

**SRI AUROBINDO CENTRE
FOR ADVANCED RESEARCH
(SACAR)
PUDUCHERRY**



ACADEMIC PROSPECTUS

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SACAR: BACKGROUND & OVERVIEW OF ACTIVITIES

Sri Aurobindo Centre for Advanced Research (SACAR), started in Pondicherry in 1998, is a research unit of the Institute of Human Study which was launched at Hyderabad in 1964. SACAR has for its objective an in-depth study of and research into the thought and vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and relate it to the present and future of India in particular, and the world in general. We encourage study of all allied thought and perspectives from other visionaries from different cultures with an objective to offer a synthetic view of the future.

SACAR is a centre of research and learning dedicated to acquiring and implementing in all areas a new and broader perspective on human life. This new perspective has a spiritual aim and basis, and underlies and unifies the multifarious solutions and changes to be made throughout the nations of the globe. The guiding principle of all our activities is the synthesizing movement to unite in a practical and progressive way the highest spiritual realisations with the development and perfection of the outer life—two fields that have been historically the special domain of Eastern and Western nations, respectively. Our focal point in this endeavour is the spiritual knowledge and vision behind this effort of synthesis.

SACAR is NOT an institution of religious education. It is important to emphasize that the philosophy and thought of Sri Aurobindo in which SACAR specialises is NOT a religion. This integral thought addresses the global and perennial questions of the nature and significance of existence and human life in a scholarly manner.

KEY ACTIVITIES OF SACAR

1. In-depth study of Sri Aurobindo's major writings: Savitri, The Life Divine, Essays on the Gita, The Synthesis of Yoga, etc.
2. Participate and present papers on the vision and work of Sri Aurobindo at seminars, conferences and symposia organized by Sri Aurobindo Centers, Colleges and Universities in India and abroad.
3. Publish quarterly journal "New Race: A Journal of Integral Studies".
4. Publish books written on the vision of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
5. Organize an audio-visual library of talks given by various scholars studying the works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother.
6. Provide research guidance for learners who are studying various topics in Sri Aurobindo's thought and vision as part of their MA, M. Phil, or Ph.D. work or otherwise, in other universities in India and abroad.
7. Organize and develop its online educational division.
8. Organize and develop correspondence programmes in Sri Aurobindo's thought.
9. Organize seminars and conferences on various topics related to Sri Aurobindo's thought.
10. Conduct Value Education programmes for teachers and students in schools in and around Pondicherry.

INFRASTRUCTURE

SACAR is situated in a building of 10,000 square feet with two large halls for lectures and workshops, meditation room, library, office spaces, guest rooms, a spacious terrace overlooking the ocean, and a beautiful garden that has ample space for organizing seminars, performances, exhibitions, or just quiet relaxation. The library is home to approximately 3000 texts in a wide variety of subjects from psychology to futurology to world literature, philosophy, and education. It specialises in literature by and about Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, their philosophy and yoga.

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARS' HOME

With an objective to grow into a living and vibrating campus for learners and scholars who are focusing their research in Sri Aurobindo studies and other related areas, SACAR undertook an ambitious project of building an International Scholars' Home. Construction is now complete on this Scholars' Home, which has rooms (single, double, suites) for more than 20 people, kitchen, dining area, and other common areas. This Home is meant to provide affordable accommodation for those learners and seekers who would be taking up research and study programmes with SACAR. Those enrolled in online programmes will also be able to use these lodging facilities when they visit Pondicherry for their Master's or Doctoral thesis or coursework. This would help these distant learners to imbibe the atmosphere of the Ashram and Auroville and experience the unique ambience of a spiritual community. For inquiry and reservations please email scholarshomesacar@gmail.com.

HIGHER EDUCATION AT SACAR

SACAR seeks to consecrate itself to the discovery and practice of the fundamental principles of a new society that embodies and expresses a new consciousness. It seeks to be a true academic center of the future seeking solutions to the difficulties of human existence through the integration of man's instrumental nature of mind, life and body with his higher spiritual possibilities. This aim is being pursued through our various educational programmes.

These programmes are based on the vision, thought and spiritual ideals of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. We provide effective in-depth instruction of and guidance on student-directed research in such areas as spiritual philosophy, integral yoga, social and political evolution, futurology, poetry and literature, Indian culture and Indian scriptures.

Learners from all over the world devote themselves to the knowledge of the spiritual foundations for the future, following Certificate, PG Diploma, Master's and Doctoral level programmes of study. They are guided by a group of talented faculty from India and abroad.

COLLABORATION WITH IGNOU

In August 2008, SACAR was recognized as a partner institution of Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), New Delhi. Under the aegis of the IGNOU's

newly opened School of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Studies (SOITS) SACAR presently offers several online and one correspondence programme in Sri Aurobindo studies.

- Certificate Programme in Introduction to Sri Aurobindo Studies (available both via online and correspondence)
- Post-graduate Diploma Programmes (in three areas: Studies in Indian Culture, Integral Education, Social and Political Evolution)
- M.A. in Sri Aurobindo Studies
- M. Phil in Sri Aurobindo Studies
- Ph.D. in Sri Aurobindo Studies (with concentration in Integral Philosophy, Yoga Psychology, and Literature and Aesthetics)

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY OF SACAR

Our approach to Integral Education is primarily concerned with the evolution of consciousness in the individual, but we firmly believe that this evolution is an integral part of the evolution of societal consciousness. We are guided by the ideal that education is the means for facilitating individual transformation to prepare the humankind, one individual at a time, for a collective transformation. We hope to become a centre of 'higher' education and a dynamic ideal for the society through the very nature of our work in facilitating individual and collective evolution of consciousness.

OUR IDEAL

As an institution of integral higher education we pursue an aim and ideal of helping learners develop the psychological and intellectual faculties and skills required for them to know clearly, and to manifest, their highest ideals. We focus on the thought and vision of Sri Aurobindo, which comprise the best of Eastern and Western intellectual and spiritual traditions and philosophy. This grand synthesis, we believe, is extremely relevant to the modern world as it struggles to find its future and its new form and spirit.

With this central focus and starting point we aim to provide learners with what we consider to be a clear and comprehensive exposition of the spiritual bases of the new creation that is emerging, and of the role, destiny, and proper function of the human being in this process.

Our courses help learners acquire and develop abilities, potentials, ideas and ideals that help them envision a new future for themselves and the world. We encourage our learners to study widely, and to know other schools of thought and to compare these with the thought, work, and ideals of Sri Aurobindo.

We do not insist that our learners accept any particular teaching, practice, or point of view, and encourage a thoughtful and critical examination of all ideas.

FREE PROGRESS: INTEGRAL METHOD OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

Our educational approach is inspired by the Free-Progress Integral Method developed by the Mother at the Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in Pondicherry, and utilized successfully in various learning institutions in India and abroad.

The term 'free-progress' means that within certain basic educational structures, the learner is given full freedom to approach and explore the subjects they study in their own unique manner, but without sacrificing the concentrated focus and rigour necessary for high quality work. This educational method encourages the development of the individual and fosters original and free thinking.

We use the term 'facilitator' instead of the more conventional 'instructor' because we truly believe that learning can only be facilitated, and "nothing can be taught." We believe that teachers are mentors and guides for their students, not 'experts' who are supposed to 'impart' knowledge to the learners. Instead the facilitators are humble learners alongside their students' learning journeys. When they interact with learners they do not speak from a position of their expertise or authority but as mentors they offer suggestions for learners to explore and come to their own understanding and interpretation.

THREE PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRAL TEACHING

Our approach to learning and teaching is guided by the three cardinal principles given by Sri Aurobindo (1956/2004)¹.

"The first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught." To put it another way, if nothing can be taught it only means that all can be learned. Our facilitators are also life-long learners and are constantly working on their inner and outer progress. As and when needed, they share appropriate personal experiences and life-situations, which helps develop a deeper and closer relation with the learners. We believe that facilitators and learners learn together as they work together; they just may have different roles but they are both seekers in their own unique ways. Our facilitators sincerely and honestly practice the values and ideals that form the heart of the learning content of many of our courses.

"The second principle is that the mind has to be consulted in its own growth." Through the various experiential, introspective and self-observation exercises which are generally included in most of our courses, we emphasize the value that it is important for learners to gradually become more and more conscious of their true *swabhava* and *swadharma*.

"The third principle of education is to work from the near to the far, from that which is to that which shall be." Our Science of Living related courses and exercises aimed at self-observation and self-transformation emphasize for our learners that while we may keep our eyes on the distant goal of completely transforming our outer nature, but we always start from what is nearest to us. We recognize the importance of

¹ Sri Aurobindo and the Mother on Education (1956/2004). Sri Aurobindo Ashram Trust.

learners' development based on their unique life experiences and help them recognize that the best way to begin on their journey of self-transformation is to begin from wherever they are.

This principle is also reflected in the nature of our interaction with learners. In order to clarify any doubts and questions learners may have regarding a certain topic, in our responses we start with what we consider as of immediate and local interest to the learner, and use simple and learner-friendly examples to illustrate abstract theories and ideas.

