

NATIONAL ACADEMIC DEPOSITORY: A STEP IN THE DIRECTION OF THE DIGITAL INDIA VISION

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ABSTRACT

The National Academic Depository of India is a manifestation of a previously conceived idea. The depository was conceived as a way to centrally store and digitise all of the academic achievements that are made available by educational institutions. The repository makes it possible to do away with the requirement of physically keeping awards. It is able to authenticate the awards that have been given to various persons by a variety of organisations. A remedy that is helpful in the fight against counterfeit and false certificates is the secure digital depository. There are a lot of parallels to be drawn between the idea of academic depository and the idea of financial securities. In India, the idea of a depository was tested with the assistance of academic awards provided by one of the testing bodies. The pilot was finished in a fruitful manner. In order for the depository to become completely functioning, it is necessary to surmount a few obstacles concerning the academic variations that exist with regard to the length of the courses and their level of equivalent. In response to these difficulties, legislation pertaining to academic repositories is currently in the process of being written. In addition to this, the NAD is becoming expectant with a wide variety of brand-new applications and opportunities. It's possible that the NAD may open up new roles for educational institutions as well, such as preparing reports for teachers based on examination data about learning gaps in the classroom, as opposed to simply labelling kids. The Academic Depository represents a first-of-its-kind initiative anywhere in the globe.

Key Words: National Academic Depository, Certificate ID, Electronic Verification, Grade Reports, Digital Academic Records Repository, and Digital Certificates.

INTRODUCTION

There are roughly 60 school boards, 416 state universities, 124 deemed universities, 54 central institutions, and 364 private universities in India's rapidly expanding higher education system. There are an additional 107 institutions, including the Indian Institutes of Science and Technology, Indian Institutes of Management, National Institutes of Technology, Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research, Indian Institutes of Information Technology, and the National Institute of Advanced Studies in India. Degrees, diplomas, and certificates, as well as mark sheets and report cards, are just some of the academic recognitions that students can expect to receive from these establishments. In addition to these, certificates, diplomas, and advanced diplomas can be obtained from institutions that fall under a variety of Ministries/Departments, as well as other skill-based schools. Access, retrieval, and validation of these academic qualifications need to be made possible in a way that is legitimate, authentic, and user-friendly for those who are either entering the workforce or pursuing further education. The retrieval of outdated academic records that are kept in paper form is a time-consuming and laborious process. Paper copies of student records are prone to a variety of potential dangers, including deterioration and falsification. When students lose or have their certificates or mark sheets destroyed, they frequently have a difficult time replacing them and acquiring duplicates of them. By storing academic awards in a digital repository, educational institutions, students, and employers would have the ability to get online access to, retrieve, and verify digitised academic awards. This would also put an end to fraudulent practices such the forgery of certificates and mark sheets.

The Government of India wanted to make it easier for its students to keep track of their many academic accomplishments, so they came up with the notion of a central online repository called the National Academic Depository (NAD). The goal of NAD is to create a trustworthy and simple means through which academic awards from different schools can be submitted, verified, and validated online. The process of validating and verifying academic degrees and honours from different schools would be greatly aided by this. By facilitating online verifications of certificates and grade reports, it will significantly reduce fraudulent activities like these. Certificates, diplomas, degrees, and other academic prizes that have been formally digitised and registered by educational institutions/boards/eligibility assessment organisations are kept in a secure online repository called Digi Locker NAD, which is accessible around the clock. It validates and verifies the authenticity and safe storage of a scholarly award and makes both easy to access and retrieve. The National Academic Depository (NAD) is an online repository for academic credentials that may be accessed by both institutions and students. Institutions of higher learning can enter award information, and students can then examine their award records. Once a student has registered with Digi Locker, they will be able to access their academic records from their school and download any certificates or documents they need. The NAD platform allows for the installation of multiple roles, such as the creation of student and academic accounts, the production of student data according

to a standard certificate template, and the dissemination of year/course-specific data. This guide's major purpose is to provide academic institutions with step-by-step guidance and education on the registration process, data preparation, and all components of the NAD application up until the release of the prizes.

HISTORY OF NATIONAL ACADEMIC DEPOSITORY

In January of 2010, the ministry established a task force to plan the introduction of the idea of an electronic storehouse for academic achievements. In September 2011, the Lok Sabha first heard the National Academic Depository Bill. The legislation is now in the hands of the Human Resources Development Standing Committee. Due to a change in Government, the bill was allowed to expire in 2014.

