



BITS Pilani

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INSTITUTION OF EMINENCE

Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Pilani, (BITS Pilani, Pilani Campus)

Vidya Vihar Campus, Pilani, Rajasthan PIN Code – 333031, INDIA

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Idea's, Innovations and Startups looking for support with pre incubation and incubation, funding, connect with investors, 1-o-1 mentoring from industry/sector experts, tech credits and co working space, technology transfer and commercialization should contact:

S. No	Contact Person	Designation	Campus
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BITS INNOVATION AND STARTUP POLICY 2022

Preamble

The BITS Innovation and Startup Policy for Students and Faculty will enable the institution to actively engage the stakeholders in strengthening an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem through a guiding framework. This framework will help in maintaining uniformity of various policies and processes across campuses of BITS Pilani. This will also guide in setting resource plans to achieve entrepreneurship goals of the institute and give momentum to start ups and other ventures founded and co-founded by BITSians in India and across the globe.

Message from the Vice Chancellor

One of the key pillars in the growth narrative of BITS Pilani for the last five decades has been innovation across multiple functions of the University – curriculum and pedagogy, research, and industry engagement. The educational system encourages students to unleash their talent and potential, so as to carve out their own journey to excel in different walks of life. Similarly, faculty members keep coming out with innovative approaches to the teaching-learning process. They also choose societal problems to undertake their research pursuits. Thirdly, they join hands with their students to promote enterprise creation. The teaching-learning system coupled with the entrepreneurship ecosystem being strengthened through new courses, programmes, various innovation/incubation platforms of the institute (e.g. CIIE, CEL, the TBIs etc.) that has led to more than 8%-10% of the BITSians founding enterprises – sooner or later. BITS Pilani has been contributing substantially in the start-up canvas of the country with at least a dozen BITSian unicorns presently. Policies of the institute encourage to build a culture of innovation that results in entrepreneurial leadership amongst students and faculty. The institute encourages and inspires various stakeholders to come out with disruptive and incremental technology driven solutions to pain points. We love to experiment and innovate to come out with the next big Start-up. We believe in building and cultivating an innovation culture that promotes constructive destruction by coming out with solutions to customer problems toward enhancing their overall experience with the product/service. We would keep strengthening our overall ecosystem to nurture the culture for promotion of innovation and start-ups.



1. Vision

Innovations from BITS Pilani would be a key contributor in solving problems facing the humanity, create wealth, and help build a sustainable world.

2. Key Goals

BITS Innovation & Startup Policy envisions an integrated, across-the-campus innovation & entrepreneurship ecosystem to facilitate, nurture, and propel ideas and innovations of students, faculty, and staff and provide an overall framework to govern, empower, and harness capabilities to build solutions for the societal problems.

2.1 Provide Comprehensive infrastructure (labs, incubation space etc.) for innovation and entrepreneurship on the campus for students and faculty

2.2 Develop innovation focused courses and programs to inspire entrepreneurial spirit in students

2.3 Build a framework of favorable, "entrepreneur first" policies and procedures for empowering student, faculty, and staff entrepreneurs

2.4 Ensure resources – technical, financial, physical, and others for catalyzing innovation on the campuses.

2.5 Install internal capabilities and capacity to support ideas and enterprises to take them from lab to market, to scale and sustain a robust innovation culture.

2.6 Empower all Campuses to formulate and implement strategic plans for ensuring the implementation of BITS Startup & Innovation Policy

2.7 Incentivize, appreciate, and recognize innovations at all levels.



3. Governance Framework

An Innovation Advisory Committee shall oversee the implementation of the BITS Startup & Innovation Policy. The committee shall consist of the following stakeholders:

- Chair: Vice Chancellor, BITS Pilani
- Co-Chair: Campus Directors of Pilani, Goa, Hyderabad, and Dubai
- Convener: NISP Coordinator
- 2 Members from Academia
- 2 Members from Startup Ecosystem
- Chief Financial Officer, BITS Pilani
- 2 Members from BITS Pilani and its allied societies

The committee shall meet bi-annually to discuss progress and recommend measures for a successful implementation of the policy. The term of the members on the committee shall be for 2 years, to be extended by the Chair.