EDUCATION OF THE WHOLE BEING

The online programmes and courses offered at SACAR provide ample of opportunities for individual learners to develop their vital, mental and psychic parts of the being. We do this through the use of a variety of learning activities and by incorporating plenty of self-reflective and introspective exercises.

We also include a variety of intellectual assignments in order to help the learner gradually perfect their mental faculties. At the same time we believe that learner's education and training of the intellect divorced from the perfection of moral and emotional nature is injurious to human progress. Therefore, we provide gentle learning opportunities—in the form of selected course content and readings that emphasize living and practicing higher ideals of life and constantly working to purify and transform one's emotional and vital self.

EDUCATION OF THE MIND

Given the online nature of our educational offerings undoubtedly there is a greater emphasis on mental education of the learners. But there also we keep in consideration the principal phases of mental education as given by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother in their writings on Integral Education. These principles help prepare learners for a higher life by:

- Developing the power of concentration, the capacity of attention
- Developing the capacities of expansion, widening, complexity and richness
- Organizing one's ideas around a central idea, a higher ideal or a supremely luminous idea that will serve as a guide in life
- Practicing thought-control and rejection of undesirable thoughts, to become able to think only what one wants and when one wants
- Developing mental silence, perfect calm and a more and more total receptivity to inspirations coming from the higher regions of the being.

These faculties are developed through our use of different types of learning activities which include: wide and in-depth reading, widening one's understanding through research and discussions with fellow-learners and facilitator, focused reflections on the core ideas covered in the material read, clear articulation of one's understanding

of the concepts, organizing one's thoughts and ideas around a particular theme such as in the form of essays, self-observation assignments, introspective analysis, and contemplative exercises.

By using this approach of mental education our objective is to help awaken in the learners interest in the subject and a will to progress - intellectually and spiritually. The wide range of activities and learning situations help develop the faculties of observation, precise recording and faithfulness of memory.

ORGANIZATION AND SYNTHESIS OF IDEAS

We also encourage our learners to take interest in and study various topics related to their main field of study in order to increase the suppleness and comprehensiveness of mind. At the same time our pedagogical approach of incorporating a range of learning activities related to a particular topic also helps remove the rigidity of the brain, makes thinking richer and more supple, and prepares the mind for a more complex and comprehensive synthesis.

The integral approach to mental education also emphasizes that learners develop the habit of constructing knowledge which will permit all the diverse and scattered and often contradictory ideas accumulated in brain to be organized and put in order, this is necessary to avoid chaos in one's thoughts. We achieve this by encouraging readers to do a wide reading.

By incorporating reading material from several authors—from different cultural backgrounds and belonging to different generations—we encourage learners to recognize that the mind must progress constantly, revise its notions in the light of new knowledge, enlarge its framework to include fresh notions and constantly reclassify and reorganize its thoughts, so that each of them may find its true place in relation to the others and the whole remain harmonious and orderly.

Through their responses to learners' comments and questions, the facilitators at SACAR help learners see that over time and with sufficient practice all contradictions can be transformed into complements, but for that one must discover the higher idea or ideal that will have the power to bring them harmoniously together. We gently remind the learners that upon the choice of the central idea will depend the value of one's mental synthesis. The higher and larger the central idea and the more universal it is, rising above time and space, the more numerous and the more complex will be the ideas, notions and thoughts which it will be able to organize and harmonize.

NATURE OF OUR PROGRAMMES

At SACAR we are inspired by a fundamental aspect of Integral Education, namely that the education of a human being should begin at birth and continue throughout his/her life. This value of life-long learning is evident in the nature and design of our programmes and courses, and also in the profile of our learners.

Within most of our programmes, learners are given a broad choice of courses that focus either on different subjects focusing on different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's

thought. Facilitators guide each learner individually, thus helping the learner to find their special interest and to explore the queries particular to each learner.

All courses at SACAR, while focusing on Sri Aurobindo's thought are sufficiently broad-based so that learners become aware of alternative perspectives and approaches to their subjects, and to tackle profound and complex subject matter in order to widen and clarify their faculties of thought, reasoning, and understanding.

EDUCATION FOR TRANSFORMATION

Learners find our programmes and courses refreshing and illuminating alternative to traditional fields of higher study. Our programmes are progressive and future-oriented. We strive toward the constant renewal, rethinking, reframing, and most importantly re-living of the timeless ideals and teachings of Sri Aurobindo for our changing times.

The educational values driving our programmes include: life-long learning, transformative learning guided by a passion for individual and social transformation, quest for knowledge for the development of self and society, respect (and not mere tolerance) for cultural diversity and a global perspective, and practice of critical and contemplative pedagogies.

For many of our learners, individualized and self-directed learning becomes a means for their individual transformation. We understand that true education enables an openness of mind and heart. We encourage learners to move beyond the limitations of dualities, to cross boundaries of ideologies. We view learning as a practice of freedom, and understand 'knowing' as that which leads us into greater connection and greater understanding of life, challenge the rigid dichotomy of mental knowing (or knowing by logic, reason) and other forms of knowing including experiential, contemplative, and intuitive.

Through experimentation and constant reflection on our teaching and learning practice, we have developed a system that reconciles these various needs of the total process of learning accurately and harmoniously.

INTERDISCIPLINARY AND TRANS-DISCIPLINARY FOCUS

Sri Aurobindo's integral thought concerns itself with all levels of human existence, which includes physical, emotional, instinctual, mental, moral, social and spiritual aspects; it looks upon them as equally valid and contributing for human evolution. This vision of integrality helps to appropriately place the vast developments made in the field of Matter—in various disciplines and fields of study—in a much wider, vaster framework of the Spirit.

Our courses cover various aspects of Sri Aurobindo—*darshnik-rishi* or the philosopher-sage; *kavi*, the mystic poet; *purna yogi*, the integral psychologist; social-political thinker; and anti-colonialist revolutionary. By integrating and synthesizing these different aspects these programmes become truly trans-disciplinary and interdisciplinary in nature.

Our learners come from a variety of academic and professional backgrounds and fields ranging from most traditional disciplines to most inter-disciplinary and individualized foci of interests. This further adds to the trans-disciplinary flavor learning environment and often then gets reflected in learners' contributions to online discussions in various courses.

We welcome innovative ideas of our learners, and encourage them to look beyond the limitations of their own ways of learning and knowing. We value rigorous scholarship, self-reflective practice, specialized and interdisciplinary learning.

MODES OF FACILITATION

We offer programmes of study through **two distance modalities**:

- a) through traditional correspondence mode,
- b) through online facilitation provided over the internet.

At present our focus is primarily directed toward building upon and strengthening our online programme offerings. In due course we shall also be developing the correspondence mode.

ONLINE MENTORING

SACAR seeks to utilize the best possibilities of the internet to provide a combination of academic excellence and spiritual depth to learners in an effective, affordable, and convenient manner. Our well-designed online courses provide learners with a structured schedule of study, and learners find support and guidance of facilitators who have expertise in the material very helpful to their learning experience.

At present we offer the following programmes of study through our online system:

- Certificate in Introduction to Sri Aurobindo
- Post-graduate Diploma (in two areas: Studies in Indian Culture, Integral Education)
- MA in Sri Aurobindo Studies
- MPhil in Sri Aurobindo Studies (with concentration in Integral Philosophy, Integral Education, Yoga Psychology, and Literature and Aesthetics)
- PhD in Sri Aurobindo Studies (with concentration in Integral Philosophy, Yoga Psychology, Integral Education, and Literature and Aesthetics)

CORRESPONDENCE

We also offer a 24-week certificate programme "Introduction to Sri Aurobindo Studies" via correspondence for residents of India. This is for the benefit of those learners who may not have easy access to online technology or may prefer a conventional correspondence approach to online learning. In the years to come we hope to also offer other advanced programmes and courses through correspondence.

ONLINE MODE

Our programmes primarily attract non-traditional, adult students who are generally highly motivated and self-directed learners, and feel most comfortable in a learning environment that allows them to be in control of their learning, and provides ample flexibility. An online learning environment can be effectively designed to provide such learning conditions.

Our online courses are structured with specific weekly reading assignments, discussions stimulated with the facilitator's questions, writing assignments, and tests. Properly designed online courses are effective, because unlike oral lectures, learners have the opportunity to spend the time needed with material and return to it as often as necessary to understand and digest it. At the same time, learners can more readily identify those particular aspects of the course material that they do not understand and seek clarification from the facilitator in a relaxed and private atmosphere.

EFFECTIVE ONLINE TEACHING

At SACAR we constantly strive to apply what Olcott (1999)² refers to as five "I"s of effective online teaching. These are: interaction, introspection, innovation, integration, and information. Interaction refers to communication that occurs between the student and the facilitator, communication that occurs among the students, and also the interaction that occurs between the student and the content of the course. Introspection is the interpretation, revision, and demonstrated understanding of concepts.