During a meeting that took place on October 27, 2016, the Union Cabinet, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, gave its approval to a proposal that was submitted by the Ministry of Education to establish a digital depository of academic awards to be known as the National Academic Depository (NAD). This was done in order to fulfil a commitment made by the finance minister in his Budget Speech for 2016–2017, in which he specified a “Digital Depository” for schools leaving certificates, degrees, and other academic honours given out by higher education institutions.

On July 9, 2017, the NAD was officially introduced by the Honourable President of India at the time. In order to put the NAD into operation, the Ministry of Education (MoE) appointed the University Grants Commission (UGC) as an authorised implementing body. This body was given the responsibility of entering into a tripartite agreement with the NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and the CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) for a period of three years. The time period covered by the tripartite agreement came to an end in December 2019, and furthermore, it has been agreed that Digi Locker, and not the CVL and NDML, will be in charge of putting the NAD plan into action. In March of 2020, a notification addressing the implementation of the NAD scheme was made available by the Ministry of Education (MoE).

UGC- THE AUTHORISED IMPLEMENTING BODY

During the meeting that took place on October 27, 2016, the Union Cabinet gave its approval to the establishment of a digital repository of academic achievements that will be known as the National Academic Depository (NAD). As a direct result of the approval of the Cabinet, the Government, in the exercise of powers conferred under section 20(1) of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, has designated the University Grants Commission (UGC) as an authorised body to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Digi Locker as a Single Depository of NAD. For the purpose of putting the NAD into action, the UGC has inked a tripartite agreement with NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) and CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL). When entering into a legally enforceable agreement for the purpose of utilising the services of NAD, the academic institutions, boards, and eligibility assessment organisations are required to choose one of the two depositories as their preferred option. The strength of this agreement will principally be relied upon for matters pertaining to lodging, access, retrieval, and validity of academic achievements in the NAD.

COMPOSITION

The National Academic Depository is made up of two separate but complementary digital repositories: CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) and NSDL Database Management Limited (NSDL) (NDML). The digital repositories have guaranteed the quality of their hardware, network infrastructure, and software to enable the safe and effective running of NAD.

STAKE-HOLDERS

Educational Institutions, Students, Verifying Partners, the NAD Repository, and the Digi Locker software are all important members of the NAD community. Participants in academic programmes and recipients of other academic qualifications.

PARTICIPANTS

- I. Central Educational Institutions are comprised of Central Universities, Central Higher Educational Institutions, and other institutions that have been granted the authority by an Act of Parliament to award degrees, diplomas, and other forms of higher education.
- II. Universities that are run by the state, universities that are considered to be universities, and other universities.
- III. Institutions for the awarding of certificates, diplomas, and degrees that were established by different Indian government ministries and departments.
- IV. Organisations that have been granted permission to operate by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- V. State School Boards, the Central Board of Secondary Education (also known as CBSE), and any other Boards.

- VI. Central eligibility exam conducting bodies such as the University Grants Commission (UGC) for the National Eligibility Test (NET) and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) for the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET).

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

- I. The University Grants Commission (UGC) has been designated as an authorised organisation to create and operationalize the National Admissions Depository (NAD) by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD). As a direct result of being granted this authorization, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has entered into a tripartite agreement with CDSL Ventures Limited (CVL) and NSDL Database Management Limited (NDML) on behalf of all Central Higher Educational Institutions (CHEIs), Institutions of National Importance (INIs), and Boards.
- II. In order to set up and run the NAD, the academic institutions, boards, and eligibility assessment organisations are authorised by the tripartite agreement to use CVL and NDML's services for a preliminary three-year period.
- III. Each educational institution, board, or eligibility assessment body will have the option of working with either of the two proposed depositories under a legally binding agreement. In the NAD, the agreement will be the primary basis for securing housing, gaining entry, retrieving and validating academic awards.
- IV. A National Steering Committee (NSC) has been established by the Indian government's Department of Higher Education within the Ministry of Human Resource Development. This forum brings together representatives from a wide range of government agencies across the country.
- V. The NSC is in charge of monitoring the launch as well as the implementation of the NAD project at regular intervals.

