Self-learning takes study out of classroom at IIT-GN

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Ahmedabad: Ensuring full attendance in classroom is sometimes a challenge. A solution could lie in the innovative initiative called the 'Self-Learning Mode' (SLM), launched by the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar, (IIT-Gn). It is gaining traction among an expanding group of students. At the institute, students can either choose the conventional means of learning, by attending classes regularly or exploring the self-learning method without having to attend classes. In the latter case, they are evaluated based on their performance in the final exam alone. The implementation of the SLM is at the discretion of instructors of various courses.

IIT-Gn is the only IIT in the country to introduce the SLM. Although the programme has been in operation for five years, more instructors have been offering the option over the past couple of years. Professor

IIT-Gn is the first among peers to introduce the option

Chelva Kumar from California, who is a visiting faculty member at IIT-Gn, said, "The SLM policy takes into account the interests of students who prefer to learn without faculty guidance." Kumar went on to say: "This semester, I decided to implement the SLM in the two courses I am teaching. The attendance of students in class has significantly improved compared to the previous ye-

What is self-learning mode

If a student is absent on more than three occasions in the first three weeks or is absent on more than six occasions in the first five weeks, the student can be placed under the SLM by the instructor. The instructor is also free to decide the criteria for attendance. A student falling short can be put on the SLM. The student is considered to be interested in self-learning rather than in following classroom instruction. The student will not have to attend classes and no academic assignments will be graded in that particular course. Such students will have to take the final examination and will be graded solely on that performance. TNN

ars, when SLM was not implemented."

Professor Shanmuganathan Raman who regularly offers the SLM for his courses said, "Irregularity in attendance of some students disturbs the momentum of the entire class. Because of this, I tried implementing the SLM policy for some of my courses." This has resulted in drawing only those students who are interested in the lectures, he said. "Other students, who choose the SLM, can decide not to attend lectu-

res; yet they effectively get into the university mode of evaluation." IIT-Gn director Professor Sudhir K Jain said, "At IIT-Gn, we treat our students as responsible young adults and respect their rights and opinions." Jain said the institute makes continuous effort to provide students with top facilities and opportunities. "But if some students believe that they could learn better outside the classroom, we try to offer them that choice as well," he said.