Innovation refers to the ability of facilitators to experiment with technologies to address various learning styles. Integration implies the integration of facts, concepts, theories, and practical application of knowledge. Information refers to the knowledge and understanding that is a prerequisite for students to move to the next level of learning.

ONLINE CLASSROOM

Learners who enrol in our online programmes are given a username and password to access the academic areas of SACAR website where the online courses are taught. Generally, all our online courses are taught through a simple, easy-to-navigate web-based bulletin board which uses a group email-like format. A specific online space is created for each course being offered in a particular semester. This space is called "class" for it serves the role of a traditional face-to-face classroom. Only the course facilitator, enrolled learners, and concerned SACAR administrator have access to the online class.

² Olcott, D. (1999). Instructional technologies - Part two: Strategies for instructor success. Selecting and using distance education technologies. In *Teaching at a distance: A handbook for instructors*. League for Innovation in the Community College and Archipelago.

While setting up our online classes we have also paid close attention to the differences in the technology available to our online students. Through our experience with adult learners we have learned that the focus in online learning should be on the essential learning experience and not on technology.

We have kept the design for our online courses fairly simple and easily accessible, which does not require students to upload any new software or upgrade their computer hardware. The facilitator's notes and lectures (if needed) are all text-based, are posted directly under the appropriate subject heading in the course online class-space, and can be easily saved or printed by the learners for easy reading. We have found that our learners appreciate the simple technological setup of our classes.

'SAGE ON THE STAGE' OR 'GUIDE ON THE SIDE'?

An important issue in an online classroom concerns the role of the course instructor. Should an instructor be only a 'provider of the content' or a 'facilitator of interaction'? Should an instructor be a 'sage on the stage' or a 'guide on the side'? Our experience suggests that the instructor's role is situated somewhere in between the two. This is also consistent with the first principle of true teaching that is, "nothing can be taught" and that facilitators and learners learn together as they work together with the course material and interact in online classroom; they just may have different roles but they are both seekers in their own ways.

Online learning and teaching is just as much about the process as the product. The facilitator and learners engage in a process of creating knowledge through their interactions with one another and with the content of the course. This content is again constructed in several ways - through the readings and learning notes assigned by the facilitator, and through the discussions and conversations that occur in the online classroom. Because the online environment allows learners and facilitator to go back and review this always-developing content in the online discussions area, the knowledge itself is always in the process of construction as new interpretations are made, and as new questions are posed by either the students or the instructor or both. This breaks down the dichotomy between process and product, between facilitator and learner, and allows for a more meaningful and collaborative learning experience.

RELATION BETWEEN FACILITATOR AND LEARNERS

Internet has been described as the great equalizer—essentially eliminating the boundaries that exist between cultures, genders, ages—and also eliminating power differences between facilitators and learners. It has been suggested that the discussions that occur in the online classroom are as free of socio-cultural bias as is possible. In order to achieve this state, however, faculty must be able to relinquish their power over the educational process and let the learners take on their process management role. Clearly, facilitators hold the extra edge in the process because they assign a grade for the course. However, in the area of process management, facilitators can and should play an equal role and leave behind the traditional power boundaries that exist between faculty and learners.

This revised role of the facilitator, however, does not eliminate the traditional role, which is to create learning opportunities that challenge learners and motivate them to participate fully in the process of creating knowledge. That is what our facilitators try to do through their comments on assigned readings, learning notes, and through participation in the Discussions.

In some sense our self-directed learners are the primary constructors of knowledge in the online discussions area, yet there is a need for course facilitators to step in and ask relevant questions and address the emerging issues in learners' responses. This helps learners see that facilitators are also active member of the online learning community, and their views and postings are just as much available for interpretation, challenge and/or criticism as theirs. That helps all learn and teach at the same time. This pedagogical approach is based on our ideal that "the first principle of true teaching is that nothing can be taught".

ONLINE PEDAGOGY

We recognize and deeply value the fact that teaching and learning are primarily about the experience that learners and facilitators create collaboratively. Only in a secondary way it is about the mode of delivery.

ONLINE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Good, learner-centered teaching is the most critical part of online teaching, and through this approach we hope to create an online learning community.

Facilitators take an active role in helping an online community to evolve. With our new learners we begin our online courses by asking them to post their personal introductions during the first couple of days of the class; the facilitator opens this 'conversation' thread by posting his or her introduction. This allows learners and facilitator to get comfortable with each other and makes them feel part of a group.

Online discussions lie at the heart of online learning communities. Learners and facilitator engage in co-construction of learning through exchange of ideas and perspectives, provide clarifications and challenges, and explore better ways to articulate thoughts and reflections. All of this is done in the spirit of learning with and from others.

For every instructional unit, our facilitators give learners a small number of (2 to 4) open-ended discussion questions that encourage reflection and critical thinking about the learning material and about its application to their world of practice. These questions act as starting points or somewhat-loose anchors to facilitate a more free-flowing conversation. They help develop an atmosphere of reflection and adventure in learning, keeping learners interested in the process of learning.

All discussion in online classes is asynchronous, that is, learners can log on to the class website at any time that is convenient for them, read what has already been posted and post their comments and responses. Depending on individual need, a phone conference or live chat may be occasionally scheduled with some learners.

As and when needed we also use web-based voice chat programmes such as Skype to communicate with our learners. This technology is also used effectively in place of tele-conferencing which is needed at some key points in a learner's programme such as thesis related discussion, oral thesis examination, etc. We also have an audio-library of many talks that summarize and interpret key texts of Sri Aurobindo. These audio CDs/MP3 are also used as additional learning material and sent to the learners as and when necessary.

ROLE OF FACILITATOR IN ONLINE LEARNING COMMUNITY

Designing a well-organized course syllabus, providing learners with a comprehensive list of reading resources, grading learners' assignments and tests are only a small part of the instructor's role in online education.

A major portion of facilitator's role in an online class is to create a supportive, encouraging, motivating, inspiring and safe space for learners to freely participate in discussions. This is done by:

- setting up class participation expectations as part of the course requirement (these expectations may be included in the syllabus as follows: each learner is expected to submit at least: i) one post per unit in response to the discussion questions posted by the facilitator, and ii) one post per unit in response to the responses submitted by other learners in the class;
- encouraging learners to post substantive and reflective comments instead of mere electronic nods;
- encouraging a dialogue between the learners;
- the facilitator positioning himself or herself as a fellow learner;
- paying attention to who is responding and who is not;
- ensuring the quality and relevance of discussion and at the same time allowing learners to be creative in their thinking and reflections;
- allowing a diversity of perspectives to emerge;
- helping learners see the value of their perspective;
- gently challenging the learners to look beyond their perspectives;
- and demonstrating inclusiveness and co-existence.

FACILITATOR AS A FELLOW-LEARNER

Learners often are not just learners but also teachers for one another. We encourage facilitators to consider themselves as another learner in the class and let learners be their fellow-teachers. This means that the traditional role of teacher is greatly transformed in online classes as they are now encouraged to silence their 'teacher voice' so that learners can take more ownership of the learning space.

As learners begin responding to the discussion questions, the facilitator participates as and when needed, shares his or her perspective, poses more questions based on learners' responses, responds to their questions, and sometimes may also pose counter-arguments in order to encourage deeper thinking on part of the learners. This interactive spirit of an online class demonstrates how meaningful knowledge can be constructed through and within these interactions. This tells learners that the

facilitator is also an active participant in the course, and reminds the learners that the facilitator may be out there somewhere in cyberspace, but is still accessible and fully engaged with activities going on in the class.

INDIVIDUALIZED MENTORING

The online mode allows and encourages individualized mentoring for each learner. The facilitator addresses the questions and points brought out by different learners in the form of individualized responses to the learners' posts concerning the assigned readings and/or discussion questions. At the same time the format of the online forum allows all learners in the class to benefit from these specific responses. This enriches, widens and deepens the learning experience for everyone in the class while making it possible for each one to receive individualized guidance.

ACADEMIC RIGOUR AND LEARNER PARTICIPATION

The real working of a learning community is only visible when members of a class start participating actively in discussions about the class topics. The learner participation is closely related to academic rigour in an online learning environment. The key to the learning process are the interactions among learners themselves, the interactions between facilitator and learners, and the collaboration in learning that results from these interactions.

Our experience has taught us that such a learner-centered learning community evolves more easily when learners are given a general framework for discussion, or some specific open-ended questions to respond to. We have also learned that it is important to create safe spaces where learners can explore issues, share their opinions, and feel confident that their views will be acknowledged and respected and their questions will be answered. This makes learners responsible for their own learning and also lets them share the responsibility of creating meaningful knowledge in the course.

These safe spaces, are however, best created when the facilitator establishes some structural guidelines, e.g. by setting some deadlines for completing each unit and certain assignments; by providing learners with some open-ended discussion questions; or by introducing a new unit with some brief introductory remarks or learning notes that invite learners to directly engage with the content. The discussion questions, if challenging, help encourage an atmosphere of reflection and adventure, keeping learners interested in the process of learning.

