# Proposals
# for the post of Vice President, Technology Students' Gymkhana, Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur

## Academic Session 2026-2027

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## OVERVIEW

**1. VidyaSetu - A Centralised Academic Intelligence Platform**: Building VidyaSetu, a centralized AI platform to give students reliable academic and career guidance, making information accessible, structured, and easy to act on.

**2. Overhauling Student Transportation at IIT Kharagpur**: Improving campus transportation through a structured electric mobility system and regulated ride services, ensuring safer, reliable, and affordable travel across IIT Kharagpur.

**3. Strengthening CDC Through Alumni-Industry Partnerships:** Establishing a formal alumni industry MoU framework to unlock placements, internships, funding, and mentorship opportunities at IIT Kharagpur, creating a scalable and institute-led career support ecosystem.

**4. Empowering Postgraduate and Research Scholar Students:** Improving support for postgraduate and research scholars through clear policies on workload, grievance redressal, and academic processes, creating a more transparent and research-friendly environment.

**5. Improving Transparency in Academic Evaluation and Grading:** Improving transparency in academic evaluation by providing clear breakdowns of marks, grade cutoffs, and structured feedback through ERP, helping students better understand and trust the grading process.

# Proposal: VidyaSetu - A Centralised Academic Intelligence Platform

## Overview

IIT Kharagpur has over 15,000 students. Many of them spend their early semesters figuring out the institution instead of fully engaging with it. Questions about academic planning, Career Development Centre preparation, available opportunities, and general institute processes often lack a reliable source of information. Students rely on Faculty Advisors, mentors, batch groups, and scattered documents that might not be accurate or up to date. The quality of guidance they receive often depends more on personal connections than on any official setup.

VidyaSetu is proposed as a Technology Students' Initiative. It will be a single Artificial Intelligence platform where students can pose any major academic or career question and get a clear, specific answer backed by sources. This is not just a general chatbot. It is built entirely on IIT Kharagpur-specific data and focuses on what the institute can confidently answer.

The platform will be managed by the Technology Students' Gymkhana, maintained by the Technical Coordinators, and developed as an open-source project with help from tech societies, including MetaKGP, KOSS, and the Developer Society, among others. The Gymkhana will handle the budget and server infrastructure. The institute's role is to support this initiative by providing access to relevant documented data and endorsing the platform for use by students.

## Needs

The problem is not that there is too little information. Most of what students need to know is documented somewhere in the institute. The issue is that this information is not in one easy-to-find, organized location. Students must rely on informal networks instead of a proper system to find it.

Guidance is not evenly distributed. Students with connections to senior peers in well-connected halls receive much better academic and career advice than others. This pattern is consistent across the institute, not just a few cases. More mentorship programs won't close this gap on a larger scale.

Important knowledge gets lost every year. Practical information about navigating the institute, preparing for placements, choosing courses, approaching professors, and understanding CDC expectations builds up within each graduating class and vanishes with them. The next class starts from scratch. Nothing carries over.

Current tools are just storage places, not helpful decision-makers. A student can search for a question paper, but no tool shows them which topics to focus on based on past trends. A student can read CDC guidelines, but no tool creates a preparation plan tailored to their specific stage and goals. The gap between information and actionable guidance leaves students figuring things out on their own.

## Proposal Details

Phase 1 covers two primary areas: academic planning and CDC and career guidance. This scope is intentionally narrow. A focused, well-functioning Phase 1 is the foundation for everything that follows.

### Academic Queries

The platform will handle questions about course selection and timetable planning, minor and micro-specialisation requirements, double major feasibility, prerequisite sequencing, programme completion planning, academic regulations and deadlines, subscription entitlements available on a KGP ID, BTP process and timelines, and general institute procedures. A student should be able to describe where they are and what they want to do, and receive a specific, grounded response drawn from official documentation.

### CDC and Career Queries

The platform will handle questions about CDC process and timeline, placement preparation by role and target company type, what a student at a given stage should be focused on, CV structure and CDC formatting requirements, and internship versus placement strategy. A CV builder will be included, enforcing CDC standards and pulling from the student's profile. Career roadmap generation will be calibrated to the student's year and stated goal. This does not require access to any sensitive placement records. It draws on publicly available CDC documentation and the body of student-compiled preparation guidance.

### Data sources for Phase 1

The sources that would be used would be the publicly available information that the institute has in its documents, such as academic regulations, requirement documents of the programs, academic calendar, guidelines by CDC, and information that is publicly available on different departmental pages of the institute. It would also include information that has been collected by the students and has been made publicly available, such as question papers that have been compiled and made publicly available by the students, blogs and guides that have been written by the students/alumni on medium, etc. No sensitive information, no information related to the students, no information related to grades, and no information that has restricted ERP access would be used in Phase 1. The role of the institute would be to ensure that the publicly available information is made available in a structured manner. No data-sharing agreement would be required in Phase 1.

