

## **1. Title of Practice: Communications Practice at IISc**

### **Objective:**

In 2017-18, IISc recognised the need to evolve a coherent communications framework to disseminate its research and other initiatives to the outside world effectively and consistently. Towards this end, a concept paper with a comprehensive communications plan was drafted. The plan was approved by the Institute, and this led to the revamping of the existing Archives and Publications Cell into a full-fledged Office of Communications (OoC).

### **Context:**

Prior to the establishment of OoC, IISc was carrying out some science outreach activities, but in a limited manner. However, its outreach initiatives lacked coordination and was distributed among several centres and offices that were already burdened by other responsibilities.

Given these issues, a dedicated office was established to bring these diverse activities under one roof. The mandate of OoC included: (1) To serve as the first point of contact for information at the Institute, including liaising with journalists/media (2) To develop and implement effective communication strategies (3) To work with various offices and centres within IISc to acquire and disseminate information (4) To ensure quality and standardisation in communication across various platforms (5) To ensure steady dissemination of information from IISc to the outside world through various channels.

### **Practice:**

OoC is headed by a Chair and comes under the Director of IISc. Its activities can be categorised under multiple verticals. These include:

1. **News:** Researchers at IISc publish more than 2,000 research and review articles in peer-reviewed journals each year. OoC identifies the most newsworthy of these articles and sends out press releases based on them to journalists across the country and abroad. These are regularly reported in most mainstream publications. OoC is also responsible for sending out press releases pertaining to important MoUs and new initiatives at IISc.
2. **Kernel:** OoC publishes an online newsletter highlighting important research breakthroughs at the Institute and profiling the lives and work of its researchers.
3. **Social media:** IISc has an active presence on various social media platforms – X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
4. **Connect:** OoC publishes Connect, the magazine of IISc. The quarterly magazine is brought out both in print and web versions.
5. **IISc Press:** IISc Press publishes research monographs, lecture notes and popular science books. Some of these books are brought out in partnership with Cambridge University Press and World University Press. It also collaborates with Springer to publish the Journal of the Indian Institute of Science. This quarterly journal publishes review articles, with each issue dedicated to a cutting-edge field of research.
6. **Archives:** The IISc archives is home to innumerable reports, letters, memos and photographs from IISc's rich past. Some of the documents date back to the 1890s when IISc's founder JN Tata conceived of the idea of a research institute for India.
7. **Writing Centre:** OoC set up this centre dedicated to effective academic communication, crucial for the success of IISc's student researchers. It offers regular courses for both undergraduate and graduate students (Master's and PhD) in research communication and provides students with feedback on their thesis chapters and research manuscripts.

8. Exhibitions and talks: OoC helps departments at IISc celebrate their anniversaries by curating exhibitions about their past. It also brings out coffee table books and brochures to commemorate the achievements of the departments and their illustrious researchers. Popular lectures on science and humanities-related topics are also organised regularly.
9. A quarterly science writing internship programme provides an opportunity for IISc students to learn the skills required to write popular science stories.

**Evidence of success:**

Since it was set up, the OoC has achieved much. IISc Press publishes at least four books annually, apart from the quarterly journal. Connect and Kernel are widely read by the public and the research community. The increased number of press releases sent out from IISc has dramatically boosted coverage in both national and international news outlets. Social media engagement has ramped up – IISc’s LinkedIn and X pages currently have more than 3.7 lakh and 1.6 lakh followers respectively. The Writing Centre has trained hundreds of students in research communication. Besides cataloguing and digitising, the Archives has hosted and provided information to several historians and researchers.

Together, these efforts have boosted awareness about the Institute’s history and scientific contributions among its alumni, donors, and the public.

**Problems encountered and resources required:**

While the project of revamping IISc’s communications initiatives and bringing it under a dedicated centre has been largely successful, it still has some teething issues. The most important among them is a shortage of staff and financial resources to hire professionals. Moreover, when OoC was established, one of the objectives was to branch out into other forms of science outreach, such as podcasting and video production. However, this requires specialised sets of skills and a dedicated studio with good quality equipment, which OoC currently lacks. In addition, the Archives needs a state-of-the-art facility and funds for categorisation, preservation and dissemination of information.