CONTENT ROBUSTNESS

Content robustness is concerned with the breadth and depth of the content included in an online course and the extent to which learners are required to interact with that content and with each other. Our online courses do aim to being robust courses and provide a lot of different learning situations in which learners can interact with the content. These learning opportunities include activities such as reflecting on particular themes explored in the week's reading, writing essays, conducting library research, introspective journaling, preparing annotated bibliography, preparing for test questions, etc.

Another aspect of our online courses that helps them become content-robust is that the course assignments generally require learners to apply course content and skills, and also require critical thinking on the part of learners.

COURSE DESIGN

All SACAR courses are organized in a number of blocks, and each block contains several 2-week or 3-week long units. The length of each unit and block may also vary depending on the preference of course facilitator. A detailed course schedule is included in the syllabus. Specific readings and written assignments assigned for each unit are listed there.

ASSIGNED READINGS

Learners are assigned a wide variety of readings for each learning unit in order to encourage them to become aware of a diversity of perspectives to the topics and themes being explored. This also helps them develop intellectual skills in engaging with profound and complex subject matter and widen and clarify their faculties of thought, reasoning, and understanding.

As per the course credit system used at SACAR, learners are expected to spend a minimum of 10 hours of study per week for each course. The key learning activities in each course are organized in a way so that half of this time is spent on reading and the other half is used for reflection, writing and discussion with facilitator.

Depending on the nature, content and the selected reading materials some courses may have more assigned reading per week, while the courses involving more complex reading material (for example, advanced courses in philosophy) may have lesser number of pages assigned for weekly reading. In almost all our courses learners are expected to read (to varying degrees) some of the original writings of Sri Aurobindo. Therefore, while determining the reading assignments for every unit we also pay attention to the learners' comprehension ability of the relatively more sophisticated English language used in these original works.

WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS

Given the online nature of our courses, typically there is sufficient writing involved in each learning unit (in the form of online discussions to be posted on the course website). However, additional specific written assignments (such as essays, project report, experiential analysis report, academic journal etc) are also included in some units. Details on their submission time are clearly indicated in the course design section at appropriate places.

ONLINE COURSE MATERIALS

In an online environment, learners work together to generate deeper levels of understanding and critical evaluation of the material under study. This interaction is the key to effective online learning. However, this interaction also includes learner's meaningful, focused and critical interaction with content. At SACAR we recognize that this is where the facilitator's responsibility to provide engaging content to learners comes to play an important role.

In most of our courses we generally use primary sources – writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. Books and articles written by other authors are also commonly used. While the learners are required to procure the main texts needed for the course, additional readings such as articles, selected book chapters are provided electronically to them either in the form of a CD or through the class website or as emailed attachments.

Optional readings are also suggested for every course, and during the duration of a course, facilitator may also provide additional reading recommendations.

TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION OF ORIGINAL WRITINGS

Given the specialized focus of all SACAR courses on Sri Aurobindo's thought, it is essential that our learners have an opportunity to deeply and critically engage with the original writings of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This is done by incorporating in each of our courses appropriate books of Sri Aurobindo and/or the Mother as the primary reading material. In many courses, compilations of their writings by other authors are also used. We encourage learners to carefully read the texts and examine them in order to deepen their understanding of the ideas under exploration before making a personal interpretation. The facilitators provide their input on learners' responses to the text and help broaden their thinking about and clarify their approach to interpreting a certain subject matter.

Through specific theme-based reflection questions and topical essay assignments facilitators foster the learner's ability to focus upon a single idea, and to work out the implications of that idea through learning how to develop theses, then how to test these theses through posing antitheses, and attempting to go beyond both positions through finding syntheses. This process helps the learner to make useful connections between subjects, ideas and concepts, which widen the learner's intellectual horizons.

CRITICAL AND CONTEMPLATIVE AWARENESS

Facilitators encourage learners to develop a personal engagement – intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, if possible – with the topic under study so that learners develop a secure basis from which to approach their studies with confidence and interest. This strong foundation enables the learner to more quickly spot problems with, or questions that need to be asked about, the subject matter or about their own perceptions, preconceptions, or ideas.

Through work dealing with the practical aspect of existence, the fact that the learner has a vital/emotional, physical, and spiritual existence is fully acknowledged. Their input in the form of online discussions and essay responses is treated with the seriousness and rigour that pure academic courses place upon the development of cognitively-based skills. The learner thus emerges from their period of study equipped with not only cognitive skills and insights, but also with psychological skills and insights necessary for dealing with the complexities, problems and opportunities of life.

EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

“The acquiring of various kinds of information is only one and not the chief of the means and necessities of education; its central aim is the building of the powers of the human mind and spirit, it is the formation, or, as I would prefer to view it, the evoking of knowledge and will and of the power to use knowledge, character, culture,—that at least if no more” (Sri Aurobindo, 1956/2004, pp. 9-10). Being guided by this ideal, the question of evaluating and assessing student performance and progress becomes a critical one for any institution of integral education.

How do we assess a learner’s growth in the powers of mind and spirit? How do we evaluate the development of mental faculties and skills resulting from the learning experiences in our courses? How do we measure the subtle transformation the learner may have experienced as a result of their deeper contemplation on some of the inspiring content they read in a certain text? How do we be fair to the individualized learning process and pace of each learner? These questions motivate us to carefully consider our evaluation and assessment policies and procedures. We have built-in several qualitative means of assessment throughout different phases of the course in order to continuously evaluate the learner’s progress.

ALIGNING ASSESSMENT WITH LEARNING GOALS

While preparing the detailed syllabi we pay close attention to aligning the learning objectives with the learning activities so that learners progress regularly towards the goals set by the course facilitator. Similarly, the specific learning activities are closely matched with the learning products that the students are required to complete and submit at various points in the course. This creates an effective feedback loop for the facilitators to evaluate student learning, and at the same time makes the entire learning experience an opportunity for learners to self-assess their progress.

Each learning product is assigned a specific percentage of the total grade. This assures that the learner completes all the assigned activities and submits all work required for the course.

NARRATIVE EVALUATIONS

As per SACAR’s educational philosophy and values, we do not provide marks or letter grades to assess learner performance. Instead we utilize a system of comprehensive narrative evaluations, which describe in detail learner performance, noting particular skills and strengths and indicating, when necessary, areas for improvement.

Our guiding philosophy of Integral Education is inconsistent with conventional system of examinations where the emphasis is on ‘testing’ how much the learner has memorized or retained the course content. We are rather guided by the ideal that the true meaning of education is ‘to educe’, or ‘to bring forth’ the knowledge that lies hidden in the learner himself or herself. Our role as educators is to facilitate the process of bringing forth this latent knowledge in the learners. Therefore, the system of evaluation that makes most sense for our institution is also one that helps us

qualitatively assess the progress made by the learner in this self-directed and facilitator-assisted process of learning.

A critical aspect of our assessment system is that after completing each course learners write a self-evaluation of their learning. This not only gives them a real opportunity to be reflective of their academic progress, but it also allows them to feel more accountable for their learning.

GRADE EQUIVALENT DEFINITIONS

While SACAR is committed to the pedagogical importance of employing narrative evaluation as its method for the appraisal of student academic work and progress, we provide here the following characterizations for the purposes of providing a basic explanation of how we may assign appropriate letter grade equivalent to different levels of student performance. This will help translate our system of narrative evaluation of student progress in more traditional grading terms. The designation of an:

“A” grade equivalent is based upon the meeting and exceeding of all basic course requirements and guidelines. Such work includes well-articulated, consistently thorough and thoughtful contributions in relation to course learning activities and assignments. Original and creative engagement of course topics and subject matter is demonstrated. Mastery and grasp of course concepts is likewise demonstrated in thought-provoking manner through appropriate and well-crafted written and verbal communications.

“B” grade equivalent is based upon the meeting of all basic course requirements and guidelines. Such work includes well-articulated and thoughtful contributions to many course issues and in relation to most learning activities. Course concepts are clearly understood and employed in thorough and in some instances creative manner, although some opportunities to fully develop and explore available opportunities remain missed.

“C” grade equivalent is based upon the acceptable meeting of all course requirements and guidelines but little or nothing more. A basic understanding of key course concepts is demonstrated although frequently with room remaining for additional elaboration or better-crafted engagement and/or application.

No Credit is based upon not meeting or fulfilling minimum course requirements. Contributions are either incomplete or prepared with undue haste. Understanding of course concepts remains uncertain due to grossly inaccurate, superficial or vague representations and/or poorly crafted or ill-considered contributions to course learning activities.

FORMATIVE AND CONTINUOUS EVALUATION

While the narrative evaluations help us do summative evaluation of student learning, we firmly believe that the students benefit most when they are provided ongoing and formative assessment of their performance. At SACAR continuous and formative assessment of student performance is done in various ways including:

- Regular and meaningful interactions between the facilitator and learner in the form of online exchanges,
- Providing constructive feedback to the learners on their responses to discussion questions and course assignments,
- As and when needed, recommending learners to re-write and re-submit some of their written assignments and papers,
- Encouraging learners to think deeper and explore new interpretations and perspectives on the content being discussed.

