

IITBBS shows way, hires five full-time foreign teachers

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Bhubaneswar: IIT Bhubaneswar has now gone where none of the Indian Institutes of Technology have not. In a move to expose students to a global standard of study, IITBBS now employs more foreign faculty members than any other IIT in the country.

While it is common for foreign faculty to visit the institutions for two to three months, IITBBS has been hiring foreign guest teachers on a full-time basis for periods ranging from one to three academic years. Five teachers from across the world have already been appointed while the hiring of 10 more is in the works. The institution has had to get the approval of its Board of Governors and the Centre for these new appointments.

GLOBAL STANDARD

► The institute has already selected five teachers from across the world and is in the process of hiring 10 more

► The teachers have been hired from Canada, Slovenia, the USA, the UK and the Netherlands

► IITBBS has had to obtain permission from the Centre for the move

Speaking to TOI, IITBBS director R V Rajakumar said there are three major reasons behind the move. "This is an effort to make the IITs among the best institutes in the world," Rajakumar said.

Secondly, Rajakumar said there is a shortage of quality faculty with technical specialities in the country which international teachers can fill.

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Tech institute hopes to better edu rankings through hiring move

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The third and most important benefit is that this will help broaden the arena of students' work. It will also help attract foreign students. The institute will be set on the path of getting a better rating globally — not that such a rating is an immediate priority," the IITBBS director said.

IITs opened up to foreign students for the first time this year. The response has been poor,

with less than five foreign students taking admission in the entire IIT system. IITs, however, can admit foreign students up to 20 per cent beyond their sanctioned strength.

Rajakumar said the regulations were changed and permission from the external affairs ministry was taken to employ foreigners as teachers. "The IIT is offering them a salary in the Indian rupee. Be-

sides, there are perks. To ensure that quality is not compromised in the pursuit of hiring global faculty, a stringent selection process is undertaken," he said.

The guest teachers feel the salary is in itself an attraction.

"The figures look comparatively less but if one factors in the low cost of living here, the salary is comparable with the best anywhere in the world," said Scott Andrew What-

tam, from Ontario in Canada. Whatam joined the School of Earth, Ocean and Climate Sciences at IITBBS recently. The re-

searcher has worked with Korea University in Seoul, South Korea between 2001 and 2006. "I wanted to experience something new, so when I was selected here I did not have a second thought. This is my first visit and assignment in India," Whatam said.

Matjaz Kovse, a mathematics teacher from the University of Maribor in Slovenia, who has joined the School of Basic Sciences here, said the remuneration he would get here is attractive given the not-so-good economic condition in his central European country. "Besides, I am fascinated with the socio-cultural life in India. So working here is a bonus," he said.

Among others, the IIT has selected Tian C Zhang from the University of Nebraska, USA, Alin Marian Achim from the UK and Javagal K Sridhar from the Netherlands, all of whom are likely to join soon.

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