

IEST
SHIBPUR

CLIMATE CHANGE
ACTION PLAN

IEST-Shibpur : Pledge for Climate Change Action Plan

Climate change and ecological destruction affect all parts of life including what we need or value the most, such as water, food, ecosystems, wildlife, safety, shelter, energy, transportation, health, communities and the economy. The basic human needs of many, in particular those who are the most vulnerable, are already in jeopardy. This has been a civilisational and existential crisis. There is no greater issue facing the future of humanity than the climate and ecological crises at the moment - that calls for immediate proactive long-term and short-term initiatives across all sections of the society.

Academic institutes pride themselves on preparing students for a bright future. But with the climate in crisis, where disasters of "unprecedented" scale and impact become the new normal, what future will our students have? As we face environmental degradation and biodiversity losses of unimaginable proportions, priorities for universities and other educational institutions should be adequately preparing their students and staff for increasingly challenging times.

Dealing with climate-induced conflicts, mass migration, health impacts, economic costs and environmental degradation represent challenges of extraordinary proportions. There is simply no greater challenge than addressing the ecological and climate emergency and academic institutions owe it to their students to be at the forefront of these issues.

Academic Institutes have a particular role to play when it comes to acting for the planet. As large academic institutions' carbon and environmental footprints are significant, and this alone should be a strong enough incentive to act. But institutes also have the responsibility to be honest with their students and prepare them for a changing climate because whatever jobs they seek after graduation will be fundamentally reshaped by an increasingly variable climate and frequent and unprecedented climate extremes.

Several million students across the planet graduate every year. All are, and will be, further affected by climate change. Humanity needs engaged citizens who better understand and can urgently address the myriad implications of climate disruption. All academic disciplines need to account for challenges of uncertainty in an unpredictable climate. Thus, higher educational institutions while having an immense potential do have even bigger responsibility in this direction.

Many institutions, across the globe have already declared a climate emergency and pronounced their commitments towards addressing this issue either as stand-alone announcements or by way of formally joining various 'Save Climate' movements which is gaining voice.

In view of what has been stated above, IEST-Shibpur reiterates its commitment towards environmental sustainability and pledges for proactive action plans towards mitigating climate Change, while joining the global movement towards this end as a signatory for Global Universities and Colleges Climate Letter, a public online document organised by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC), UNEP and others.

What does it mean for IEST's Pledge for Climate Change Action Plan?

- **Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and ecological footprint.** The Institute would set transparent greenhouse gas emission reduction goals, and would be held accountable for and report on these on a regular basis. By adopting sustainable practices in all aspects of their functioning, from catering to transport and travel, investment, building design and maintenance, waste and energy management and more. The Institution would strive to become more environmentally sustainable and set an example for other organisations.
- **Adapting and bracing for impact:** The Institute would set in place measures to ensure that they, their students, staff and visitors are, as far as realistically possible, better prepared for climate-related risks and impacts such as floods, heat waves, water scarcity, tropical cyclones, as well as the social unrest, declines in productivity and health that will inevitably flow from our deteriorating climate. Equally important is preparing their students to be receptive to emerging opportunities that may arise at certain periods in some regions due to changes in the climate.
- **Mainstreaming ecological and climate action across all disciplines:** The Institute would ensure that all students, regardless of the discipline and level of study, understand specific climate impacts and possible remedial action in their line of work. This would be reflected in environmental and sustainability education across curricula, institute rankings and accreditations, graduate attributes, as well as in performance measurements of all teaching and non-teaching staff members at all levels.
- **Interdisciplinary teaching and research activities:** The Institute commits to prioritise interdisciplinary teaching and research on global environmental challenges, resilience and solutions with mobilization of additional resources and also to organize adequate campus and community outreach programmes for sensitization and dissemination of knowledge.
- **Showcase Institute's commitments towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals** (particularly SDG 4 -quality education and SDG 13 - climate action).

This may also be pointed out that the importance of climate-change is well-recognised and IEST has already incorporated some of the allied issues in the academic curriculum of various engineering and science departments and also through offering number of elective subjects at postgraduate level. Various departments, research centres and schools in the institute have been conducting cutting edge interdisciplinary research funded by various national and international organizations (like UK Research and Innovation-UKRI, UNICEF, IC-IMPACT-Canada and others) on development of clean technologies, policy and planning briefs to address vulnerabilities of risk-prone locations, sectors and communities. The institute is involved in collaborative research with institutes of eminence in global north and south (Newcastle University, Stockholm Environment Institute, Asian Institute of Technology, International Union for Conservation), conducting grass root dialogue with the affected people and engaging in policy advocacy with national think-tank like NitiAyog, Ministries and departments of Environment and Climate Change at national and state level regarding the principles of mitigation, adaptation and implementing sustainable development goals in vulnerable locations and communities.