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH PHASE IN MPhil AND PHD PROGRAMMES

M.Phil

1. Every three months both student and guide prepare brief progress reports documenting the research work that has been completed and that is presently in progress.
2. After the research proposal is approved, the guide prepares and submits a narrative evaluation.
3. After the student completes the draft of the dissertation, a copy is sent to an external examiner for review. The examiner is nominated by IGNOU from a list of experts sent by SACAR.
4. After the evaluation of the dissertation by the external examiner, an oral viva examination is conducted by a panel comprising the external examiner, the student's guide from SACAR and SACAR Director.
5. After the successful completion of the viva examination, the guide helps the student to make any revisions in the dissertation as per the suggestions of the panel.
6. After the student submits the final dissertation, the guide completes and submits the final evaluation of student's performance in the M.Phil programme to SOITS/IGNOU for the award of M.Phil degree to the student.

Ph.D.

1. Every six months both student and guide prepare brief progress reports documenting the research work that has been completed and that is presently in progress.
2. After the doctoral thesis proposal is approved, the guide prepares and submits a narrative evaluation.
3. After the student completes the draft of the Ph.D. thesis, required number of copies are sent to the SOITS/IGNOU .
4. The thesis is examined by three external experts nominated by IGNOU from a list of experts sent by SACAR.
5. After the evaluation of the thesis by expert examiners, an oral viva examination is conducted by a panel comprising one of the external examiners, student's guide and SACAR Director and a representative of IGNOU. As per the SACAR-IGNOU MOU this viva is arranged by IGNOU in discussion with SACAR.

6. At the successful completion of the viva examination, the guide completes and submits the required evaluation of student's presentation of his or her research.
7. After the student submits the final thesis, the guide completes and submits the final evaluation of student's performance in the Ph.D. programme to SOITS/IGNOU for the PhD award to the student.

ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The two academic semesters generally begin as per the following schedule:

Semester I

First day of the Semester: August 15

Last day of the Semester: December 15

Semester II

First day of the Semester: February 21

Last day of the Semester: June 21

In a certain year, the first and last days of the semesters may vary slightly because of several reasons. These changes are notified to the learners in advance.

ELIGIBILITY FOR IGNOU-SACAR PROGRAMMES

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME: INTRODUCTION TO SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

1. Completed secondary education with a satisfactory grade/percentage.
2. Adequate competency in English language. After an initial review of application, an English competency entrance examination may be required for some applicants.
3. Completed application form, submission of necessary documents and references.

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES

1. A Bachelor's degree or higher education certificate, in any subject.
2. Adequate competency in English language. After an initial review of application, an English competency entrance examination may be required for some applicants.
3. Completed application form, submission of necessary documents and references.

M.A. IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

A candidate must comply with ALL of the following pre-requisites.

1. A Bachelor's degree or higher education certificate, in any subject.
2. Adequate competency in English language. After an initial review of application, an English competency entrance examination may be required for some applicants.

3. *EITHER* successful completion of the SACAR Certificate Programme in Introduction to Sri Aurobindo Studies, *OR*, passing of a SACAR entrance test that assesses the candidate's ability to satisfactorily comprehend the complex ideas presented in the works of Sri Aurobindo.
4. Submission of a 3-4-page essay on any topic of applicant's choice. The topic may concern any recent social, cultural, political, economic event or issue pertinent to India or rest of the world. Alternatively, applicants may choose a topic that is of spiritual or philosophical significance. Since there are often multiple sides to the ongoing debate and discussion surrounding an issue or a topic, applicants are encouraged to incorporate in your essay different viewpoints in order to present a wider and more inclusive picture.
5. Completed application form, submission of necessary documents and references.

M.PHIL IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

A candidate must comply with ALL of the following pre-requisites.

1. A Master's degree or equivalent in any subject.
2. At the time of the application for admission, the candidate is required to submit an Initial Research Idea Paper (1,000 words) mentioning the proposed research area, the importance or relevance of the proposed research, how the proposed research will address any gaps in the knowledge created by pre-existing research, general approach that will be adopted for the research, the broad method which will be employed – qualitative or quantitative method, philosophical, historical or any other method, data gathering method/s to be used, and the likely direction of conclusions and/or recommendations that might emerge from the research findings.
3. The candidate will also be required to submit a synopsis or summary (maximum 200 words) of the above mentioned Research Idea Paper.
4. Satisfactory passing of the entrance exam administered by SACAR.
5. After an initial review of application, an English competency entrance examination may be required for some applicants.
6. Completed SACAR application form, submission of necessary documents and references.
7. As part of the selection process, a phone/webcam/in-person interview may also be conducted in case of some applicants.

PHD IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

A candidate must comply with ALL of the following pre-requisites.

Category 'A' (without course work)

1. Masters/ MPhil Sri Aurobindo Studies.
2. 5 or more years of relevant teaching /practical /industry /professional /self learning experience in the field, appropriateness of which will be determined by SACAR admission committee. Candidates need to provide sufficient documentation in support of the above.

3. At the time of the application for admission, the candidate is required to submit an Initial Research Idea Paper (4,500 words) mentioning the proposed research area, the importance or relevance of the proposed research, how the proposed research will address any gaps in the knowledge created by pre-existing research, general approach that will be adopted for the research, the broad method which will be employed – qualitative or quantitative method, philosophical, historical or any other method, data gathering method/s to be used, and the likely direction of conclusions and/or recommendations that might emerge from the research findings.
4. The candidate will also be required to submit a synopsis or summary (maximum 200 words) of the above mentioned Initial Research Idea Paper.
5. Satisfactory passing of the entrance exam administered by SACAR.
6. After an initial review of application, an English competency entrance examination may be required for some applicants.
7. Completed SACAR application form, submission of necessary documents and references.
8. As part of the selection process, a phone/webcam/in-person interview may also be conducted in case of some applicants.

Category 'B' (with course work)

1. A Master's degree or equivalent in any subject.
2. At the time of the application for admission, the candidate is required to submit an Initial Research Idea Paper (1,000 words) mentioning the proposed research area, the importance or relevance of the proposed research, how the proposed research will address any gaps in the knowledge created by pre-existing research, general approach that will be adopted for the research, the broad method which will be employed – qualitative or quantitative method, philosophical, historical or any other method, data gathering method/s to be used, and the likely direction of conclusions and/or recommendations that might emerge from the research findings.
3. The candidate will also be required to submit a synopsis or summary (maximum 200 words) of the above mentioned Research Idea Paper.
4. Satisfactory passing of the entrance exam administered by SACAR.
5. After an initial review of application, an English competency entrance examination may be required for some applicants.
6. Completed SACAR application form, submission of necessary documents and references.
7. As part of the selection process, a phone/webcam/in-person interview may also be conducted in case of some applicants.

RESEARCH SUPERVISORS

1. Dr. V. Ananda Reddy, Sri Aurobindo' Philosophy and Metaphysics, Sri Aurobindo's Literature, Vision of Future, Sri Aurobindo's Ideal of Human Unity
2. Dr. Larry Seidlitz, Integral Yoga Psychology, Spiritual Poetry and Poetics, Research in Philosophy & Transpersonal Inquiry, Science of Living.

3. Dr. Beloo Mehra, Indian Culture, Integral education, Social thought of Sri Aurobindo, Qualitative Research Methods for Education, Women's Studies.
4. Dr. Suhas K. Mehra, Management, Quantitative Analysis, Engineering, Data Mining
5. Dr. Chhalamayi Reddy, Integral Education, Indian Culture, Sri Aurobindo's Thought, Sri Aurobindo's Literature.
6. Dr. Bhagavandas Lahoti, Sri Aurobindo's Social-Political Thought, Western/ Indian, Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy.
7. Dr. Goutam Ghosal, Sri Aurobindo's Literature.
8. Dr. Dilip Kumar Roy, Western/ Indian Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy
9. Dr. Kalpana Bidwaikar, Sri Aurobindo's Literature, English Literature
10. Dr. Murali Sivaramakrishnan, Sri Aurobindo's Literature, English Literature
11. Dr. Alok Pandey, Western/ Indian Psychology, Integral Psychology, Sri Aurobindo's
12. Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo's Literature
13. Dr. K. Srinivas, Western/ Indian Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy, Sri Aurobindo's Social- Political Thought
14. Dr. R.M. Matthijs, Western/ Indian Psychology, Integral Psychology, Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy
15. Prof. Vladimir Yatsenko, Sanskrit, Indian Scriptures, Sri Aurobindo's Literature, Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy.
16. Dr. K. V. V. Murthy, Engineering, Artificial Intelligence.