4. Policy Period

The initial policy shall be in-force for a period of 3 years.

5. Policy Framework

The BITS Innovation & Startup Policy shall operate within the following key pillars for achieving the goals as mentioned in the policy.

5.1 Academics: Design, develop and offer programs, courses, labs, workshops etc. for nurturing entrepreneurial interest amongst students, faculty, and staff.

5.2 Infrastructure: Make available integrated incubation and innovation infrastructure consisting of maker spaces, design and innovation labs, co-working space, ICT infrastructure, conference rooms, and other amenities to facilitate conversion of ideas into prototypes-MVP-product and service driven enterprises.

5.3 Resources: Provide requisite funds and budgets for undertaking initiatives and activities, hiring manpower, infrastructure development and maintenance, seed funds to support innovation and entrepreneurship.



5.4 Programs: Design, development and delivery of programs to strengthen pre-incubation, incubation, and acceleration of enterprises, consisting of knowledge sessions, workshops, mentoring support, learning materials, industry & investor connect, and other networking opportunities.

5.5 Events: Undertake planning, designing, financing and execution of events targeted towards spurring interest amongst budding entrepreneurs, support existing entrepreneurs, and develop a pipeline of innovative ideas. Students, faculty, and staff would be encouraged and supported to organize events such as business plan competition, hackathons, workshops, immersion programs, internships, talks, summits etc.

5.6 Supporting Policies: To complete the objectives of this policy, various divisions of BITS Pilani should formulate favorable policies to encourage startup creation. Some of these policies are: Faculty Entrepreneurship Policy, Faculty Mentoring Policy, Technology Commercialization policy, Incubation policy, Deferred placement policy, Sabbatical policy, Startups and Doctoral Thesis policy etc.

5.7 Collaboration and Outreach: For improvement of systems, processes, programs, and outcomes of the innovation and entrepreneurship, BITS shall collaborate with national and international organizations and institutions of repute, known for active and vibrant entrepreneurship ecosystem.

5.8 Research based Entrepreneurship: Promote entrepreneurship based on solving societal problems, deep-tech innovations, patent based, lab-driven research by Faculty and graduate students, with due incentivization in performance management and appraisal. Research leading to innovative, patent based, novel products driven Startups, may be considered equivalent to doctoral thesis for a Ph.D. degree.

5.9 Impact: Develop Systems and processes to monitor and measure quantitative and qualitative impact of all entrepreneurship activities as defined in this policy. Such reports shall be placed before the innovation advisory committee on a periodical basis.

5.10 Alumni Engagement: BITS alumni would be the key stakeholders in implementation of the policy with involvement in various programs, events, activities, funding for infrastructure and seed, research collaborations and further investments.



6. Implementation of the Policy

BITS shall develop a comprehensive, integrated, campus-wide strategic plans for implementation of the above policy framework to achieve its stated goals. The following stakeholders shall develop these plans:

- Campus Directors
- Centre for Incubation, Innovation, and Entrepreneurship
- Technology Business Incubators
- Alumni and Industry Experts

Implementation plan and process shall be led by a senior official / authority of the institute. Such an official shall report to the Vice-Chancellor.

7. Financial Resources

Resource mobilization plan will be worked out at the institute for supporting pre incubation, incubation infrastructure and facilities. A sustainable financial strategy would be put in place to reduce the organization constraints.

7.1 ~1% fund of the total annual budget of the institution will be allocated for supporting innovation and startup related activities through creation of separate 'Innovation Fund'.

7.2. The funding shall also include raising funds from diverse sources through government (State and Central) such as DST, DBT, MHRD, AICTE, TDB, TIFAC, DSIR, CSIR, BIRAC, NSTEDB, NRDC, Startup India, Invest India, MeiTty, MSDE, MSME, etc.