FEATURES AND FUNCTIONS OF NAD

- I. NAD is responsible for the provision of a number of services, including the housing, maintenance, access, verification, and authentication of academic awards in digital format.
- II. It is the responsibility of the academic institutions, boards, and eligibility assessment bodies that lodge data in NAD to ensure its accuracy.
- III. In order to make use of the resources provided by NAD, users such as students, academic institutions and boards, and eligibility assessment bodies must first register with the system.
- IV. For the purposes of both registration and usage, Aadhaar serves as an identifier. If an individual does not have access to their Aadhaar number, they are assigned a one-of-a-kind NAD ID.
- V. A student and/or any verifier who has been officially authorised by the student concerned can receive a digital and authenticated copy of their academic awards. These copies come equipped with the specified security elements.
- VI. A person who requires verification and authentication of any particular academic award in the NAD is able to apply online after completing the necessary registration and upon payment of the stipulated user charges, provided the person meets all of the requirements. Requests for the online verification of academic honours and awards are fulfilled on the same day and, at the latest, within 24 hours.
- VII. The academic awards can be safely stored in one central NAD repository because all the digital depositories are compatible with one another. Because of this interoperability, there is no longer a need to lodge a single academic award at numerous locations within the NAD system, and information can move freely and in real-time across the various NAD depositories.
- VIII. The NAD is responsible for ensuring that the award database is authentic, intact, and kept confidential at all times.
- IX.

BENEFITS

Students, academic institutions/boards/eligibility assessment bodies, and verifying users all have access to the NAD's online system, which is open 24X7 for the purpose of submitting, retrieving, authenticating, and verifying academic awards in digital format. In addition to this, it offers a database of academic awards to the government, regulatory authorities, and academic institutions for the purpose of data analytics. Academic awards can be accessed online by educational institutions, boards, eligibility assessment bodies, students, and employers thanks to the electronic depository of academic awards. This eliminates the need for individuals to seek physical transcripts of such awards or mark sheets for verification.

I. Benefits for Academic Institutions

- All academic achievements given out should be kept in a record that is both permanent and secure.

- It is unnecessary to provide duplicate academic awards because students can obtain them directly from NAD.
- Paper certificates that are fabricated or faked are effectively deterred by this measure.
- NAD is able to meet all of your verification requirements for academic awards; they provide an administration that is efficient, effective, and transparent.
- Aimed at the idea of a paperless government, it reduces the amount of administrative work that needs to be done. It does this by reducing the amount of paper that is used and speeding up the verification process. This brings the administrative costs down.
- Providing trusted issued documents is one of the benefits of digital transformation.
- With the student's permission, the Secure Document Gateway performs the function of a secure document exchange platform, analogous to a payment gateway, between a trusted issuer and a trusted Requester/Verifier.
- Real-Time Verification: This feature offers a verification module, which, once user consent has been obtained, may be used to validate data straight from the issuers.

II. Benefits for Students

- Instantaneous accessibility of academic prizes upon their upload by Academic Institution Online, as well as a permanent record of academic honours and awards.
- There is no possibility of the academic awards being misplaced, ruined, or damaged.
- Access to academic honours on demand, at your leisure, and in any location.
- Essential Documents are Available Whenever and Wherever You Are!
- Digital Document Exchange That Produces Authentic Documents That Are Legally Equivalent to the Originals This service requires the student's permission.
- Delivery of services more quickly, particularly in the areas of government benefits, employment, financial inclusion, educational admittance, and health care.

III. Benefits for Verifying Entities

Verifying entities, such as banks, employer companies (domestic and overseas), visa consulates, Government entities, academic institutions/universities/boards/eligibility assessment bodies (domestic and overseas), etc., are referred to as verifiers because they engage in the practice of verifying the academic certificates that students submit to them.

CONCLUSION

The idea behind the National Academic Depository, often known as NAD, is to provide a central repository for all academic honours and awards in the form of an online database. The National Academic Depository (NAD) is an online repository that is accessible around the clock and houses digitised copies of academic awards such as certificates, diplomas, degrees, and mark sheets, which have been submitted by academic institutions, boards, and other eligibility assessment bodies. The National Accreditation Board (NAD) not only makes it simple to retrieve an academic award but also verifies its genuineness and ensures that it is kept in a secure location. Students and educational institutions alike are up against a significant number of obstacles in their pursuit of NAD authorization. It's possible that the depository will collaborate with educational institutions to get things started. The data repository becomes a fool proof option when it is used by both students and educational institutions to keep data from a significant number of years. It would be to the advantage of those storing, retrieving, and validating degrees if the National Academic Depository were to be built successfully and work as intended. By reducing the amount of work that administrative tasks need of staff members hired by educational institutions, it will improve the overall teaching and learning environment. Educational institutions may take on many more significant responsibilities, such as analysing the quality of the test items, preparing reports on students' performances on the test items, and providing feedback to the students' instructors as well as their parents. It would be helpful in allocating the primary aim of evaluation, which is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in educational institutions at all levels.

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