DURATION FOR ALL PROGRAMMES

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME: INTRODUCTION TO SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

- Six (6) months
- Maximum time allowed to complete the programme: One (1) year

POST-GRADUATE DIPLOMA PROGRAMMES

- One (1) year for full-time students
- Two (2) years for part-time students
- Maximum time allowed to complete the programme: Three (3) years

M.A. IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

- Two (2) years for full-time students
- Four (4) years for part-time students
- Maximum time allowed to complete the programme: Five (5) years

M.PHIL IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

- 18 months for full-time students
- 3 (three) years for part-time students
- Maximum time allowed to complete the programme: Three (3) years

PHD IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

Phase I: Coursework

- 1 (one) year (for full-time students)
- 2 (two) years (for part-time students)

Phase II: Directed Research

- 2 (two) years (for full-time students)
- 4 (four) years (for part-time students)

Maximum time allowed to complete PhD: 7 (seven) years

PERSONAL CONTACT PROGRAMME AT SACAR CAMPUS

While the bulk of the learning and teaching for all our programmes is conducted online, learners are asked to come to SACAR, Pondicherry for a 4-7 day personal contact programme (PCP) held at the beginning of their study programmes. (Certificate students come for a 4-day PCP whereas students for all other programmes attend a 7-day PCP). During this time the learners will participate in various learning activities which serve as an orientation for their programme. They are also given demonstration and hands-on training for the online learning system used for the programme. Additionally, learners benefit immensely by experiencing and absorbing the spiritual atmosphere of Sri Aurobindo Ashram and Auroville. Attending the PCP is mandatory. For foreign students appropriate adjustments are made on a case-by-case basis.

MA and M.Phil students also make another campus visit near the completion of their programmes for their final project/thesis presentation. These visits are scheduled individually with the students depending on their progress in the programme.

For PhD students, in addition to the 7-day Personal Contact Programme at the beginning of the coursework (Phase I), two more campus visits are required in Phase II (Directed Research) as per their progress in the programme. These visits to SACAR campus in the Phase II allow students to have in-depth discussions with their guide and gain clarity on their research goals.

1. 5-8-day visit at the completion of the coursework during which student completes qualifier examination and makes a seminar presentation.
2. 7-10-day visit for the final Viva Examination (“defence of doctoral thesis”) scheduled near the end of thesis completion.

ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES AND COURSES

CERTIFICATE PROGRAMME: INTRODUCTION TO SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

The six-month Certificate Programme provides an introduction to Sri Aurobindo’s life and major writings in the areas of Indian culture, philosophy, social and political thought, yoga, and psychology – utilizing selected key excerpts from his writings in each of these areas. The five sections in the programme are:

- a) Sri Aurobindo: His Life, Work and Vision
- b) The Indian Tradition
- c) Integral Philosophy
- d) Social and Political Thought
- e) Yoga Psychology

Different aspects are covered in individual sections which are presented sequentially to the learners. Learners earn 4 (four) credits for successfully completing each 'core content' block, while 2 (two) credit each is awarded for the introductory block. The learner also receives 2 (two) credit for attending the 4-day Personal Contact Programme at SACAR organized at the beginning of the programme.

BLOCK	DURATION	SECTION / BLOCK	SACAR Code	IGNOU Code	CREDITS =20
	Before the start of the semester	4-day Personal Contact Programme at SACAR	PCPCP	BAUE-001	2
I	Weeks 1-3	Sri Aurobindo: His Life, Work and Vision	SLS	BAU-002	2
II	Weeks 4-8	The Indian Tradition	IT	BAU-003	4
III	Weeks 9-13	Integral Philosophy	IP	BAUE-004	4
IV	Weeks 14-18	Social and Political Thought	SPT	BAU-005	4
V	Weeks 19-23	Yoga Psychology	YP	BAU-006	4
	Week 24	Student Self-Evaluations			

PG DIPLOMA IN STUDIES IN INDIAN CULTURE

This PG Diploma course may be of special interest to anyone interested in a deeper study of Indian culture and Indian-ness.

- 7-Day Personal Contact Period at SACAR (4)
- Sri Aurobindo and his Essential Thought (4)
- Foundations of Indian Culture (8)
- Contemporary Views on India and Indian Personality (6)
- Spirituality and Creative Expression in India (8)
- Contemporary Issues in Indian Society (6)
- Final Interview (2)

Programme design may be revised from time to time; enrolled students will be notified of the changes at the appropriate time.

PG DIPLOMA IN INTEGRAL EDUCATION

This PG Diploma course may be of significance to anyone interested in the education of children and adults. Current and future teachers at school and college level, educational administrators and policy-makers may especially benefit from this.

7-Day Personal Contact Period at SACAR (4)
Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought (4)
Principles of Integral Education (8)
Education in Ancient India (4)
Educational Thought in India (8) *OR* Holistic Education in the West (8)
Practical Approaches to Integral Education (8)
Final Interview (2)

Programme design may be revised from time to time; enrolled students will be notified of the changes at the appropriate time.

M.A. IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

This 74-credit programme is designed to give the learner a broad and deep understanding of Sri Aurobindo's thought, vision and spiritual practice. Plenty of course choices are also available for learners to structure their programme according to their areas of interest.

Compulsory Courses (credits are in parenthesis)

7-Day Personal Contact Period at SACAR (4)
Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought (4)
Academic Writing (4)
Foundations of Indian Culture (8)
The Philosophy of Evolution of Consciousness (8)
The Psychology of Yoga (8)
Final Presentation/Interview at SACAR (6)

Electives (choose 4)

Principles of Integral Education (8)
Science of Living (8)
Secret of Indian Scriptures (8)
A Psychological Approach to the Bhagavad Gita (8)
The Rhythm of Social Development (8)
Emergence of the Inner Being (8)
Towards Human Unity (8)
Poetry of the Future (8)
The Vision of the Future (8)

M.PHIL IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

Course Work

During this intensive programme learners pursue a series of courses which help them build a strong foundation in the various aspects of the integral thought and vision of Sri Aurobindo. Students also complete an appropriate research methods course, and submit a research-based thesis as part of the programme requirements. Towards the end of the programme, the student makes a formal presentation of his or her completed thesis at SACAR. Guidance is provided for this presentation. For foreign applicants, we generally suggest appropriate alternatives for this final presentation.

Compulsory Courses (credits are in parenthesis)

7-Day Personal Contact Period at SACAR (4)

Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought (4)

Research Methods in Philosophy and Transpersonal Inquiry (6) *OR* Qualitative Research Methods for Education (6)

Presentation & Submission of thesis at SACAR (6)

Elective select 4 (all these courses may not be offered every semester)

Foundations of Indian Culture (8)

Principles of Integral Education (8)

The Philosophy of Evolution of Consciousness (8)

The Vision of the Future (8)

The Rhythm of Social Development (8)

Towards Human Unity (8)

The Psychology of Yoga (8)

Poetry of the Future (8)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Independent Study options are also available for M.Phil students. This allows students to somewhat individualise the coursework according to their interests. The student supervisor along with other faculty at SACAR will make the final approval of any such independent study options. Independent Study courses may be taken for 2 to 8 credits.

In selected cases, the course titled Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought may be waived for some students. Such decision will be made by SACAR Director. In these cases, the student may choose an independent study course for equivalent number of credits.

Based on the review of student's writing ability, Academic Writing course may also be required for some M.Phil students. Such decision will be made by SACAR Director.

METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME (DURATION: SIX TO TWELVE MONTHS)

Credits: 6

Important: Before proceeding to this stage, the student must have successfully completed the required Research Methods course and also the required coursework in the field of Sri Aurobindo Studies offered by SACAR.

Preparation, Submission and Approval of Research Proposal

a) Research Proposal

The student works independently with his or her guide who provides necessary guidance for beginning work on the research proposal. As part of these discussions the students are asked to present their ideas for their M.Phil research project. The student works closely with the guide and completes a 4000-word proposal (approximately 15-20-double-space pages). This should also include a literature review that is relevant to the research topic. Necessary guidelines for proposal preparation and submission are provided by the SACAR guide.

b) Proposal Approval

The guide reviews the proposal and offers guidance and suggestions to the student. If no re-write is necessary, the guide writes a narrative evaluation thereby approving the proposal. In cases where the student is asked to make major revisions and re-submit the proposal, the guide gives clear deadlines to the learner so that the final approval can be granted.

Research and Dissertation Development

The student begins the research into approved topic and commences the development and writing of a dissertation in consultation with the guide. The student submits a completed draft of the dissertation to the committee/ guide for review in the following semester.

Submission of Completed Draft

The dissertation draft should be somewhere between 25,000-50,000 words (approximately 70-100 double-space pages) and should represent a significant contribution to the field, and not merely restate the writings and ideas of other authors. The M.Phil dissertation must be an original work demonstrating the candidate's ability to do independent research in the selected area/topic covering vast existing primary sources and other secondary literature relevant to the field of specialisation. The completed dissertation must be "defended" during an oral viva examination to be held during the last semester of the programme. Additional guidance for dissertation preparation and formatting is provided by the guide.

Viva, Revision of Dissertation and Final Submission

a) Viva Examination

At an appropriate time to be determined by the student and programme guide, the student appears for an oral examination (viva) as part of the dissertation review process. During this examination the student briefly presents his or her research and addresses the questions posed by the Expert Committee formed for the purpose by the consent of SOITS/IGNOU. The committee may also offer suggestions for revisions to the dissertation. The viva is conducted on SACAR campus preferably.