7.3 Institute shall also approach private and corporate sector to generate funds, under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

7.4 Institute may also raise funding through sponsorships and donations. Institute must actively engage alumni network for promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

7.5 For expediting the decision making, hierarchical barriers would be minimized and individual autonomy and ownership of initiatives would be to Incubator Heads and Faculty-in-Charges for the Center for Innovation, Incubation, and Entrepreneurship (CIIE).



8. Norms for Faculty Startups

A faculty member desirous of setting up a start-up may submit a business plan or idea at any of the Technology Business Incubators (TBI) at any of the BITS campuses only and will be governed by faculty entrepreneurship policy. The concerned faculty member must inform the respective campus director and the Dean, Sponsored Research and Consultancy Division (SRCD) about the startup as well.

The faculty member must disclose the details pertaining to founders, legal entity, IPR, share-holding pattern, any funding received etc.

Overall, Involvement of the faculty in a start-up company can be in the following ways:

8.1 Capital Investment by faculty members by way of shares in a start-up with no involvement:

8.1.1 A faculty may be involved in start-up by providing capital investment only in return for shares with no other managerial, technical or mentorship role whatsoever.

8.1.2 When a faculty member makes a financial investment in a company or a start-up without contributing in technical/ consulting or advisory role or any other involvement of BITS or without contributing intellectual or commercial transaction of BITS, then it shall be considered as a private matter of the concerned faculty and is of no concern to BITS. That it is further clarified that the concerned parties to the transaction shall keep BITS indemnified and BITS will be in no manner responsible for the actions of the concerned Legal Entity, its members, management, share-holders, etc.

8.1.3 Further, TBIs of BITS and SRCD will have no role to play in such business association of the faculty member.

8.1.4 However, the faculty member will have to make a declaration to BITS, regarding this financial investment as a good practice to avoid any conflict of interest.

8.1.5 In case this start-up or any other company intends of award a consultancy project to the BITS faculty, then the same will be done after informing Dean SRCD in writing. The terms of the said approval (amended from time to time, at the sole discretion of the SRCD) and prevailing rules and regulations (As amended from time to time) for consultancy projects in SRCD, shall apply.



8.2 Part time engagement of faculty members in the start-up

8.2.1 Any faculty member may engage in the activities of start-up by taking executive roles such as Director, CEO (Chief Executive Officer), COO (Chief Operating Officer), CTO (Chief Technology Officer) on a part-time engagement under the consultancy norms of the institute. However, there shall be no compensation for this activity. This work shall be over and above all regular duties assigned to the faculty member. That the faculty member should take prior approval in writing from the respective campus director before accepting any part time engagement. The terms of the written approval (As amended from time to time) will be applicable on the faculty member. Under no circumstance the performance of the faculty member, qua all the regular duties assigned, deteriorate.

8.2.2 In case the faculty member is not the founding member of the start-up, then after taking the prior written approval of the respective campus director, the faculty member must inform the Technology Business Incubator where the startup has been incubated.

8.2.3 The mode of this engagement would be an agreement of the faculty member with the start-up besides the BITS technology/ IPR being licensed to the start-up. The terms (including financial) of BITS technology/ IPR to be licensed, will be solely decided by BITS. A faculty member in this arrangement can be permitted to obtain shares of this company in part or full in lieu of cash payment.

8.2.4 It should be critically noted that faculty member at BITS shall ensure that all his/her academic duties and institutional responsibilities take absolute precedence over all other activities related to the start-up regardless of his/her engagement with the company. That it is further clarified that if the performance of the faculty member deteriorates, then the respective campus director has the sole discretion, to withdraw the permission granted.

8.3 Full time engagement of faculty members in the start-up with availing of sabbatical and EoL (Extra-ordinary leave)/Earned Leave (EL) for setting up a start-up/pursuing entrepreneurship

8.3.1 The faculty member may avail of either sabbatical or EOL/ EL for a maximum period of one year as per the prevailing rules of Faculty Affairs Division (FAD) and may be allowed



to work full time for the start-up. Permission will be initially given for a period of six months and may be extended for another six months there from.

