e.g. design thinking, critical thinking, etc.), by inviting local entrepreneurs or experts to address young minds. Initiatives like idea and innovation competitions, hackathons, workshops, seminars, conferences, exhibitions, mentoring by academic and industry personnel, throwing real life challenges, awards and recognition shall be organized regularly.



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- 10.4. Education activities shall be integrated with enterprise-related activities in order to prepare the students for startup.
- 10.5. Linking of startups and companies with wider entrepreneurial ecosystem to provide support to potential students and connecting them with entrepreneurs to enable students understand the challenges related to entrepreneurship.
- 10.6. The Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) of GCU shall guide the university in conducting various activities related to innovation, startup and entrepreneurship development and budget for these activities should be allocated by the university to the IIC.
- 10.7. GCU shall organize events to network with potential investors to create a platform for the new entrepreneurs to have access to finances.
- 10.8. There shall be a provision on homepage of GCU website to clarify the queries of the innovators and provide them with information on the facilities available in the university for innovation.

11. Norms for Faculty Startups

GCU shall create the following norms for faculty to do startups for better coordination of the entrepreneurial activities. The technology that originates within the university shall be taken up for faculty startups.

- 11.1. Faculty can take on different roles ranging from being the owner/ promoter, consultant or on the board member of the startup.
- 11.2. The university shall ensure that the regular responsibilities of the faculty is not hindered due to their involvement in startups.
- 11.3. Faculty startup can comprise of the faculty alone or the faculty along with students, other faculty members, other institutes, universities, alumni or entrepreneurs.
- 11.4. Faculty should refrain from accepting gifts from the startups.
- 11.5. In situations where the faculty holds the managerial position in the startup for a continuous period of three months, he/she shall go on sabbatical, or leave without pay or make use of their credit of leave.
- 11.6. If the faculty startup is selected by an external national or international accelerator, a maximum leave of one semester or a year can be granted on the basis of the decision of the



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Research Committee constituted for this purpose by the university. The leave can be in the form of sabbatical, existing leave, unpaid leave, casual leave or earned leave depending upon the situation.

11.7. Startups involving research on human subjects should obtain the approval and necessary clearance from the university's ethics committee.

12. Pedagogy and Learning Interventions for Entrepreneurship Development

12.1. GCU shall adopt innovative pedagogy to bring about interdisciplinary learning and varied approaches by using games, creative activities, case studies etc., instead of the monotonous delivery of lectures.

12.2. The university can make use of the existing student clubs with guidance from respective departments to organize competitions, workshops, bootcamps etc. They shall be involved in the university's strategic planning activities to promote the thinking ability of students.

12.3. GCU shall initiate an Annual Innovation Award to acknowledge and appreciate exemplary ideas, and successful organizations for promoting innovation in the university.

12.4. Pedagogy to create awareness among students shall focus on creative and practical aspects such as case studies, success stories, failed approaches and real-life experiences of startups.

12.5. To promote innovation across the university, nomination of Innovation Champions from the students, faculty, staff belonging to each department or school shall be encouraged.

12.6. Education focusing on entrepreneurship shall be incorporated at all levels to students to promote courses on innovation. During the induction programme for newly admitted students, they can be oriented about the entrepreneurship support available in the university.

12.7. In order to carry out research on the trends in field of research, technology and innovation, the university shall build collaborations with industries.

12.8. GCU shall evolve and promote student projects and innovations which have a strong base on practical aspects and challenges in life and they should also be encouraged to be part of discussions and dialogues so that their innovations are based on emerging needs.

13. Collaboration

Collaboration with important stakeholders is very important to support entrepreneurship.



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13.1.GCU shall identify potential partners, and enterprises, resource organizations and organize events for better networking so that there is opportunity for faculty and students to exchange knowledge and ideas with collaborators.

13.2.GCU shall create a Single Point of Contact (SPOC) mechanism who will ensure that the faculty, students, and collaborators have access to information and this should provide the utmost utilization of entrepreneurship opportunities.

13.3.The university shall develop Innovation Knowledge development to oversee the knowledge management making use of the available ICT facilities within the university.

14. Impact Assessment.

GCU shall evolve definite evaluation parameters to undertake impact assessment of all the entrepreneurship activities such as pre-incubation, incubation, entrepreneurship education. The following aspects can be assessed:

14.1. Evaluation of the knowledge exchange initiatives.

14.2. Engagement of faculty and concerned departments in entrepreneurial teaching and learning.

14.3. Assessment on the number of startups, the support offered by the university, participant's feedback etc.

14.4. The impact of the support system provided by the university to student entrepreneurs, the faculty and staff for purpose of pre-incubation, incubation, protection of IPR, linkages with industry etc.

14.5. To measure success, the impact assessment should focus on sustainable impact in the market in terms of social, financial and technological. As commercial success of any entrepreneurship is the ultimate way of measuring the impact.

14.6. Frameworks, scales and measurements will be developed and utilized for assessing innovation to facilitate integration of innovation activities at all levels.



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15. Settlement of Disputes and Conflict of Interests

The Institution's Innovation Cell (IIC) and the Research Development Cell of GCU shall be vested with the responsibility and authority to approve or disapprove any matters related to the innovation and startup policy and the decision taken by them shall be the final.

In situations where there is any conflict of interest related to the innovation by the members involved or by their immediate family, it shall be governed by the decisions taken by the review committee established for this purpose. The members are also expected to ensure that their involvement in the entrepreneurial activity shall not have any adverse impact in other regular responsibilities in the university.

The policy shall be reviewed once in three years or when the need arises. Any issues or concerns that are not addressed in this policy shall be handled on an individual or case basis with the prime objective of creating an environment that promotes and facilitates innovation at GCU.

References

1. National Innovation and Startup Policy 2019 for Students and Faculty. A Guiding Framework for Higher Education Institutions. Ministry of Human Resource Development. https://mic.gov.in/assets/doc/startup_policy_2019.pdf
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3. Institute Innovation and Start-up Policy (IISP) For Faculty, Staff, Students and Alumni. National Institute of Technology, Silchar.
4. Indian Institute of Technology Bombay Startup Policy 2021
5. KIET- INNOVATION AND START UP POLICY FOR "STUDENTS AND FACULTY MEMBERS" (Aligned with National Innovation and Start-up policy-2019)



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