

Date: 25th July, 2018

Dear Recruiters,

Subject: Improving placement process at IITs

As a prospective recruiter of the CSE students of IIT Bombay, we value your contribution to IIT Bombay. Thanks to many companies like you and the strong academic foundation that we strive to provide to our students, IIT Bombay has emerged as the top choice for CSE students as well as companies that would like to recruit CSE students.

Background

Many Computer Science and Information Technology (CS/IT) companies have started conducting pre-placement talks and tests much before the final interviews that begin from 01st December. We would like to bring to your notice the following points:

- A significant number of companies are primarily interested in CSE students (or students who can be recruited for CS/IT related jobs). This means that CSE students have a large number of opportunities available to them during the placement.
- There is a long gap between the talks/tests and final interviews.

This leads to an unfortunate problem where CSE students end up taking a large number of tests. Even the toppers, who would normally get through their first choice, do appear in multiple tests because the delayed interviews mean that the final decision would not be known for a long time. The amount of time spent by students on such talks and tests has been very large, which has seriously affected their focus on academic work. It is not unusual for a student to attend 40 talks and tests which amount to 120 hours of time, assuming each company's talk and test take 3 hours. This roughly translates to as much as 40% of course-work in a semester! Consequently, due to this overload, the research output and overall academic performance of our students during the Fall (monsoon) semester is seriously affected.

Our concern is shared by the CSE department of IIT Delhi and other IITs, some of whom are working on norms similar to those we propose below.

Proposed Norms for CS/IT Recruiters

A complete solution to this problem will mean rescheduling the entire placement process, which will require coordination among all IITs as their placement schedules are interlinked. This dialogue has been initiated but may take long to find a solution acceptable to all stake holders.

For IIT Bombay we propose to continue to follow the norms that have been followed for past three years (thanks to the cooperation of the participating companies!). They have succeeded somewhat in bringing some semblance of normalcy back into academics and we seek your cooperation this year also. These norms apply primarily to CS/IT companies. These include the likes of Facebook, Google, Microsoft, Amazon, and other well-known companies.

1. *Limit the pre-placement talks.*

No pre-placement talks by any company that has visited IITB for placement in last three years. Only new companies that have not visited IITB for placements in last three years will be allowed to conduct pre-placement talks. Other companies will be required to upload material (slides, documents, short video etc.) which can be viewed by the students. In particular, we would encourage audio recorded e-PPTs being sent which not only acts as virtual PPTs but also are convenient to be watched again and again as per student's convenience

Also, the PPTs that need to be held during the semester will have to be concentrated on chosen weekends. IITB has regular lecture schedules extending up to 8:00 p.m. Further CS101 Teaching Assistants (and some of them are M.Tech.2 students appearing in placements) have lab duties up to 10:30 p.m. and sometimes even up to 11:00 p.m. Thus it is fallacious to assume that a week day evening is "out of office hours" and hence is a free time for placement activities.

2. *Limit the period, the number and the duration of the screening tests conducted by companies.*

- Screening tests conducted during the semester conflict with academic work. Hence such tests should be conducted either
 - Between 27th October and 09th November (M. Tech thesis 1st stage presentations are scheduled in the month of October, and we will try to finish them by 26th October)
 - OR After 03rd December (after the end-semester exams are over with a few days gap for students to finish TA commitments)
- For tests conducted between 27th October and 09th November:
 - A company can conduct only a single test (not multiple rounds)
 - The duration of any such test should not exceed one hour.
- If a company holds a screening test at any time, it is assumed to be their commitment to participate in the placements.
 - Such a company cannot back out of interviews citing any reason including non-availability of a first day slot for interviews.
 - If a company is not sure of holding the interviews, then they should not conduct a screening test either.

3. **Limiting the number of tests taken by a CSE student.**

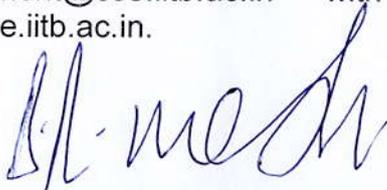
We propose the following two options primarily to seed a discussion and seek feedback. The goal is to evolve an option acceptable to most companies keeping their participation voluntary.

- Participating companies submit their questions to CSE department which collates them and proctors the test (or a small number of tests) ensuring complete confidentiality and makes the performance of the students available to the participating companies. The grading is done by the companies based on the questions of their interest. An added advantage is that a company gets to grade the performance of a student on the questions submitted by other companies too and a company need not submit a large number of questions.
 - OR IITB allows test by only a few companies; companies that are permitted to conduct such a test must share their data of the tests (questions, performance of individual students from IITB, and statistics of performance by students from outside IITB) with Placement Cell, IITB, which can then be shared with all companies recruiting from IIT Bombay. This will minimize work for companies as well as for students. IITB will choose from companies that propose to hold tests based on internal criteria such as type of test, global reach of company, etc.
4. Ensuring that those selected by the company during placement will not have to attend company events during the academic year where they are forced to miss classes OR report for their position before they have completed their academic requirements.

We hope that you find the norms reasonable and agree that reducing the stress of placements on students will enable better assessments of students for placements. Thus, even if the norms seem to constrain your ability to recruit our students somewhat, it is for the benefit of the students, and by extension, of the prospective recruiters. With a bit of discipline, all stakeholders will benefit in the long run.

We are aware of the fact that in some exceptional situation, it may be hard to meet the norms, in which case please contact us by email with details.

We also seek your valuable feedback on the above issues. Do contact us at pic.placement@cse.iitb.ac.in with a copy to pic.placement@iitb.ac.in and head@cse.iitb.ac.in.



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