8.3.2 The faculty member will prior seek approval of BITS for the above-mentioned sabbatical or EoL/EL as the case may be in accordance with the prevailing FAD Rules and Regulations. Permission for sabbatical or EoL/EL would be decided by the respective campus director or it may be referred to a committee involving CIIE faculty-in-charge. The decision of the Director or the appointed committee appointed by the director will be final.

8.3.3 The faculty member must apply for approval for engagement with the start-up and the startup must enter into an agreement with the TBIs. Such an agreement should establish the mode of engagement of the faculty member with the start-up besides including the BITS technology / Intellectual Property being licensed to the start-up. The terms (including financial) of BITS technology/ IPR to be licensed, will be solely decided by SRCD.

8.3.4 The rules for salary to the faculty member during the sabbatical leave, EoL or EL shall be governed by the prevailing Rules and Regulations of FAD.

8.3.5 During the period of EoL, the faculty member can receive a compensation from the start-up in cash which BITS will be informed about, within 1 week of receipt of the amount. However, in the case where the faculty member is on a sabbatical leave and receives compensation then BITS norms for consultancy projects will be applicable.

8.3.6 However, when on EoL, if the compensation received from the start-up is related to any work done in BITS (including but not limited to usage of facilities at/of BITS) then BITS norms for consultancy projects will be applicable and he/she will be required to share a certain percentage as per the then prevailing norms. This will also apply to those on sabbatical leave.

8.3.7 Faculty member on EoL will be allowed to obtain shares of the start-up/company as compensation for engagement with the company in part or in full, in lieu of cash payment. He/she will however be required to share the details of these shares with BITS.



8.3.8 Faculty member on sabbatical leave too will be allowed to obtain shares of the startup/company as compensation for engagement with the company in part or in full, in lieu of cash payment. He/she will however be required to share the details of these shares with BITS.

8.3.9 The faculty member after completing his sabbatical or EoL will re-join BITS. Post this, no compensation is due to BITS as long as the involvement of the member, for which the compensation was paid, completely ceases after the leave period.

8.3.10 In case the faculty member is involved as a mentor, consultant or any other form other than a shareholder after sabbatical or EoL, then rules applicable will be same as that of part-time engagement as mentioned in section 8.2.

8.3.11 In case a faculty member intends to be involved as a mentor, consultant or any other form after sabbatical or EoL, with the start-up, then the faculty member shall inform the respective campus TBIs.

8.3.12 The terms (including financial) of BITS technology/ IPR to be and/or licensed, will be independent of the above-mentioned Clauses and will survive even after the faculty member re-joins BITS after completing his sabbatical or EoL.

9. Norms for Student Startups

BITS Students can incorporate a start-up company either singly or jointly with faculty as mentors or partners. Innovative ideas would also be evaluated and those exhibiting promise could be provided initially a pre-incubation support and subsequently help them in incorporation, incubation, and seed funding at respective campus TBIs.

Students (First Degree, Higher Degree, or Ph.D.)

9.1 Ideally students who intend to put up their start-up based on the technology co-developed/ developed by them or the technology owned by the institute, would be allowed to take a license on the said technology on easy term, either in terms of equity in the venture and/ or license fees and/ or royalty to obviate the early-stage financial burden.

9.2 Student Entrepreneurs may earn course credits for working on innovative prototypes/Business Models.



9.3 Students shall not be allowed to skip any of the examinations fixed by BITS while pursuing entrepreneurship in part-time mode. However, in case wherein student intends to take a year off to pursue entrepreneurship on full time basis, his application would be routed through the Dean AUGSD / AGSRD for approval to the Competent Authority.

9.4 Students who win prizes at state / national level idea competitions / business plan competitions may also be given up to 2% grace marks in the semester in which prize was won. This academic incentive shall inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship among students.

9.5 Student inventors would be allowed to opt for start-up in place of their mini project/ major project, seminars, summer trainings. The area in which student wants to initiate a start-up may be interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary. However, prior approval of such arrangement has to be approved by a committee comprising of Dean AUGSD / AGSRD and Head of the Department.

