



## **Now, Courses Taken Online Could Add to Your College Credits**

A few months ago, the online course page of a highly-niche and less broached subject called 'Data Analytics' saw a sudden surge of interest and sign-ups. "All TCS employees who can finish this online course and produce certificates can be leveled-up to our Pune office," read a posting on the course forum. It got thousands of takers.

Today, the Airports Authority of India mandates its pilots to take two other technical courses — Introduction to Airplane Performance and Stability & Control of Aircraft, curated and taught by IIT Kanpur and hosted on the same web portal, which is one of the earliest Indian massive open online course (MOOC) portals — NPTEL.

These courses were initially intended to just serve as a timed online course offering (through videos and exercises) students extra subjects. They would be merited with certificates from reputed institutions upon clearing an exam. But little did NPTEL expect that what started as a response to global MOOC platforms like EDX and Coursera would show such promise.

Institutions across the country have started offering college credits to NPTEL certificates produced upon clearing an examination. For instance, a course completion certificate is usually offered by IIT or IISC offering the course.

The credit system being given by several autonomous colleges for these MOOC courses is: 1 credit for a 10-hour course, 2 credits for a 20-hour course and 3 or 4 credits for a 40-hour course. Kalasalingam University, Centurion University, Pune University and National Engineering College, Kovilpatti are among those who have this system in place.

MOOC has also proved to be an in-built faculty-training system. For instance, Vellore Institute of Technology has announced that prospective teachers take two courses from the site and produce certificates to clear their selection process.

“One thing that sets apart NPTEL from MOOC platforms like Coursera and EDX is that we don’t go for popular courses, but subjects that cater to industry-specific requirements and those that students have shown interest towards,” said Bharati, speaking for NPTEL.

Some universities in Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have made it compulsory to take up online courses, which has also sent a stream of students to these courses.

Companies like L&T, Tata Steel, Infosys and TCS also distribute MOOC course content to their employees, making it a mandatory part of their training. Many employees in banking and IT sector are required to take up courses that form a crucial part of their jobs, like ‘Information Security’ provided by IIT-Madras.

This year’s January intake alone saw 47 courses, of which three (Principles of HR, Marketing I and Probability & Statistics for Finance) are from Management and three (including Language & Mind and Technical English for Engineers) are from Arts and Humanities stream.

“We are getting a certificate from an IIT at the end of the day. It’s something many people have wanted, and is finally possible,” says Ram R, a software professional who had signed up for a course last year.