## Structure and Operations

VidyaSetu will operate as a TSG initiative under the VP portfolio. The Technical Coordinators of TSG will maintain the platform. Open-source development will be coordinated through volunteering technology societies, including MetaKGP, KOSS, the Developer Society, and others who wish to contribute. There is no centralized proprietary development team. The platform is open-source from day one, with contribution documentation maintained as a standard deliverable. The institute's role is to support the initiative and provide access to documented data rather than own or co-manage the platform.

## Implementation Plan

| Phase | Focus | Scope | Timeline |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Phase 1** | Academic and CDC AI | Academic planning queries, timetable and programme planning, CDC assistant, CV builder, institute information. Hosted on Gymkhana servers. | 0 to 4 months |
| **Phase 2** | Research and BTP | Faculty project listings, BTP and MTP guidance, professor discovery, PAN-IIT research opportunity integration. | 4 to 8 months |
| **Phase 3** | Community and Events | Student marketplace for developer projects, unified event calendar with calendar app sync, society recruitment integration, subscriptions and opportunities board. | 8 to 14 months |

Phases 2 and 3 are contingent on Phase 1 adoption. Each phase will be brought back to TSG with usage data before proceeding.

### Estimated cost (from Gymkhana budget)

Based on 15,000 enrolled students, estimated 20 percent monthly active in Phase 1 (3,000 MAU), growing to 35 percent by Phase 3 (5,250 MAU). Assumed 8 queries per active user per week at an average of 1,200 tokens per query. Query caching is expected to reduce billable AI calls by 60 to 70 percent of gross volume.

| Item | Phase 1 | Phase 2 | Phase 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| AI inference (Gemini Flash API) | Rs. 2,500-4,500 | Rs. 4,000-7,000 | Rs. 6,000-10,000 |
| Server hosting (Gymkhana infrastructure) | Rs. 0 | Rs. 0 | Rs. 0 |
| Storage for PYQs and documents | Rs. 500-1,000 | Rs. 1,000-1,500 | Rs. 1,500-2,500 |
| **Monthly total** | **Rs. 3,000-5,500** | **Rs. 5,000-8,500** | **Rs. 7,500-12,500** |
| **Annual total (estimated)** | **Rs. 36,000-66,000** | **Rs. 60,000-Rs. 1,02,000** | **Rs. 90,000-Rs. 1,50,000** |

These are running costs only. Development is entirely voluntary through open-source societies. No development budget is required. Gymkhana server infrastructure covers hosting at zero marginal cost. The primary recurring expenditure is AI API usage.

Server specification for Gymkhana allocation: 4 vCPU, 8 GB RAM, 200 GB SSD, Ubuntu 22.04 LTS; outbound internet for API calls; HTTPS on a subdomain; MongoDB-compatible document store with 50 GB allocated and expansion path.

## Impact

The most direct impact is on access equity. Every student, regardless of hall, network, or year of joining, would have access to the same quality of guidance on academic planning and placement preparation from day one. That is a structural improvement, not a marginal one.

The second impact is on the accumulation of institutional knowledge. Student-produced guidance, preparation strategies, and documented processes currently exist in informal and scattered forms. A structured platform gives them permanence and discoverability.

The third is that this positions IIT Kharagpur as the first major Indian technical institute with a formally structured, AI-powered academic guidance platform operated under a student body. That is a meaningful distinction as peer institutions globally begin moving in this direction.

Success will be measured through three indicators: adoption rate, defined as active accounts as a percentage of enrolled students; weekly engagement rate, defined as average queries per active user; and a structured semesterly feedback form with standardised questions to track satisfaction and surface gaps. Targets will be proposed after the first semester of Phase 1 operation, once actual usage patterns are established.

## Groundwork

A working prototype https://www.myvidyasetu.in is already built and tested. It currently handles academic process queries from publicly available institute documentation, PYQ-related queries from student-maintained repositories, and CDC guidance drawn from over 200 scraped Medium blogs and student-published preparation resources. Authentication is live and restricted to @iitkgp.ac.in accounts. A feedback form has been circulated and initial student responses collected. Informal conversations with deans have taken place, and the concept has received preliminary support. This proposal formalises what is already in motion.

The model is validated globally. Institutions that have adopted AI guidance platforms tailored to their needs are seeing consistent results in areas like adoption rates, student performance, and equitable access.

Georgia Tech's Jill Watson, an AI teaching assistant developed using course-specific materials, has been in use since 2016. A 2024 study revealed that this platform answers student questions correctly 78.7 percent of the time, a significant improvement over the 30.7 percent accuracy of a general-purpose AI assistant. The core design choice, limiting responses to verified institutional data instead of the vast expanse of the internet, mirrors the approach taken by VidyaSetu.

Georgia State University's Pounce platform, which serves 40,000 students, has proven effective, decreasing summer melt by 22 percent. Furthermore, it boosted the likelihood of students earning a B or higher in specific courses by 5 to 6 percentage points.

In 2024, the US Department of Education awarded a $7.6 million grant to scale the model across partner universities, citing documented improvement in outcomes specifically for

first-generation and lower-income students. The equity dimension maps directly to what VidyaSetu addresses.

