



## The IGNOU Bachelors Preparatory Programme (Deaf Students) and BA (Hons) Applied Sign Language Studies (BAASLS) opens up new avenues for disabled students

Following an agreement signed between the prime ministers of India and the United Kingdom for a UK India Educational Research Initiative Scheme (UKIERI) the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) has collaborated with The University of Central Lancashire (UCLan) to create the Bachelors Preparatory Programme, Deaf Students (BPPDS) and BA (Hons) Applied Sign Language Studies (BAASLS) for Indian and international students. Both universities have been awarded the project of educating and

training students with speech and hearing impairment.

These programmes will focus on sociolinguistics, cultural sociology and in disability studies. The aims are:

- Access to learning through sign language
- Development of signing and academic skills at par with international scholarly levels
- Creating a harmonious atmosphere and interactive cosmopolitan base for students on the campus
- To bring out more confident participants in the

mainstream of social and cultural affairs

- Generating a wealth of human resources capable of finding a place for themselves in the wider world
- Myriad avenues to explore and select subjects based on aptitude and performance
- Offering an inclusive programme which is sensitised to gender ratio and encourages female admissions.

The course curriculum encompasses a varied, intra-disciplinary study pattern, which will be of immense help to impaired students to go through life.

The Foundation Entry Programme, Bachelors Preparatory Programme Deaf Students (BPPDS) is an access programme for those who want to study at university level, but lack the necessary requirements and facilities. This programme focuses on intensive English literacy skills as well as addressing other skills required for higher education. The module contents are based on a range of case studies from various countries, in combination with the explanation of corresponding theoretical norms. The relationship between such communities and society at large is also considered.

These include evaluating the importance of cultural and linguistics identity in deaf communities and the relationship to deaf community leadership.

Skills for effective deaf community leadership, for example:

- Networking and engaging

- Conflict resolution
- Presentation skills
- Project management skills
- Ways of empowering communities through:
- Skills development and capacity building.
- Social enterprise.
- Volunteering
- Mentoring

Another important topic under discussion for the foundation year is Personal Development Planning (PDP) which is managed through a number of inter-linked measures to support the development of academic, personal and professional skills in students.

At the end of the one-year Foundation Course, BPPDS, students will be awarded Dual Certificates from IGNOU and UCLan respectively. The same status prevails after the completion of the three-year BA (Hons) Applied Sign Language Studies for the students who will get degrees from both the universities mentioned.