

IIT Bhubaneswar Conducts Final Semester Examinations Online

CITY LIGHTS : SCHOOL / CAMPUS BUZZ

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IIT Bhubaneswar has conducted the end-semester examinations in online mode between 24 to 30 June 2020 for its final year subjects. 526 final year students, including a fraction of others who registered for the final year courses participated. The students included 206 B.Tech students, 36 dual degree students, 75 M.Sc students, 167 M.Tech students and 42 Ph.D students.

The commercially available systems for online examinations are normally designed to hold computer-based tests and not for conventional examinations in a comprehensive form and have certain limitations. IIT Bhubaneswar created an innovative system in-house to hold conventional examinations online with invigilation in virtual examination halls and adopted the same for its final year students.

The conceptual and architectural design of the system was provided by Prof R V Raja Kumar, Director and the system was developed by the Computer and IT Services Cell (CITSC) of the institute with Dr Barathram, Chairman and Chandra Vadde, the programmer carrying on the main development. The system uses a commercial system provided by Wheebox as its sub-system with a lot of customization and enhancements made as per the guidance of the institute.

The team claims that the inspiration for creating this innovation and its application has come from the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convert the pandemic crisis into an opportunity towards creating a self-reliant India.



While speaking on the occasion, Prof Raja Kumar said, "One of the challenges faced in the system's design is to provide fairness of access to students who have a lot of variation in available gadgets and internet connectivity. Since the answering can also be done with pen and paper, the requirement of the internet is reduced to question paper access, answer paper uploading and invigilation."

The institute provided multiple options to facilitate the students to take the test with fairness, though they have different levels of technology access (single to two gadgets). "Our students cooperated well as they are highly technology savvy and participated in the examinations with seriousness and helped the institute in conducting their examinations in good standards," added Kumar.

Dr P R Sahu, Dean (academic) said, "The examinations could be held without any compromise on the regulations despite the pandemic situation. The one change made is that the duration of the online end-semester exam is reduced to 2 hours from the usual 3 hours and accordingly the weightage to 40% in place of 50%, as recommended by our Senate".

"Holding of the examinations in the new system was a challenge and putting it into practice and holding the examinations of the institute with the same effectiveness as conventional examinations have given us a rewarding experience," said Dr Rajan Jha, the Prof-in-charge, Examinations.