The University of Michigan launched UM-GPT in August 2023, hosted entirely on university infrastructure with institution-specific data controls, making it one of the first universities globally to deploy AI services at an institutional scale while maintaining data governance internally. Arizona State University followed by deploying ChatGPT Edu across 181,000 students with over 200 active institutional projects. Both cases establish that the infrastructure model proposed here, Gymkhana-hosted, institution-specific, open-source, is operationally proven and not experimental.

Within India, no IIT or NIT has yet formally institutionalised an AI student guidance platform. IIT Delhi's Yardi School of AI has focused on academic research and degree programmes rather than student guidance infrastructure. The gap identified in this proposal is present at every major technical institute in the country. IIT Kharagpur is positioned to be the first to address it in a structured way.

# Proposal: Overhauling Student Transportation at IIT Kharagpur

## Overview

Getting around IIT Kharagpur, one of the largest university campuses in Asia, is a daily friction that students have quietly learned to live with. There is no organised institute support, pushing students toward bike taxis and electric rickshaws with fluctuating prices without accountability or safety assurance. Within campus, the lack of structured short-distance mobility means long walks between halls, academic blocks and facilities, or complete reliance on personal bicycles without supporting safety infrastructure. Bike taxi riders often overcharge, and unsafe practices like Ola or Rapido riders not providing or using helmets have become common, so these issues should be prioritized.

## Needs

- **Absence of Short-Distance Campus Mobility**
  The large campus layout makes daily travel quite time-consuming, as moving between hostels, academic buildings, and Nalanda takes up a significant part of the day. While many similar institutions have introduced electric mobility options for easier commuting, IIT Kharagpur (despite having the largest campus) still lacks a convenient, shared transport system designed for quick and flexible short-distance travel.
- **Pricing Issues and Safety Concerns:**
  Students often face issues with inconsistent fares and occasional overcharging by ride service providers around the campus. Another concern is safety during app-based two-wheeler rides, while drivers usually wear helmets, passengers are rarely provided with one. This highlights a clear gap in safety practices. At present, there is no proper system in place to regulate pricing or ensure that basic safety measures are consistently followed.

## Proposal Details

- **Electric Micro Mobility Fleet Across Campus**
  - An electric cycle sharing system will be introduced with docking stations across halls, academic areas, Nalanda, the library and Gymkhana. The system will operate on a rental model based on time and distance, accessible through an aggregator-provided application that links the user's roll number. Students can pick up and drop off cycles at any station, allowing flexible usage across the day.

    - To avoid maintenance failures seen in similar deployments elsewhere, the vendor agreement will include a battery service model where maintenance and replacement remain the vendor's responsibility. This ensures long-term usability without placing operational strain on the institute. The institute will constitute a committee for tender evaluation under the guidance of the Dean of Infrastructure, with Gymkhana supporting coordination and deployment.
- **Regulating Aggregator based Travel and Improving Safety**
    - A structured engagement will be initiated with ride service platforms to establish fair pricing for trips originating from campus. The institute's scale provides leverage to introduce pricing guidelines and formal complaint channels. Repeated violations by drivers can lead to restricted access for campus pickups.

## Implementation

- For the electric cycle fleet, TSG will lead vendor identification and evaluation, with the battery-as-a-service clause treated as a non-negotiable condition in the vendor agreement before any contract is signed. Docking station locations will be finalised in consultation with the Office of Infrastructure, prioritising high-traffic nodes across halls, academic areas, Nalanda, the library and the Gymkhana. The institute ID-based access system will be integrated into the rental platform by the vendor as part of the deployment agreement. A pilot covering a smaller set of stations will run for one semester to identify gaps in station placement and usage patterns before the full campus rollout.

  Proposed locations of docking and charging stations are in or around the following locations:

| **Placement of Charging Stations** |
|---|
| Halls of Residence |
| Nalanda (Subway Side) |
| Nalanda (Wrong Side) |
| Ramanujan Complex |
| Mechanical Department |
| Mining Department |
| TSG |
| Main Building |

The vehicles will have GPS tracking and will not be allowed to go out of the campus, for security purposes.

- For ride regulation, formal engagement with Ola and Rapido will be initiated in coordination with the Dean of Students' Affairs, with the institute's scale used as leverage to establish pricing guidelines and a complaint mechanism for overcharging. Recognising the specific safety requirements and high pedestrian density of the IIT KGP campus, a campus-wide speed limit of 30 kmph is deemed a necessary intervention**.** To ensure strict compliance, the vendor will be mandated to implement a firm speed lock on every vehicle, supplemented by digital governors and real-time monitoring within the application. The Security Section will be briefed on enforcement protocols only after the procurement window has closed, and awareness initiatives will run concurrently to ensure the rollout is supported by genuine behavioural change rather than relying on enforcement alone.

## Impact

1. **Safety:** More structured travel systems, along with enforced helmet use, strengthen safety, especially for students travelling alone or during late hours.
2. **Sustainability:** The introduction of electric mobility supports the institute’s sustainability goals while bringing campus infrastructure in line with leading peer institutions.
3. **Reliability:** The proposal moves campus transport toward a system students can consistently rely on, with services that are stable, accessible and predictable across different needs.