**2. Title of the Practice: Career Counseling and Placement**

**Objective:**

The primary mission of the Office of Career Counseling and Placement (OCCaP) is to offer centralized support for internship and full-time placements across various academic programs at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc). These programs encompass a diverse range of educational levels, including:

- Master of Technology (M. Tech.)
- Master of Technology by Research (M. Tech. (Res))
- Master of Design (M. Des.)
- Master of Management (M. Mgmt.)
- Master of Science by Research (MSc (Res))
- Bachelor of Science by Research (BSc (Res))
- Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
- Post-Doctoral Scholars

OCCaP is committed to facilitating and enhancing the placement experience for students and scholars at IISc, thereby contributing to their professional growth and development.

**Context:**

Campus placements are the starting point for a broader and more meaningful engagement between academia and industry. By nurturing these relationships, institutions can create a dynamic ecosystem that benefits everyone involved.

**Students:** Campus placements give students opportunities to kickstart their careers and gain practical exposure. These experiences shape their future and contribute significantly to their personal and professional development.

**Institutions:** A robust placement record enhances the reputation and brand value of educational institutions. It can attract more and better students, promote research collaborations, and foster innovation through incubation centers.

**Industry:** Companies benefit from campus placements by tapping into a pool of fresh talent, reducing recruitment costs, and gaining access to the latest research and ideas. Collaborations with educational institutions can lead to mutually beneficial initiatives such as research projects, fellowships, CSR activities, etc.

**Practice:**

The OCCaP practices the following services to place the students.

**Full-time Placements:** The full-time placement season at the institute typically commences in October and extends through May. During this period, eligible and interested students, in accordance with the criteria set by the recruiting companies, express their intent to participate in the company's recruitment process by submitting their details online. All relevant student information becomes accessible to organizations through the OCCaP account. OCCaP actively manages and coordinates recruiters' visits for pre-placement talks, assessments, and personal interviews, ensuring a seamless process for both students and companies.

**Internship Placements:** IISc permits students to pursue internship opportunities in the industry for up to three months without impacting their academic commitments. Undergraduate and Master's level students typically undertake these internships during the summer months, from May to July. Research students may engage in internships after completing their coursework, contingent upon advisor and departmental approvals. Special arrangements can accommodate extended internships. OCCaP plays a central role in facilitating interactions between students and companies keen on offering internship opportunities through special events and networking sessions.

**Pre-placement talks:** The OCCaP plays a pivotal role in facilitating pre-placement talks, a crucial event that precedes the commencement of hiring activities. The pre-placement talk is vital for reducing the information gap among students, the institution, and prospective employers. It ensures that all stakeholders are well-informed about the placement process, expectations, and opportunities. These talks actively engage industry representatives. Companies gain insight into the talent pool available at the institution, various academic programs, courses offered, and the diverse range of services and support available to the industry. The pre-placement talk also serves as a platform for fostering connections that can lead to fruitful partnerships, internships, research collaborations, and recruitment.

These comprehensive services provided by the OCCaP contribute to enhancing students' career prospects and industry exposure while fostering valuable connections between students and potential employers.

**Evidence of success:**

The Office of Career Counseling and Placement (OCCaP) has consistently delivered exceptional placement results year after year, maintaining an impressive placement rate of 80%-85%. This remarkable success is complemented by sustaining an overall average CTC (Cost to Company) ranging between 25 lakhs per annum (LPA) to 30 LPA.

One of the hallmarks of OCCaP's achievements is the active participation of renowned companies from various sectors in both internship and full-time hiring activities. These industry leaders extend opportunities encompassing internships, fellowships, Pre-Placement Offers (PPOs), and full-time employment, underscoring the trust and value they place in our institute's talent pool.

**Problems encountered and resources required:**

The Office of Career Counseling and Placement (OCCaP) has excelled in connecting with recruiters and facilitating the hiring process. However, certain challenges persist in infrastructure and staffing.

OCCaP faces constraints in terms of infrastructure, including seminar halls and interview rooms. This limitation impacts the efficiency of hiring activities, particularly as the number of student registrations continues to rise and the recruiters' demand for a physical mode hiring process.

The absence of dedicated support staff hampers the seamless execution of placement processes. A permanent solution is essential to ensure consistent support for the OCCaP and recruiters.

The OCCaP team currently operates on a contract basis, which raises concerns about continuity. The turnover of team members can disrupt processes and necessitate the repeated training of newcomers, potentially affecting the placement process. Addressing these challenges is vital to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of OCCaP's role.