9.6 Students who are under incubation, but are pursuing some entrepreneurial ventures while studying are allowed to use their address in the institute to register their company with due permission from the institution.

9.7 The institute has provision of accommodation to the entrepreneurs of incubated start-ups with the TBIs within the campus for some period of time, on subsidized cost basis.

10. Norms for Non-Teaching Staff to Invest in Startups

10.1 Capital Investment by Non-Teaching Staff by way of shares in a start-up with no involvement:

10.1.1 A non-teaching staff may be involved in start-up by providing capital investment only in return for shares with no other managerial, technical or mentorship role whatsoever.

10.1.2 When a Non-Teaching Staff makes a financial investment in a company or a start-up without contributing in technical/ consulting or advisory role or any other involvement of BITS or without contributing intellectual or commercial transaction of BITS, then it shall be considered as a private matter of the concerned Non-Teaching Staff and is of no concern to BITS. That it is further clarified that the concerned parties to the transaction



shall keep BITS indemnified and BITS will be in no manner responsible for the actions of the concerned Legal Entity, its members, management, share-holders, etc.

10.1.3 Further, TBIs of BITS and SRCDD will have no role to play in such business association of the Non-Teaching Staff.

10.1.4 However, the Non-Teaching Staff will have to make a declaration to BITS, regarding this financial investment as a good practice to avoid any conflict of interest.

10.1.5 The TBI staff may be allowed to invest in start-ups after taking approval from the respective campus director, and fulfill all the conditions laid in Clause 10.1.

11. Guidelines Regarding Intellectual Property (IP) Rights

The intellectual property comprises of Patents, Trademarks, Copyrights, Industrial Designs and Integrated Circuits; Plant Varieties, etc. The following clauses governs the IP rights of start-ups incubated by Students or Faculty at the respective TBIs, and patents, copyrights, trademarks etc. generated after incubation of their start-ups.

11.1 All IP/research results obtained by its full-time/part-time faculty, staff, students, third party manufacturers, vendors or consultants, and any other members thereof during their employment/engagement with the Institute shall only be owned by Institute

11. BITS faculty driven startups which are based on the IP created from their research work and that is owned by BITS under work for hire, may put up a request to license the technology from BITS TT office. The same may be given on easy terms either in terms of equity in the venture and/ or license fees and/ or royalty or a mix of various modes as decided by TT Committee

11.3 The commercial agreements related to license will as per the IP & Commercialization policy applicable at that point of time and will be initiated through Technology Transfer Office of BITS Pilani

11.4 if product/ IP is developed by innovators by not using any institute facilities/ resources, outside office hours (for staff and faculty) and which does not form the part of their research, then product/ IP will be entirely owned by inventors in proportion to the contributions made by them. In this case, inventors can decide to license the technology to third parties or use the technology the way they deem fit. Such cases should be



declared to BITS competent authority with proper justification on IP generation / sources of resources used/ownership to avoid any conflict of interest.

11.5 If a Faculty driven start creates a new IP product using BITS Pilani's background IP from the research conducted at BITS Pilani, the under such cases such startup should license the background IP of BITS Pilani through a license agreement.

11.6 If the Faculty in his individual capacity, develops an IP in any of the BITS supported incubator with financial support from any of the Startup fund from GoI or any external agency using BITS official time, then in such cases IP shall be owned by BITS and Faculty.

The same IP shall be licensed to the Faculty startup as and when it will be registered on mutually agreed easy terms

11.7 In case a start-up incubated at respective campus TBIs develops a technology/product, then the IPR would be held by the innovators and the start-up.

11.8 All trademarks, designs etc. shall be the property of the inventors and start-ups incubated at BITS.

11.9 That it is clarified that the above-stated clauses will be subject to the approval of BITS and TBI and the decision of BITS will be final and binding on all of the parties.