## Groundwork

Student feedback across halls and online forums consistently highlights transportation as a major concern, particularly bus reliability, vacation travel costs and fare overcharging. Benchmarks from peer institutions confirm that both tracking systems and electric mobility solutions are practical within existing infrastructure. A campus-wide survey further reinforces demand, with transportation emerging as a key non-academic concern across departments and year groups.

In discussions with previous Vice Presidents TSG, indicate that private mobility companies have previously approached the institute to explore similar electric transport solutions. While these proposals were not formalised at the time, they demonstrate existing industry interest in operating within the campus ecosystem. This suggests that vendor participation is unlikely to be a constraint and that a structured, institute-led framework could attract multiple service providers. Over time, successful implementation could further strengthen industry confidence, encouraging more companies to approach the institute with competitive and improved mobility solutions. Additionally, collaborations undertaken by IIT Delhi in the domain of smart mobility and electric transport solutions demonstrate the feasibility of integrating technology-driven transportation systems within large campuses. These initiatives provide a relevant benchmark, indicating that similar models can be adapted and implemented at IIT Kharagpur to enhance overall transportation efficiency and accessibility.

# Proposal: Strengthening CDC Through Alumni-Industry Partnerships

## Overview

One of the largest and most accomplished alumni networks exists under the umbrella of IIT Kharagpur, with alumni in senior roles in industry, research, and multinational corporations. The alumni network is still greatly underleveraged in terms of creating formalized routes for existing students. The Career Development Centre's engagement is largely based on recruiter relationships built over time and company interest. This has served us well in established roles but has consistently failed to meet requirements for specialized roles, niche domains, and those not in the mainstream placement drive.

The alumni database is already maintained by the **Office of Alumni Affairs,** and so the raw material for a structured outreach is already in place. What is lacking is a framework that translates alumni goodwill into institutional commitment, a commitment that goes beyond occasional interactions and creates reliable, recurring opportunities for students of all programmes. What this proposal does is establish that framework, a formally signed Memorandum of Understanding between IIT Kharagpur and companies through alumni in senior industry positions, facilitated by T&P coordinators in departments and anchored by the office of alumni affairs.

## Needs

- **Alumni Engagement Remains Informal and Inconsistent:** While the institute has a large alumni base in its database, the present relationship between the institute and its alumni in the industry has remained mostly ad hoc in nature, where the alumni may be responsive to emails sent by the students or may be willing to be a part of panel discussions or contribute to the alumni funds, but there exists no formal framework that converts the seniority and industry access of the alumni into actual career avenues for the students. Goodwill exists in abundance; what it needs is a channel.

- **CDC Outreach Does Not Capture Alumni-Led Opportunities:** The CDC's efforts in reaching out to the companies are mainly focused on established recruiters and firms that have been actively involved in the past. Alumni who have risen through the ranks in firms that have not yet become recruiters of IIT Kharagpur students are an unexploited opportunity. This does not happen through any process, and the opportunities do not arise despite the interest of the alumni.

- **No Formal Pathway for Project Funding, Higher Study Aid, or Internship Support from Alumni:** For students requiring funding for their projects, research internships, mentorship in industry and guidance and support for higher studies abroad, they do this completely on their own. There is no programme that connects a student's need to an alumnus in a position to help with that need. This means that access to these opportunities is largely dependent on individual initiatives and personal networks.

## Proposal Details

- **Formalizing Alumni Engagement Through Signed MoUs:** The centrepiece of this proposal is the establishment of formal Memoranda of Understanding between IIT Kharagpur and companies through alumni currently in senior industry positions. These MoUs will be signed at the institute administration level, giving them institutional weight and ensuring that the commitments made within them are not dependent on individual relationships that can dissolve when people change roles.

  Each MoU will be structured around one or more of four defined career engagement categories, based on what the alumnus is best positioned to offer:
  - **Placement Opportunities:** The alumnus commits to considering IIT Kharagpur students for open roles at their organization, with a defined point of contact within their HR or recruitment function to whom the CDC can directly reach out each placement season.
  - **Internship Opportunities:** The alumnus commits to offering structured internship positions, either semester-long or summer, to students from relevant departments. These internships will be listed through the CDC and treated as part of the formal placement infrastructure rather than informal arrangements.
  - **Project Funding:** The alumnus or their organization commits to funding student-led projects, research initiatives, or competition participation on a proposal basis. This is particularly valuable for research groups and technical teams that currently lack access to seed funding.
  - **Aid for Higher Studies:** Alumni in senior academic or industry research positions commit to providing structured mentorship, recommendation support and guidance to students applying for graduate programmes and research fellowships abroad. This does not require financial commitment but rather a formal, recurring engagement with a defined cohort of interested students each year.