Revision and Submission of Final Dissertation

After the viva the student makes revisions to the dissertation based on the Expert committee's recommendations. Final formatting of the manuscript is also completed during this time. The revised dissertation, after the guide has reviewed and approved the final copy, is submitted to SOITS/IGNOU with a recommendation for the award of M.Phil degree to the student.

PH.D. IN SRI AUROBINDO STUDIES

Our 78-credit doctoral programme is designed to assist the learner in developing a broad and deep understanding of Sri Aurobindo's philosophical thought and spiritual practice. Students first complete a series of structured coursework as Phase I of the programme. These courses help them build a strong foundation in the various aspects of the integral thought and vision of Sri Aurobindo. Phase II of programme comprises of several distinct steps that the learner is required to proceed through in order to fulfill the doctoral research requirements. Each Ph.D. student is assigned a guide who is selected based on the student's area of study.

For admission purposes, an applicant's sufficient background and prior preparation in the thought and works of Sri Aurobindo is demonstrated through a completed MA or M.Phil in Sri Aurobindo Studies. Students who *have* either an MA or M. Phil in Sri Aurobindo Studies will *not* be required to complete the coursework phase of the programme. However, on the discretion of SACAR admission team, they may also be asked to demonstrate their level of mastery in the field of Sri Aurobindo Studies through an examination. After successful completion of this examination, such students may directly proceed to the Phase II.

PHASE I: COURSEWORK

Compulsory Courses (credits are in parenthesis)

7-Day Personal Contact Period at SACAR (4)

Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought (4)

Research Methods in Philosophy and Transpersonal Inquiry (6) *OR* Qualitative Research Methods for Education (6)

Elective select 4 (all these courses may not be offered every semester)

Foundations of Indian Culture (8)

Principles of Integral Education (8)

The Philosophy of Evolution of Consciousness (8)

The Vision of the Future (8)
The Rhythm of Social Development (8)
Towards Human Unity (8)
The Psychology of Yoga (8)
Poetry of the Future (8)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Independent Study options are also available for Ph.D students. This allows students to somewhat individualize the coursework according to their interests. The student supervisor along with other faculty at SACAR will make the final approval of any such independent study options. Independent Study courses may be taken for 2 to 8 credits.

In selected cases, the course titled Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought may be waived for some students. Such decision will be made by SACAR Director. In these cases, the student may choose an independent study course for equivalent number of credits.

Based on the review of student's writing ability, Academic Writing course may also be required for some Ph.D students. Such decision will be made by SACAR Director.

METHODOLOGY FOR RESEARCH PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME

(DURATION: TWO YEARS, MAXIMUM LIMIT: FOUR YEARS)

Credits: 24

Important: Before proceeding to this stage, the student must have successfully completed the required Research Methods course and also the required coursework in the field of Sri Aurobindo Studies offered by SACAR.

SEMESTER I (6 credits)

Qualifying Examination, Seminar Presentation, Proposal Planning - *To be completed in first 8-10 weeks of the semester*

a) Complete a written qualifying examination

The purpose of qualifying examination, designed by the student's PhD guide in discussion with other SACAR faculty, is to assess the learner's comprehension of the fundamentals of Sri Aurobindo's thought in selected areas of student interest. As part of this written examination learners are asked to submit essays or critical responses to a small set of questions covering several areas divided into two broad categories: a) different aspects of Sri Aurobindo's thought and work; b) research methodology that is appropriate for learner's area of research interest. In some cases this examination may also be conducted via email.

b) Seminar presentation

The student makes an oral presentation of a seminar-style paper on a topic chosen from the completed coursework. In order to prepare for this presentation, the student may arrange prior discussion with his or her PhD guide.

The written qualifying examination and paper presentation help SACAR faculty assess the student's preparedness for the next step, namely, preparation of thesis proposal.

c) Begin planning of the research/thesis proposal

The student works independently with his or her guide who provides necessary guidance for beginning work on the thesis proposal. As part of these discussions the students are asked to present their ideas for their doctoral research project.

d) Doctoral Committee

The student and the guide also discuss matters concerning the formation of a doctoral committee of three to five members (including SACAR Director, SACAR Guide, IGNOU/SOITS representative, Subject Expert from outside SACAR and any other person if deemed necessary).

Preparation, Submission and Approval of Thesis Proposal

c) Thesis Proposal

During this phase, the student works closely with the guide and completes a 6000-8000-word (approximately 20-30 double-spaced pages) thesis proposal. This should also include a literature review that is relevant to the research topic. Necessary guidelines for proposal preparation and submission are provided by the SACAR guide.

d) Proposal Approval

The committee led by the guide reviews the proposal and offers guidance and suggestions to the student. If no re-write is necessary, the guide in consultation with rest of the doctoral committee writes a narrative evaluation of the proposal thereby approving the thesis proposal. In cases where the student is asked to make major revisions and re-submit the proposal, the guide gives clear deadlines to the learner so that the final approval can be granted by the middle of next semester.

SEMESTER II (6 credits)

Research and Thesis Development

During this phase, the student begins the research into approved topic and commences the development and writing of a doctoral level thesis in consultation with the guide. The student submits a completed draft of the thesis to the committee for review in the following semester.

SEMESTER III (6 credits)

Submission of Completed Draft

The thesis draft should be somewhere between 75,000-125,000 words (approximately 200-400 double-spaced pages) and should represent a significant contribution to the field, and not merely restate the writings and ideas of other authors. The doctoral thesis must be an original work demonstrating the candidate's ability to do independent research in the selected area/topic covering vast existing primary sources and other secondary literature relevant to the field of specialisation. The completed thesis must be "defended" during an oral viva examination to be held during the last semester of the programme. Additional guidance for thesis preparation and formatting is provided by the guide.

SEMESTER IV (6 credits)

Viva, Revision of Thesis and Final Submission

a) Viva Examination

At an appropriate time to be determined by the programme guide and the student, in consultation with rest of the doctoral committee, the student appears for an oral examination (viva) as part of the thesis review process. During this examination the student briefly presents his or her research and addresses the questions posed by the Expert Committee, which may also include members from the doctoral committee. The Expert Committee may also offer suggestions for revisions to the thesis. The viva is conducted on SACAR campus preferably.

Revision and Submission of Final Thesis

After the viva the student makes revisions to the thesis based on the Expert committee's recommendations. The revised thesis, after the guide has reviewed and approved the final copy, is submitted to IGNOU through SOITS for the award of Doctoral Degree to the student.

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Sri Aurobindo and his Essential Thought

This course introduces the learner to some of the key details of the outer life and personality of Sri Aurobindo. Learners also learn about his spiritual collaborator, the Mother, and gain a brief overview of their vision and work. Through the selected readings learners are exposed to the multiple facets of Sri Aurobindo as a political revolutionary, nationalist and globalist, philosopher, social thinker, psychologist, yogi and a poet. They also write a short paper on any one particular facet of Sri Aurobindo and his work in that area.

Foundations of Indian Culture

This course will provide a broad overview of spiritual foundations of Indian culture from its ancient times to contemporary scenario. The learners will also have an opportunity to engage in cross-cultural study and analysis. In addition to the main

text, Sri Aurobindo's *Foundations of Indian Culture*, the course material also includes several articles and selections from other relevant books.

The Philosophy of Evolution of Consciousness

India has been a perennial source of spiritual philosophy wherein the experiences of the Reality, the World and Man have been analysed in a systematic manner. The different views, be they epistemological or dialectical, or cosmological, have had their own deep impact on the ideals and goals of an individual's life upon earth.

The present course, while taking a cursory interest in the evolution of spiritual thought in Indian Philosophy, focuses upon Sri Aurobindo's integral world-view and his integral Advaitism. What is of equal importance is his vision of individual and cosmic evolution and his faith in the higher destiny of man culminating in the descent of a supramental race. His views are at the same time essentially modern and synthetic in nature giving solutions to the present predicament of man.

Principles of Integral Education

This course covers the basics of Integral Education as developed by Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. This educational philosophy and approach aims to develop the whole person, including the spiritual part, by bringing out what is latent in the being and seeking to emerge. Thus, it is a learner-centered approach, grounded in the individual student's unique personality, capacities, and style and rhythm of progress. The focus of this course is on the nature and training of the spiritual, psychic, mental, vital, and physical parts of the being. Towards the latter part of the course, the student will also learn briefly about the educational philosophies of some other Indian and contemporary Western thinkers more for developing a broader understanding and appreciation of holistic approaches to education as emerging from within Indian thought.

Science of Living

This course provides in great detail an analysis of the main parts and planes of the human being as a preliminary step towards knowing oneself, which, in fact, forms the first part of the science of living. The second part – to control oneself – is given as a fourfold discipline of the different parts of the being leading to an integral self-perfection.

Secret of Indian Scriptures

This course is dedicated to the studies of Sri Aurobindo's writings on the Vedas and Upanishads, particularly *Secret of the Veda*, *The Upanishads*, and *Hymns to the Mystic Fire*. It is based on a selection of chapters from these major works, as well as from letters written by Sri Aurobindo and talks of the Mother to their disciples.

