

# ST. JOSEPH'S DEGREE & PG COLLEGE



(Autonomous) - Affiliated to Osmania University

Re-accredited by NAAC (3<sup>rd</sup> Cycle)

Basheerbagh, King Koti Road, Hyderabad – 29

## **Bridging Theory and Practice through Experiential Learning**

The learner-centered education model marks a paradigm shift from conventional teacher-centered methodologies to those that actively engage students, emphasizing experiential, multidimensional learning experiences which make learning vibrant, effective, making them life-long learners. The hands-on, real-world activities that encourage reflection, skill development, and deeper understanding. The curriculum designed and developed by various departments prioritizes mandatory internships, industry and field visits, exhibitions for showcasing innovative models enhancing students' practical knowledge in line with NEP 2020.

### **Objectives of the Practice:**

- To bridge the gap between theory and practice, offering students hands-on learning through industry visits, field trips, and exhibitions.
- To increase students' employability by equipping them with industry-relevant skills and knowledge.
- To foster critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication skills through experiential learning.
- To promote innovation, entrepreneurship, and teamwork among students.

**Context:** In today's competitive job market, theoretical knowledge alone is often inadequate. Recognizing this, our institution has implemented a comprehensive experiential learning program that complements classroom learning with practical, real-world exposure through industry visits, field trips, exhibitions, internships, and effective teaching methodologies ensuring students can smoothly transition into professional life in line with NEP 2020's emphasis on skill-based learning and holistic education.

### **The Practice:**

The departments emphasize experiential learning by transitioning to learner-centered classrooms. This shift is achieved through industry and field visits, the organization of exhibitions, the incorporation of practical components in the curriculum where applicable, internships, role plays, case studies, and projects all in line with NEP 2020's focus on active learning and student-centered approaches.

***Industry Visits and Field Trips:*** Each department organizes industry visits and field trips, allowing students to gain direct insights into various industries, workplaces, and job roles. Students observe professional practices, interact with industry professionals, and understand career pathways. **29** industrial/fields visits were organized during AY23-24

**Examples:**

B.Com students visit companies like EPIT Research Labs, Dolphin Food India Ltd., and Bhoodan Pochampally Textile & Madhu Foods Pvt. Ltd to gain insights into production, marketing, and R&D functions.

- BBA students visit T-Hub, a tech incubator, to explore entrepreneurship and innovation in the tech sector.
- Mass Communication students visit Fever 94.3 FM, SR Studios, and The Hindu Press to understand media production and communication.
- Physics & Electronics students explore places like BM Birla Science Center and the C-MET lab, a Smart Nanomaterials lab, and Antarctica Room to learn about cutting-edge research and applications in science and technology.
- Apart from various academic field trips, students were also taken to heritage sites like Golconda Fort & Chowmahalla Palace by Languages Departments.

***Organizing Exhibitions:***

Departments organize exhibitions where students showcase their talents and projects. These exhibitions offer a creative platform for students to apply their knowledge, hone presentation and communication skills, and receive feedback from peers and faculty. **9 exhibitions** were organized during AY 23-24 where students of neighborhood institutions participated . Students with innovative startup ideas are invited to present their ideas in the boot camps organized by the institution and also encouraged to participate in the hackathons organized by other institutions.

**Examples:**

- The Commerce Department holds exhibitions on business, finance, and marketing topics.
- Mathematics & Statistics students present their models in a dedicated working models exhibition.
- Psychology students conduct the "Euphro Psyche" exhibition for interactive psychology awareness.
- Computer Science students host "Informatique Exhib" to display tech innovations.
- Mass Communication organizes "Parampara" on National Handloom Day to support handloom weavers and products.

- On "Entrepreneurship Day" at Joseph's College, an exhibition themed "Art & Handicrafts," was organized. Around 12 stalls were set up, allowing students to display their talents and explore business strategies through exhibition and sales.
- The College Institution Innovation Council (IIC) and Techno Innovation and Incubation Cell (TIIC) are hosting "Innovilla Fete 2024" on January 16, from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm, to boost entrepreneurial skills and support student-led businesses. This event showcases innovative startup ideas, offers networking opportunities with investors and mentors, and advocates policies that foster startup growth.
- A two-day **Book Exhibition** provided students with the opportunity to explore a diverse range of academic and general-interest books, fostering an appreciation for reading and learning across disciplines.
- Festibition, an intercollegiate food fest held on 29th Feb 2024 was organized to enhance the entrepreneurship skills of the students

**Practical Components and Innovative Teaching Methodologies:** The curriculum includes practical components wherever necessary, such as the establishment of the NSE Lab in AY 2023-24, providing students with a live experience of financial markets. Additionally, role plays, case studies, and mandatory final-year projects are incorporated to actively engage students, promoting deeper understanding and retention of learning.

**Boot Camps and Hackathons:** Students with innovative startup ideas are invited to present their ideas at boot camps organized by the institution and are also encouraged to participate in hackathons hosted by other institutions. These initiatives further promote innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Internships:** Internships are an integral part of experiential learning, providing students with hands-on experience in their chosen fields. These placements allow students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world settings, develop practical skills, and gain valuable professional exposure, bridging the gap between academic learning and industry demands.

### **Evidence of Success:**

The success of this experiential learning methodology is evident in the substantial improvements in students' skills, employability, and professional readiness. Industry partners consistently provide positive feedback on students' preparedness and practical grasp of industry practices. Each year, students actively participate in exhibitions, presenting their models and earning commendable feedback on both their presented models and communication skills. Many students have transformed their exhibition models into degree-fulfilling projects.

The enthusiasm displayed by students during industry visits and their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to real-world contexts is impressive. Alumni surveys also reflect that graduates feel

more confident and capable in their professional roles due to the real-world exposure gained from this program.

The teaching methodologies, such as role play and case studies, helped students gain insights into real-world challenges and decision-making processes. These approaches enhanced critical thinking by encouraging students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical problems. Their effectiveness was evident in how they engaged students actively, making the learning process more hands-on and reflective, which in turn promoted deeper understanding and retention.

Additionally, the knowledge gained through these experiences is reflected in the cultural and literary events, academic fests, and community service activities, all of which are entirely organized by the students. These experiences also help hone their leadership qualities.

**Problems Encountered:**

- Difficulty in finding faculty with industry experience for field trips.
- Difficulty in getting permissions from the industry for allowing students
- Initial resistance from some faculty to adapt teaching methods for experiential learning.
- Ensuring students' engagement during field trips and exhibitions.
- Scheduling field trips and exhibitions within the academic calendar.
- Covering costs associated with exhibitions and field trips.
- Maintaining long-term industry partnerships.
- .

**Conclusion:** Our comprehensive experiential learning program, featuring industry visits, field trips, and exhibitions, has effectively bridged the gap between theoretical learning and practical application. These initiatives prepare students for successful careers by enhancing employability and providing invaluable real-world skills. We remain committed to addressing challenges to sustain and grow this impactful program.

# Best Practices







