

**National Seminar**  
**on**  
**‘Building Intercultural Competence in Higher Education: Strengthening Local-Global Links’**

**(23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2021)**

In today’s globalised world, many institutions of higher education are being found frequently citing ‘internationalization’ as an integral part of their academic plans. This includes increasing international student enrollments and more opportunities for local students to gain international experience while pursuing their academic goals. However, international exposure in higher education comes with challenges such as language barriers, group separation, and cultural differences in learning styles. This necessitates building up inter-cultural competencies amongst the youth.

What constitutes intercultural competence, how to promote it, and towards what end, remain largely unanswered and the existing view points are often debatable. The proposed seminar is an attempt to understand the basic essence of inter-cultural competence in higher education and also to look at some of the major challenges facing internationalization of higher education in the process of teaching and learning in a multi-cultural classroom. The challenge is particularly acute in the disciplines of the humanities and social sciences, where identities are negotiated, diverse perspectives are tried out, and differences are debated.

Building up inter-cultural competency primarily requires an emphasis on importance of values such as genuine respect, trust, and humility in intercultural interaction, an acceptable and basic code of conduct, or rules of adaptable behaviour such as knowing one’s biases, understanding and adapting to different cultural norms, assisting others in understanding cultural differences in values and norms, ultimately leading to the creation of new sets of unwritten rules.

Further, inter-cultural and social competence can also be understood as a process of qualitative changes at three levels: individuals’ capacity to understand the logic of interpersonal relationship (interpersonal knowledge), their social skills to resolve conflicts and deepen a relationship (social strategies), as well as their motivation and abilities to stay connected with others (personal meaning and valuing).

The proposed seminar will invite discourses and debates on the significance of building up intercultural competence amongst students and research scholars in higher education institutions enriched by global and local perspectives on developing social competence with a view to create spaces that support greater understanding and responsiveness to cross-cultural, multicultural, intercultural, and trans-cultural perspectives and practices in higher education. Discourses and arguments emanating from such an academic deliberation shall go a long way in grounding our

understanding of ‘internationalization’ in terms of normative claims about desirable outcomes of human development and engaging in intellectually rigorous argumentative practices in a reflexive attitude to reach consensus on this pertinent but contentious issue.

The seminar also aims to understand the varying types of opportunities and activities that may be needed to raise a greater consciousness and responsiveness regarding how students can be a part of and live well with diversity in their working and learning contexts.

Inter-cultural attitude or cross-culturalism is manifest in the diminishing significance of cultural differences, minimized primarily through frequent meeting of cultures. The cultural dialogue that occurs subsequently is rather spontaneous and natural. The seminar is being organized with the purpose of highlighting the fact that the ever changing understanding of intercultural processes which includes crossing the boundaries of one’s own culture still requires a more acute, in-depth and reflective skill of existing and functioning along the different dimensions of the cultural frontiers since wider and very often sudden exposure to cultural, religious, ethnic or racial diversity can have both positive and negative effects. It solely depends on how a particular institution of higher education is set to handle diversity within its local confines, as well as on a global scale.

### Sub-Themes

Papers are invited from academics, researchers, policy makers, members of the civil society and young research scholars on the following broad sub-themes:

- i. Intercultural competence and social awareness
- ii. Role of cross-cultural interaction in Higher Education
- iii. Building intercultural competence through internationalization
- iv. Linking the ‘local’ with the ‘global’ through internationalization in Higher Education
- v. Building multicultural perspectives and practices in Higher education

### Points to remember:

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| 1. Seminar Dates                               | : 23-24 September, 2021     |
| 2. <b>Last date for Submission of abstract</b> | <b>: 15 September, 2021</b> |
| 3. Last date for submission of full paper      | : 20 September 2021         |

### Abstract Submission

- Abstracts (750-1000 words) should be submitted on or before the last dates to [swapnaprabhu.ps@utkaluniversity.nic.in](mailto:swapnaprabhu.ps@utkaluniversity.nic.in).
- Selected abstracts/ full papers will be included in the conference volume.

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