- **T&P Coordinator-Driven Outreach via the Alumni Database:** Departmental T&P coordinators, in coordination with the office of Alumni Affairs, will be responsible for driving this outreach effort. The existing alumni database will be segmented by department of graduation and by industry position, enabling each department's T&P coordinator to target alumni from their own field who are most relevant to their students' career profiles.

A structured template of an email that can be sent out for outreach purposes will be created and standardized across the **CDC** departments so that emails sent to alumni are professional and clearly articulate the ask. The ask is not generic; it is a MoU with clear commitments in any of the four areas listed above, making it much simpler for the alumni to say yes and know exactly what they are signing up for.

The office of alumni affairs will assist in the actual signing of a memorandum of understanding when the alumnus has agreed in principle, so that the administrative and legal details of a memorandum of understanding are handled by someone other than the T&P coordinators in each department.

- **Monitoring, Renewal and Accountability:** MoUs will be reviewed annually. Each signed MoU will specify the nature and frequency of engagement committed to and the CDC will track whether those commitments have been fulfilled at the end of each academic year. MoUs where engagement has been active and productive will be renewed. Those where alumni have been unresponsive will be flagged and followed up on before renewal is considered.

  This review cycle ensures that the MoU framework does not become a symbolic exercise but remains a living, productive set of relationships that generate real outcomes for students year after year. Aggregate data on opportunities generated through alumni MoUs will be reported to the Students' Senate annually, creating institutional accountability for how the programme is performing.

## Implementation

The rollout will proceed in three phases:

- The first phase involves the CDC and the Office of Alumni Affairs jointly developing the MoU template across the four engagement categories, segmenting the alumni database by department and seniority and briefing departmental T&P coordinators on the outreach process. Standardized email templates will be finalized, and a target of initial outreach to a defined number of alumni per department will be set.

- The second phase is active outreach. T&P coordinators begin mailing alumni using the standardized template, with the office of alumni affairs available to follow up on positive responses and initiate the formal MoU signing process. A target of completing the first round of MoU signings before the start of the placement season will be maintained so that the first cohort of students can benefit within the same academic year.

- The third phase is monitoring and expansion. After the first annual review cycle, the programme will be evaluated on the number of opportunities generated across each category, student uptake and alumni responsiveness. Learnings from the first year will

inform an expanded second-year outreach that targets a broader set of alumni across more departments.

## Impact

1. **Expanded Placement Pipeline:** Alumni in senior positions at companies that do not currently recruit from IIT Kharagpur represent a direct pathway to new recruiters. Formal MoUs create the institutional relationship that converts an alumnus's willingness into an organization's recruiting commitment.

2. **Equitable Opportunity Access:** Currently, students who happen to know the right alumni get access to internships, project funding and higher study guidance. This proposal replaces personal network dependency with an institutional programme that is accessible to all students equally, regardless of their individual connections.

3. **Structured Support for Higher Studies:** For students pursuing graduate programmes abroad, structured mentorship from alumni in senior academic or research positions is enormously valuable and almost absent at present. The higher study aid category of the MoU framework directly addresses this.

4. **Institutional Credibility:** Formal MoUs signal to alumni that the institute is serious about the relationship and has built a system capable of honouring commitments on both sides. This professionalism is more likely to attract and retain high-quality alumni engagement than informal outreach has historically managed.

5. **Long-Term Sustainability:** Because the MoUs are signed at the institute administration level and reviewed annually, the programme does not depend on any individual's tenure or personal relationships to continue functioning. It becomes part of the institution's career infrastructure rather than a one-term initiative.

## Groundwork

The **Office of Alumni Affairs** has a structured alumni database in place, thereby validating the first foundational element required for this proposal. Interacting with the T&P In-Charges at each department showed unanimous enthusiasm for a formal mechanism to engage with the alumni network. Some departments mentioned that ad hoc connections with the alumni network had, in the past, led to very successful placements and internships, but the lack of a formal mechanism made these results unpredictable and uncontrollable.
Interacting with the **Student Placement Coordinator** team also validated the potential to leverage the recruiter outreach through the CDC, with the existing alumni network not being systematically utilized. The benchmark with IIT Bombay, where the alumni network is more formally engaged in the funding mechanism, also shows the potential for a formal MoU-based

engagement mechanism to have a significant impact, especially at the scale required at a large institute like IIT.
The infrastructure at IIT Kharagpur in terms of existing infrastructure, exhaustive alumni database, formal office of alumni affairs and functioning T&P coordinators at each department, validates the existence of all required conditions to replicate and enhance the model at IIT Bombay.

# Proposal: Empowering Postgraduate and Research Scholar Students

## Overview

Postgraduate and Research Scholar students at IIT Kharagpur operate in one of the most demanding academic environments in the country, yet the systems meant to support them have not kept pace with their needs. Scholars routinely find themselves waiting weeks for seminar approvals that should take days, navigating supervisor conflicts with no formal safety net and competing for placement opportunities in a process built almost entirely around undergraduates. The Central Research Facility, despite ERP integration, still functions through layers of manual approvals that eat into valuable research time. With the introduction of the 40-30-30 grading structure, Teaching Assistant duties have quietly expanded into an unregulated workload burden with no institutional cap in sight. Taken together, these are not isolated inconveniences. In conversations with fellow research scholars and through observations within the institute, it became evident that these challenges are not isolated incidents but recurring patterns affecting multiple departments. If left unaddressed, they risk pushing away some of the institute's most committed research talent.

