



# National Agricultural Education Policy

## Why in News

The **first National Agricultural Education Policy** is set to bring **academic credit banks and degree programmes with multiple entry and exit options** to the 74 universities focussed on crop sciences, fisheries, veterinary and dairy training and research.

- The process for formulating the **National Agricultural Education Policy** was started about two months ago, after the release of the [National Education Policy \(NEP\) 2020](#).
- Earlier, the Prime Minister had pitched for **taking farm education to middle school level**, saying necessary reforms have been made in this regard in the NEP 2020.

## Key Points

### ▪ Agricultural Education Policy to be Aligned with NEP 2020:

#### ◦ Academic Credit Banks:

- These may be a service provider available to a desirable student community. It may facilitate the **integration of the campuses and distributed learning systems**, by creating **student mobility within the inter and intra university system**.
- It may help in seamlessly **integrating skills and experiences into a credit based formal system** by providing a credit recognition mechanism.
- It will **digitally store academic credits** earned from recognised **Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)** and allow for credit redemption in order to be awarded a certificate, diploma or degree.

#### ◦ Experiential Education:

- In India, agricultural education is already ahead of its time, and already aligned with the NEP. The NEP wants a **shift to four-year undergraduate degrees**, and agricultural degrees are already four-year programmes.
- The NEP mentions **experiential education**, which has been already mandated in agricultural education since 2016.
  - Experiential education is a **teaching philosophy** that informs many methodologies in which educators purposefully engage with learners in direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills, clarify values, and develop people's capacity to contribute to their communities.
- The **Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) programme** requires all students to undertake a six-month internship, usually in their fourth year, to gain hands-on training, rural awareness, industry experience, research expertise and entrepreneurship skills.
- One **major challenge** is to ensure that experiential learning is made available to all students if the **multiple entry-exit system** gets implemented.

- The option of multiple entry and exit provides students with the opportunity

to earn a diploma or an advanced diploma, while they are given the choice to re-enter as and when they are able to resume their studies and earn a full college degree.

▪ **Issues:**

◦ **Challenge of Multidisciplinarity:**

- Agricultural universities have been modelled on the **land grant pattern**, with a focus on research and extension, and deep community connections, driven by the philosophy that farmers need holistic solutions to their problems.
- However, in recent years, several **domain specific universities** in horticulture, veterinary science and fisheries sciences have come up. Incorporating humanities and social sciences into these settings could be a big challenge.

◦ **Related to the ICAR:**

- Though **agricultural education is a State subject**, the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR - Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare)** is responsible for the **quality of education** across the country, and expects to continue in a standards-setting role under the new system of higher education regulation proposed by the NEP.
- However, it is not clear **whether it will continue in its accreditation and grant making roles** under the new regime.

[Source: TH](#)

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