National Academic Depository

Background

Indian Higher Education system is a large and growing system with approximately 55 school boards, 359 state universities, 123 deemed universities, 47 central universities and 260 private universities. Apart from these, there are 107 other institutions such as IISc/IITs/IIMs/NITs/IISERs/IIITs/NITIE and 12 other centrally funded institutions. These institutions issue academic awards to students including degrees, diplomas and certificates along with mark sheets and evaluation reports. Apart from these, institutions under various Ministries/Departments and other skill based institutions also dispense certificates, diplomas and advanced diploma.

Those who are entering into employment or pursuing higher studies require a credible, authentic and convenient mechanism for access, retrieval and validation of such academic awards. Retrieval of old academic records maintained in paper form is cumbersome. Academic records maintained in paper form are susceptible to hazards such as spoilage and forgery. Students often face difficulties in obtaining copies of their certificates/mark-sheets whenever they are lost or destroyed. Maintaining academic awards in a digital depository would enable educational institutions, students and employers online access/retrieval/verification of digitised academic awards and shall eliminate fraudulent practices such as forging of certificates and mark-sheets.

The Government has already made dematerialization of financial securities to ensure the trading of financial securities flawless and transparent. It had enabled trading and transfer of shares electronically without involving physical share certificates and transfer deeds, thus eliminating the paper work involved in scrip-based trading and share transfer system. The same can be effectively replicated in respect of academic awards as these are even more important guarantors of the future than financial securities.

Maintaining academic awards in an electronic depository would provide benefit to educational institutions, students and employers by enabling online access of academic awards which will

eliminate the need for persons to approach educational institutions for obtaining transcripts of such awards or marks-sheets for verification. It would also eliminate fraudulent practices such as forging of certificates and mark-sheets, by facilitating online verifications thereof. The National Academic Depository aims at ensuring a credible and convenient mechanism for online lodging, verification and authentication of the academic awards issued by various educational institutions.

About National Academic Depository (NAD)

The vision of National Academic Depository (NAD) is born out of an initiative to provide an online store house of all academic awards. National Academic Depository (NAD) is a 24X7 online store house of all academic awards viz.certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark-sheets etc. duly digitised and lodged by academic institutions / boards / eligibility assessment bodies. NAD not only ensures easy access to and retrieval of an academic award but also validates and guarantees its authenticity and safe storage.

National Academic Depository comprises of two interoperable digital depositories viz. CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) and NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML). These digital depositories have ensured hardware, network facilities and software of prescribed quality for smooth and secured operationalisation of NAD.

UGC-the authorized body

The Union Cabinet has approved establishing a digital depository of academic awards to be known as National Academic Depository (NAD) on the pattern of securities depository in its meeting held on 27th October, 2016.

Consequent upon the approval of Cabinet, the Government in exercise of powers conferred under section 20(1) of University Grants Commission Act,1956 has designated University Grants Commission (UGC) as an authorised body to enter into a tripartite agreement on behalf of all Central Higher Educational Institutions (CHEIs), Institutions of National Importance (INIs) and Boards with the wholly owned subsidiaries of the depositories registered under SEBI Act, 1992, namely NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) initially for a period of three years for the purposes of establishment of NAD comprising of two interoperable digital depositories.

The UGC has signed a tripartite agreement with NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) for operationalising NAD. The academic institutions / boards / eligibility assessment bodies are required to select either of the two depositories for entering into legally enforceable agreement for utilizing services of NAD. Lodging, access, retrieval and validation of academic awards in the NAD will be primarily on the strength of this agreement.

The students and verification users are free to select either of the depositories to register on to NAD.

Further, NAD provides a feature of portability i.e. the users of NAD may switch among the depositories if they are not satisfied with the services rendered. Since, the depositories are inter-operable, the data would be automatically synced among the depositories, the user can seamlessly operate the same account with the other depository.

Features of NAD

NAD will:

- Operate in fully online mode
- Allow lodging of Academic awards in a digital format, maintaining the integrity of access to the database and of the awards lodged in the database.
- Allow students to retrieve their lodged academic awards at any time.
- Allow employers and other person with prior approval of the concerned student to verify the authenticity of any academic award.
- Maintain the authenticity, integrity and confidentiality of the database.

Stakeholders of NAD

- Students/other award holders
- Academic Institutions/Boards/Eligibility assessment bodies
- Verifying entities i.e. banks, employer companies (domestic and overseas), Government entities, academic institutions/universities/boards/eligibility assessment bodies (domestic and overseas) etc.
- Ministry of Human Resource Development/ University Grants Commission
- Depositories i.e. NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL)

Academic Institutions to be covered under NAD

Academic Institutions to be covered under NAD shall be the institutions listed by name by the University Grants Commission amongst the following categories:

- Central Educational Institutions comprising:

  o Central Universities
  o Central Higher Educational Institutions and institutions empowered by an Act of Parliament or State Legislature to grant degrees
  o Central Higher Educational Institutions awarding diplomas

- State Universities and Deemed to be Universities approved for participating in NAD by the University Grants Commission (UGC).
- Private Universities approved by University Grants Commission
- Institutions approved by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for participating in NAD.
- Central Board of Secondary Education;
- Other School Boards
- Eligibility test conducting bodies such as bodies listed by name by UGC and shall include University Grants Commission (UGC) for National Eligibility Test (NET) and CBSE for Teacher Eligibility Test (TET).

Academic Awards to be covered under NAD

Academic awards to be covered under NAD shall be the awards listed by the University Grants Commission amongst the following categories:

- Any certificate or degree or diploma including related mark sheets, transcript or evaluation reports or provisional certificates, as the case may be, granted by an Academic Institution
- Certificate, degree, diploma for skill development issued by approved institutions.
- All certifications by National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF) aligned bodies which shall include all training courses/short term and long term certificate courses/any other courses as offered by institutions and as approved by the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE) for participating in NAD;
- Mark sheets, certificates issued by the school boards;
- Certificates issued by eligibility test conducting bodies.

- Online, quick and reliable verification of academic awards (with prior consent of the student concerned)
- Access to authenticated copy of academic awards
- No risk of fake and forged Certificates.
- Reduction in cost, time and efforts for verification