## Needs

- **Lack of Proper Regulation of Teaching Workload Under the 40-30-30 Framework:** The newly implemented grading system of 40-30-30 has given teachers control over 40% of a student's grading. For Research Scholar students who are assigned the role of Teaching Assistants, their workload has increased significantly in terms of grading; however, there is a lack of policy that indicates how many hours a week this can be assigned to these students. In essence, if there is no limit to how many hours a student can be assigned to a Teacher's Assistant role, then this role can encompass any available time, which is increasingly becoming the time that these scholars need for their own research.

- **Academic Grievances Addressal:**
  When a student has concerns about their supervisor, such as a lack of feedback, the supervisor being occupied, or something more serious, there is currently a lack of any official streamlined mechanism to raise those concerns. This leads to an increase in mental overload and exhaustion of time of a Research Scholar students'. A structured grievance process is a basic institutional need that can be executed conveniently.

- **Absence of Structured Seminar Scheduling:**
  Researchers who are at pre-synopsis and synopsis stages often experience delays that

are not related to the quality of the research. In many instances, faculty members are not able to respond due to their academic commitments, and a lack of a departmental calendar causes academic milestones to be subject to administrative uncertainty. The working execution of this functioning can be smoothened to ease the burden of both the Faculties as well as the Research Scholar students.

## Proposal Details

- **Capping Teaching Assistant Hours:**
    - This is the most prioritised addition to this proposal, and it addresses a gap that the 40-30-30 grading framework has made unwillingly difficult. With 40% of a student's final grade now falling under Teacher's Assessment, the assessment-related workload on Research Scholar students functioning as Teacher's Assistant has grown considerably. There is a lack of official policy to define how many hours per week a scholar can be required to dedicate to this role. In the absence of any such limit, duties of the Teachers' Assistant routinely overflow into the time scholars need for their own research.
    - We also recommend putting a cap on the duty hours of the Teacher's Assistant for each Research Scholar student for a week. This cap will be formally incorporated in the Teacher's Assistant appointment letter issued by departments at the start of each semester. Any workload demand time above the cap needs to be formally approved by the Head of the respective departments.
    - Peer institutions treat Teacher's Assistant responsibilities as structured, time-bound commitments. Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur should do the same. A research scholar's primary obligation shall be their research, and the institution's policies can reflect that without ambiguity.

- **Strengthening Academic Grievance Redressal:**
    - A Central Academic Grievance Cell will be established as a formal, time-bound channel for Post-Graduate and Research Scholar students to raise concerns related to delayed  evaluations, inadequate feedback and supervisor-related issues. It will operate through both online and in-person modes, ensuring accessibility for all students regardless of circumstance.
    - A Standard Operating Procedure for supervisor change will be developed that involves frequent, timely feedback consideration, along with the fair analysis of the case from the situational perspective of both the Supervisor and the research scholar. This procedure will clearly outline the steps involved, like the Point of View analysis, possible modifications of the situation and the major changes if required, post supervision by the relevant stakeholders. It will involve following the timelines that both the student and the institution are expected to follow. A defined window will be available for initiating the process after initial supervisor allotment, so that no student is left without recourse simply because they are not able to act within an unstated deadline.

    - An anonymous feedback mechanism will be built into the grievance framework. Scholars must have the ability to raise concerns without putting their academic standing at risk. This is not about creating conflict. It is about creating the kind of trust that makes a research environment actually function.

- **Ensuring Timely Seminars for Research Scholars:**
    - The goal here is straightforward: no scholar should have their research timeline disrupted by administrative delays that a little structure could easily prevent.
    - Every department will publish a semester-wise seminar calendar at the start of each semester, with defined windows for pre-synopsis and synopsis presentations. This gives both students and faculty a shared timeline to plan around, removing the ambiguity that currently causes so much unnecessary delay. A structured response timeline can be introduced for seminar-related communications, along with periodic reminders, to help faculty manage responses smoothly within a reasonable number of working days.
    - A seminar tracking module will be integrated into the existing ERP system, giving scholars real-time visibility into the status of their requests and approvals at every stage. Monthly departmental reviews will complement this by catching recurring problems before they become entrenched problems.