12. Guidelines for Conflict Resolution and Arbitrations

12.1 If there is a dispute in ownership of IPR or matters related to IPR, a committee, comprising of two faculty members (having developed sufficient IPR and translated to commercialization), two of the Institute's alumni/industry experts (having experience in technology commercialization) and one legal advisor with experience in IPR matters, will examine the issue after meeting the concerned parties to help them settle the same amicably. The Institute can appoint alumni/faculty members of other institutes as members, if sufficiently experienced Institute alumni/faculty members are not available. Where the Parties have used their best efforts but failed to resolve a dispute through negotiation, within 30 days, then the parties may refer the dispute to be finally resolved by arbitration in terms of Clause 10.3 to 10.4.

12.2 This policy document and all procedures outlined by the institute based on this Start-up Policy document shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the Laws of



the India, without giving effect to its choice of laws rules and shall be submitted to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Courts at Pilani and the Hon'ble High Court of Rajasthan.

12.3 If any dispute arises between the Parties hereto during the subsistence of this Policy document or thereafter, in connection with the validity, interpretation, implementation or alleged breach of any provision of this Policy, the Parties hereto shall endeavour to settle such dispute amicably (within 30 days) through mutual discussion among the Parties in dispute.

12.4 In the event the Parties are unable to resolve the dispute through mutual discussions shall be resolved by binding arbitration conducted by a sole arbitrator appointed under the provisions of the Indian Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 (As amended till date) and the rules made thereunder.

12.5 No arbitrator chosen shall be related to, employed by or otherwise affiliated with any Party, or any of their relatives or affiliates.

12.6 The arbitration proceedings shall be conducted in English, and in Pilani. The decision and award of the arbitrator shall be in writing and in English, and final and binding on all the Parties to this Agreement.

12.7 The arbitrator in his or her final arbitral award shall determine the final allocation of the costs of arbitration.

12.8 The award shall be binding on the Parties subject to the Applicable Laws in force and the award shall be enforceable in court of law in Pilani

13. Pedagogy and Learning Interventions for Entrepreneurship Development

13.1 Diversified approach will be adopted to produce desirable learning outcomes, which should include cross disciplinary learning using mentors, labs, case studies, games, etc. in place of traditional lecture-based delivery. Student clubs/ bodies/ departments organize competitions, boot camps, workshops, conferences, etc. Experts and related bodies shall be involved in institutional strategy planning to ensure enhancement of the student's entrepreneurial thinking and response ability.

13.2 CIIE will start annual 'Innovation & Entrepreneurship award' to recognize



outstanding ideas, successful enterprises and contributors for promoting innovation and enterprises ecosystem within the institute. For creating awareness among the students, the teaching methods shall include case studies on business failure and real-life experience reports by startups. TBIs will start documenting case studies on success stories and failures also to create learning repository. Validated learning outcomes will be made available to the students and staff.

13.3 BITS startup eco system is designed for tolerating and encouraging failure. Failures are elaborately discussed and debated to imbibe that failure is a part of life, thus helping in reducing the social stigma associated with it. Very importantly, this is a part of institute's philosophy and culture. Innovation champions will be nominated from within the students/ faculty/ staff for each department/ stream of study.

13.4 Entrepreneurship education is imparted to students at curricular/ co-curricular/ extracurricular level through elective/ short term or long-term courses on innovation, entrepreneurship and venture development. Integration of expertise of the external stakeholders has been done in the entrepreneurship education to evolve a culture of collaboration and engagement with external environment. Alumni are involved extensively in teaching innovation and other courses in the institute.

13.5 In the beginning of every academic session, institute will conduct induction program about the importance of I&E so that freshly inducted students are made aware about the entrepreneurial agenda of the institute and available support systems. Curriculum for the entrepreneurship education is continuously updated based on entrepreneurship research outcomes.

13.6 Institute believes that everyone can become an entrepreneur. Pedagogical changes are done on continuous basis to ensure that maximum number of student projects and innovations are based around real life challenges. Learning interventions developed are used for inculcating entrepreneurial culture. Institute will introduce courses on innovation and Entrepreneurship based on stakeholder's feedback.