

INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE

203 B.T. Road, Kolkata 700108



**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL OF THE INSTITUTE
HELD ON DECEMBER 13, 2021 AT 2:00 P.M. ONLINE AND IN THE CSSC VIDEO
CONFERENCE ROOM, ISI, KOLKATA**

PROCEEDINGS

1	Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay (Chair)	2	Debasis Sengupta (Convener)		
3	Amartya K Dutta	13	BS Daya Sagar	23	Rajat K De
4	Anil Ghosh	14	Debapriya Sengupta	24	Ravindran G
5	Anish Sarkar	15	Dipti P Mukherjee	25	Rituparna Sen
6	Anisur Rahaman Molla	16	Gopal K Basak	26	Saurabh Ghosh
7	Ansuman Banerjee	17	Mahuya Datta	27	Shanta Laishram
8	Arup K. Pal	18	Nabanita Das	28	Siva Athreya
9	Arup Ranjan Mukhopadhyay	19	Partha Sarathi Mukherjee	29	Sumitra Purkayastha
10	B Ramakrishnan	20	Parthasarathi Ghosh	30	Surajit Ray
11	Banasri Basu	21	Pradipta Maji	31	Susmita Sur-Kolay
12	Bhabatosh Chanda	22	Prasun Das	32	Swagata Nandi

Agenda: Conclude the deferred part of the decision on Agenda Item 3.3 of the 76th meeting of AC (held on 22 and 24 November), related to pass-marks in interviews

The Director welcomed members and asked for immediate commencement of proceedings. The Dean of Studies said that the arguments for and against the use of pass-mark in interview have already been presented in the 76th meeting of the Academic Council. These would be summarized in the draft proceedings to be circulated soon, and need not be repeated here. In order to bridge the gap between the two divergent views on this matter he proposed that a pass-mark be used on the maximum of the scores given by the interview panelists, so that a candidate fails the interview only if all panelists agree on that decision. Further, passing should be based on the scores given by at least three panelists, including the Chair or the Convener or both. The Dean said that even though there would be subjectivity in any interview, this mechanism would address (a) variation in scores given by panelists and (b) worries about too few panelists.

Prof. Rajat Kumar De said that having three members in the panel can be occasionally challenging. Prof. Amartya Dutta and Prof. Saurabh Ghosh said that the presence of at least three members including the Chair and/or the Convener is a good practice that is generally followed and should be universally followed. The Director asked whether this is a rule or only a convention. There was general agreement that it should be a rule. Prof. Dutta asked about a female panelist in the case of a female candidate and/or a panelist of reserved category in the case of candidates of reserved categories. It transpired that this convention is already followed in ISI. The Director said that this should also be explicitly mentioned in the rules.

On the issue of whether the pass-mark should be left to the selection committees, the Dean of Studies said that a universal pass-mark of 10% may be used by all the committees, so that (a) this threshold can be used by panelists as a reference point for calibration of their scoring patterns, and (b) failure in an interview becomes a relatively extreme event backed by a unanimous decision of the panelists. This suggestion was generally accepted. There was also a general agreement that this pass-mark on interview scores should be declared beforehand.

Dr. Arup Ranjan Mukhopadhyay mentioned the possibility of some good students not doing well in interviews, and also the possibility of bias and subjectivity. The Dean said that interviews are now an almost universal practice in JRF selection across institutions in India, and the requirement of at least three panelists to agree on the failure of a candidate prevents one or two panelist's personal bias from being the deciding factor.

Prof. Gopal Basak suggested that the scores given by individual panelists along with questions asked should be recorded. Dean said this is a good practice, but difficult to follow compulsorily. Prof. Mahuya Datta and Prof. Amartya Dutta said that the tabulation of marks will be slowed down by this requirement.

Prof. Susmita Sur-Kolay said that even if there is a pass-mark for maximum interview score given by the panelists, that maximum score should not be used for computation of composite score. It was agreed that the selection committees would continue to decide the summary mechanism (mean, median etc.) to be used for computing "interview score" as a component of composite score. Prof. Mahuya Datta said that there should be no cut-off on the composite score if there is a pass-mark in the interview. There were multiple views on this issue. The eventual decision was to leave the matter where it had been before the present meeting, and to allow the selection committees to choose the relevant selection parameters.

Prof. Bhabatosh Chanda inquired whether a legal opinion on the proposal of pass-mark in interview has been obtained. Prof. Saurabh Ghosh said that this cannot be the case, as JRF selections all over the country, including our own selection of JRFs with external fellowships, make use of pass-marks in interview. Prof. Susmita Sur-Kolay said that a legal opinion had indeed been sought, but none of the known legal facts undermine the proposed pass-mark. Prof. Chanda insisted that there is no harm in checking again – in case something had been missed. The Dean agreed to double check.

There was extensive discussion on the possibility of keeping a cut-off on the composite score also, but there was no consensus in favour of this suggestion.

It was resolved that there will be a pass-mark specified as 10% of the highest possible score, on the maximum of the scores awarded by the panelists in respect of admission interviews for JRF programmes, and this maximum would be based on the scores given by at least three panelists, including the Chair or the Convener or both. Further, the need for the requisite quorum in the panel, including in the cases of female candidates and candidates of reserved categories, would be codified.

A reporting matter

The Dean of Studies reported that there had been an error in reporting the list of awards in the 76th meeting of the Academic Council: the recommended recipient of the Mukul Chaudhri cash award for best female student in the BStat (Hons) First year batch would be Aytijhya Saha.

sd/-
Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay
Director, ISI and
Chair, Academic Council

sd/-
Debasis Sengupta
Dean of Studies and
Convener, Academic Council