## Implementation

- The Teacher's Assistant hour cap will be formalised through consultation with the Dean of Students' Affairs and the Head of Departments. The policy will define a cap in hours per week as the institutional ceiling for Teacher's Assistant duties per Research Scholar student and this limit will be incorporated into the Teacher's Assistant appointment letter issued by every department at the start of each semester. A standardised appointment letter template reflecting this cap will be drafted in coordination with the academic section and circulated to all departments before the semester begins. Any workload demand exceeding the cap will require documented approval from the Dean of Students' Affairs, creating a paper trail that discourages casual override. A reporting mechanism will be developed on the ERP portal, allowing scholars to flag violations anonymously without having to confront their supervisors directly. The academic section will be responsible for monitoring flagged cases and escalating unresolved ones. This will encourage Professors of the respective courses to structure the Teachers' Assessment in such a way which takes into account the time cap. It also ensures no undue pressure on the students.
- The SOP for changing the supervisor would also be formulated in consultation with the Head of the department, RS members, and faculty members of departments with the highest RS student population. This SOP would detail the procedures that a student would need to adhere to, documents that would be needed at every stage of the process, which bodies within the university would be involved in this decision-making process, and within what timeframe a student would need to receive information regarding this decision. This SOP would also be uploaded on the official portal of the

academic section and sent to all incoming RS students at the time of allotment of their supervisors. A window of initiation would also be defined within this SOP so that it does not remain open-ended.

- The semester-wise seminar calendar will be implemented through academic coordinators in each department, who will be responsible for ensuring that a defined window for pre-synopsis and synopsis is published at the beginning of each semester. A new ERP seminar tracking system will be developed by TSG Technology coordinators in collaboration with the ERP office and will enable scholars to submit their seminar requests and keep track of their status at each stage in real time. A mandatory faculty response deadline will be fixed by the academic section and formally intimated to all departments; the tracking system will be the mechanism that makes delays visible rather than invisible.
- The Central Academic Grievance Cell will be established through a formal order from the Dean of Students' Affairs, with a defined charter, a designated nodal officer and a stated response timeline for every category of complaint. It will operate through both an online submission portal, integrated into ERP and an in-person channel with fixed office hours. The anonymous feedback mechanism will be built into the portal as a separate submission stream, ensuring that scholars who are not comfortable filing a named complaint still have a protected channel to surface concerns. The CAGC's performance, including average resolution times and complaint categories, will be reviewed at the end of each semester by the Students' Senate to maintain institutional accountability.

## Impact

1. Research Productivity: Capping TA hours per week restores protected time for scholars, directly improving both the quality and pace of research output.
2. Institutional Accountability: The CAGC and the SOP for supervisor change provide a formal layer of accountability, which is currently lacking. Issues that were not being addressed because no mechanism existed to raise the issues will now have a mechanism for resolution.
3. Equitable Career Outcomes: A dedicated RS placement window and a formalised PG internship option levels the playing field in a placement ecosystem that has historically disadvantaged postgraduate students.
4. Transparent Research Infrastructure: Live CRF slot access and ERP-based seminar tracking replace opaque, manual processes with systems that are visible, trackable and fair.
5. Talent Retention: Scholars who feel protected, supported and institutionally recognised do not leave. Building that environment is not just good for the students. It is good for the research output and long-term reputation of the institute.

## Groundwork

- Discussions with Research Scholar Representative to Institute Senate revealed consistent frustration with undefined TA workload expectations, the absence of any formal supervisor-change process and the complete lack of institutional infrastructure for the RS community to organise itself. The introduction of the 40-30-30 grading structure has amplified concerns around TA workload without any accompanying policy to protect scholar time, a gap confirmed through conversations with both faculty members and senior scholars who have experienced it directly.
- The absence of a budget and venue access for RS representatives was flagged repeatedly across these conversations as something that fundamentally limits the RS community's ability to function as a cohesive body. This is not a complicated problem to solve and the fact that it has persisted this long is reason enough to make it a priority.
- Benchmarking against IISc Bangalore and IIT Bombay, both of which maintain deferred placement systems, defined TA workload policies and formal institutional support structures for their research scholar communities, confirms that what is being proposed here is not experimental. It is standard practice at institutions that take their research community seriously. Counsellors at the IIT Kharagpur Counselling Centre have also noted that undefined academic expectations and a general sense of institutional invisibility are recurring themes in sessions with research scholars, signalling that this is a systemic issue, not an isolated one.

# Proposal: Improving Transparency in Academic Evaluation and Grading

## Overview

Academic evaluation at IIT Kharagpur plays a central role in shaping student outcomes, yet the process often lacks visibility at the student level. While assessments such as quizzes, mid-semester examinations, end-semester examinations, and teachers' assessment form the backbone of grading, students rarely have access to a clear breakdown of how their final grade is arrived at. Marks for individual components are not consistently shared, cutoffs are not formally communicated, and evaluation criteria often remain implicit. This creates avoidable confusion, limits opportunities for self-assessment, and weakens trust in an otherwise robust academic system. This proposal aims to introduce structured transparency into the grading process, ensuring that students have clear, timely, and accessible information about their academic evaluation.

## Needs

- **Lack of Visibility in Component-Wise Marks:** Students are often unaware of their exact performance across different evaluation components, such as quizzes, mid-semester examinations, end-semester examinations, attendance, and the teacher's assessment. This makes it difficult to understand where they stand academically or identify areas of improvement.
- **Absence of Standardised Grade Breakdown:** Final grades are released without a detailed breakdown of how each component contributed. The absence of this structure leads to speculation and repeated clarification requests to faculty.
- **No Formal Communication of Cutoffs:** Grade cutoffs are rarely communicated officially. Students are left to estimate boundaries through informal discussions, which creates inconsistency and misinformation.
- **Limited Scope for Academic Clarification:** Without access to detailed marks and evaluation data, students are unable to raise informed academic queries or seek meaningful clarification regarding their grades.

## Proposal Details

- **ERP-Based Academic Evaluation Dashboard**
    - A dedicated module will be introduced on the ERP where students can view a complete breakdown of their performance in each course. This will include:
    - Marks obtained in quizzes, assignments, mid-semester examinations, and end-semester examinations

    - Attendance records contribute to the evaluation
    - Teacher's assessment component with weightage
    - Total aggregated score before grade allocation
    - This dashboard will be accessible only to the concerned student, ensuring privacy while enabling complete clarity.
- **Structured Upload of Teacher's Assessment**
    - The faculty will upload the components contributing to the teacher's assessment in a structured format on ERP. While qualitative judgment remains with the instructor, the weightage and contributing factors will be visible to students.
    - This ensures that even subjective components are communicated transparently without interfering with academic autonomy.
- **Mandatory Communication of Grade Cutoffs**
    - After grade finalisation, course-wise cutoffs will be formally shared with students through the institute email or ERP notifications.
    - This will include grade boundaries for all awarded grades, ensuring that students understand where their performance stands relative to the cohort.
- **Post Evaluation Clarification Window**
    - A defined time window will be introduced after grade release, during which students can raise queries regarding their evaluation.
    - Since students will now have access to detailed marks and breakdowns, queries will be more specific, reducing unnecessary back and forth while improving the quality of academic interaction.

## Implementation

- The ERP evaluation dashboard will be developed in coordination with the ERP office and the academic section. The module will be designed to pull data directly from the existing grading infrastructure, displaying component-wise marks (quizzes, assignments, mid-term examinations, end-term examinations, attendance and the teacher's assessment) in a structured, student-facing view. Since ERP already supports data display modules, the development effort required is incremental rather than a ground-up build. The concerned team will define data fields, access permissions and display logic before development begins, ensuring the module is consistent across all courses and departments from day one.
- On the faculty side, a standardised data input format will be established for uploading marks and assessment components. This format will be defined in consultation with the academic section and shared with faculty at the start of each semester, alongside clear deadlines for when marks must be uploaded relative to grade submission timelines. The goal is not to impose additional burden on faculty but to channel the data they already maintain into a format that is systematic and student-accessible. Department-level academic coordinators will be responsible for ensuring compliance within their units.
- For cutoff communication, an automated notification system will be integrated into ERP that triggers once grades are finalised and approved by the academic section. Students will receive course-wise cutoff information through both ERP and institute email

simultaneously, ensuring no student misses the communication regardless of how they access the institute systems.

- The post-evaluation clarification window will be operationalised through a formal grievance ticket system on ERP, through which students can raise specific queries tied to their component-wise data. A defined response timeline will be set for faculty and the academic section will monitor pending queries to ensure no ticket goes unaddressed. Guidelines for both students and faculty on what constitutes a valid academic query will be published at the start of each semester to manage expectations and prevent misuse.

## Impact

1. **Clarity in Academic Performance:** Students gain a clear understanding of how their grades are computed, removing ambiguity around evaluation.
2. **Improved Academic Accountability:** Transparent systems encourage consistency in evaluation practices while maintaining faculty autonomy.
3. **Better Student Faculty Interaction:** With access to detailed data, student queries become more informed and constructive rather than speculative.
4. **Reduced Stress and Uncertainty:** Much of the anxiety around results comes from not knowing. Structured transparency directly addresses this gap.
5. **Stronger Trust in the System:** A system that is visible is a system that is trusted. Transparency strengthens confidence.23 in academic processes across the institute.

## Groundwork

Discussions with students across departments consistently highlight a lack of clarity in grading as a recurring concern, particularly around teachers' assessments and grade cutoffs. Existing ERP infrastructure already supports data display modules, making this proposal technically feasible with incremental development rather than a complete overhaul. Similar transparency practices are followed in several global as well as Indian universities, where component-wise grading and cutoff disclosure are standard, reinforcing both feasibility and relevance in the IIT Kharagpur context.

In addition, discussions with Undergraduate Department Representatives across multiple departments indicate that implementing such transparency measures within the current system is practical. Representatives noted that the required data is already recorded by instructors and stored within existing systems, requiring only a structured presentation rather than new data collection. They also expressed strong support for a standardized, institute-level framework, emphasizing that clarity in grading would significantly reduce ambiguity and student grievances.

Further, consultations with Professors suggest that the proposal is also viable from an instructional perspective. Faculty members acknowledged that most of the relevant evaluation data is already maintained as part of routine course administration, and that making it accessible in a structured format would not impose significant additional workload if

implemented systematically. They also noted that increased transparency could help align student expectations with evaluation criteria, reducing disputes and improving overall academic communication.