The course will introduce the basic elements and imagery of spiritual symbolism of the old psycho-physical tradition of the Vedas and the Upanishads in the light of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. It will examine their views on the planes and parts of the being, and the symbolism of the Vedic Sacrifice, Angirasa Rishis and the Vedic Gods Agni, Vayu, Indra, Soma, Usha, Brihaspati, and all the Adityas: Mitra, Varuna,

Aryaman, Bhaga, Daksha, Amsha, Surya etc., as well as the anti-divine forces Dasyus, Vritra, Vala, Panis, etc., and the transition from the Vedic to Upanishadic psychological symbolism. The course will proceed through readings and discussions of the material, a research paper, and two essay tests on the primary concepts covered.

A Psychological Approach to the Bhagavad Gita

Bhagavat Gita has been unique in its capacity to mirror in all ages the spirit and need of the age thus guiding the individual aspirants and the society as such in its march towards higher levels of spirituality. The modern age has a pointed need to approach spirituality from a psychological angle and hence a study of the Gita from this angle would be not only relevant but it is the need of the hour. This study would be based primarily on Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* for it is a perfect blend of Gita's integral philosophy and its yogic-psychological approach. The Gita's study of the different levels of human consciousness, human nature and the practical solution it offers to face the battle of life are inimical and are of supreme importance to day to day life.

The Rhythm of Social Development

This course provides students with an introductory knowledge of Sri Aurobindo's theory of social development in the context of other theories, with a view towards understanding their application in today's world. Learners will examine the theory in terms of self-understanding and how his concepts may be applied in the contemporary world.

Emergence of the Inner Being

For all practical purposes the psychic being is the soul in each person which goes from birth to birth gaining different experiences. Normally it is not felt because it is covered by its instruments the mind and the vital. But contemplative, inward looking and introspective exercises could help in the uncovering of the psychic being. Once it is awake it could take hold control of the rest of the being and influence the instruments so that all may become the expression of the inner soul. This course deals with the inner awakening on the psychological level giving an experiential and inward-look orientation to the syllabus.

The Psychology of Yoga

The course will cover basic principles and important elements from each of four main branches of the Integral Yoga: the Yoga of Divine Works, the Yoga of Integral Knowledge, the Yoga of Divine Love, and the Yoga of Self-Perfection. In addition, the course will examine a selection of letters and conversations about yogic attitudes towards life, oneself, other people, work, difficulties, and spiritual practice.

Towards Human Unity

This course examines Sri Aurobindo's theory of the evolution of political groupings of mankind that are leading towards the unification of the human peoples. It examines the relation of the individual and group in the historical development of

societies, the problems of liberty and uniformity, the possibilities and problems of a world-government, and the necessity and possibilities of a free grouping of mankind. In considering recent political events and developments, it will examine the views of other social and political commentators and activists in international peace.

Poetry of the Future

This course introduces the learner to the basic principles of prosody, Sri Aurobindo's theory of the future poetry, and his correspondence relating to his own poetry and that of others. It focuses on the nature of spiritual poetry that is inspired by higher levels of consciousness, and the various characteristics and signs of inspired poetry. It will also examine a selection of his and others' poetry in light of these basic principles and theory.

The Vision of the Future

Sri Aurobindo is a bridge between the Vedantic ideals of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* and the future evolutionary promise of a Supramental race. Hence his vision of the future comprehends the evolution the individual who would fulfil himself in an integrally transformed being; the evolution of the society culminating in a new Spiritual age; the evolution of the nations ending in a world unity based on the religion of humanity; the evolution of the human species concluding in a new race called the Supramental race.

This unique vision as seen by Sri Aurobindo has no parallels in human history. He has not only envisioned it but has poured all his spiritual force into the realisation of it. This course would guide the student in this adventure of human consciousness which promises to travel from the human to the divine.

Contemporary Views on India and Indian Personality

What does India of twenty-first century look like? How does the present India connect to her past, and what are her aspirations for the future? Is there something distinct about Indian personality, and what is unique about Indian culture that shapes such distinct personality? What is understood by "being Indian", what is Indian-ness, what is the group-soul of India, and what is India's *dharmā*? These are some of the questions that will be explored in this course. A broad selection of readings from a variety of contemporary authors will be provided to allow students to investigate these questions from multiple perspectives. Learners will also be asked to interpret some of these contemporary views in the light of what they read in Sri Aurobindo's *Foundations of Indian Culture* and other writings on India. They will be required to present critical summaries of these readings and incorporate their personal observations and reflections in their written assignments.

Contemporary Issues in Indian Society

This course will allow the student to broadly investigate a sampling of issues concerning the present socio-cultural reality of India. We will focus on four main topics - caste and class, inter-religious harmony, gender and womanhood, and consumerist and commercial mindset. While a number of contemporary texts by

different authors will be used as the reading material for this course, a distinct feature of this course is that these issues will also be examined in the light of Sri Aurobindo's social, political and cultural writings.

Spirituality and Creative Expression in India

This course will help the learner to develop a spirituality-informed critical perspective to examine and appreciate the uniqueness of Indian art, architecture and literature. According to Sri Aurobindo, spirituality is the master-key of Indian culture because the Indian spirit saw since the beginning of its cultural development that the material, vital, and mental aspects of life do not get their full meaning until they are rightly related to the spiritual reality. This course will examine Indian culture in light of its spiritual basis in such areas as art, architecture, and literature.

Educational Thought in India

This course introduces the student to educational philosophies of several important Indian thinkers - Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, J. Krishnamurti and others. Students will also be asked to follow a comparative approach to learning which will help them develop a broader understanding and appreciation of holistic and integral approaches to education as emerging from within the Indian thought.

Education in Ancient India

Though not much of it can be applied in the present scenario, it is important to study the ideals of education in ancient India for they serve as a window to the cultural roots of India. Educational institutions always mirror the times and thus we can get by this study a good understanding of India's ancient civilisation. Its educational centres preserved and propagated the ancient Indian ideal of life on its moral, mental, aesthetic and spiritual levels when the modern methods of disseminating ideas through printing and publication were not available.

The basic idea of education that was prevalent in the ancient times was that all education is never ending and that it is essentially a mode of self-development, progress, prosperity and self-realisation. It has been in its peculiar manner an integral approach to development of personality: a full-fledged training of duties and *dharma* of each individual in society, an inculcation of social duties, and upholding the national culture. In brief education was aimed at life fulfillment and self-realisation. This course will be a review of the ideals of ancient Indian civilisation as reflected in its system of education.

Holistic Education in the West

This course is designed to provide an overview of the philosophies, theories and approaches that are frequently understood as guiding the holistic education movement in the West (focus being on the United States) and are reflected in the pedagogy and practice of holistic education. The student will be asked to explore and understand at a personal and professional level the theories of holistic learning as well as the social and psychological benefits of holistic education. Another part of the course will require the student to do a comparative study into one Indian and one Western thinker's approach to Integral or Holistic Education.

Practical Approaches to Integral Education

The course content is divided into two components. For the first part, the focus will be on selected practical approaches to implementing the ideals of Integral Education in real-world classrooms. Published material based on the experiences of teachers and schools currently employing these approaches will be researched, reviewed and discussed. Challenges in the application of Integral approaches to education will also be brought forth.

The work done in this first component will prepare the student for the observations and interviews to be conducted at an Integral Education Centre at a convenient location. SACAR faculty will help arrange this 3-day visit.

In conjunction with this school visit, this school visit, the student will be asked to prepare a short course (of two-week duration) on any topic in a subject area of personal choice keeping in consideration some of the principles and approaches to Integral Education learned in the previous courses. This short course may cover a topic from traditional subject areas such as languages, science, mathematics, social studies or be based on any contemporary social or cultural issue facing India and/or the world.

The student will present the “self-designed course” in the form of a talk or workshop to a small group of interested teachers at a local school of their choice in their geographic area. The student will design a simple feedback form which will be used to gather input from the audience. The student will compile this feedback, make appropriate revisions to the course design, write a personal reflective assessment of course design and presentation experience, and submit all the work as part of a portfolio for final assignment of this course.

Academic Writing

This course is designed to enhance students' skills and abilities in writing that is appropriate in an academic context. Specific exercises will be given to the students to develop and practice necessary skills for interpretive and reflective writing for scholarly purposes. Additional opportunities will also provide practice in the areas of proper citation and referencing. Students will also be introduced to basic ethical standards concerning academic integrity and plagiarism.

Research Methods in Philosophy and Transpersonal Inquiry

This course examines research methods in two related areas pertinent to Sri Aurobindo Studies: philosophy and transpersonal psychology. The first half of the course focuses on research in philosophy, and the second half on research in transpersonal psychology. In addition to research, the first half will also cover basic issues in the writing of papers in philosophy. Other aspects of research in philosophy covered include types of research topics in philosophy, principles of selecting a topic for research, stages in the execution of a research project, collection and organization of data, and presentation of results. Types of research methods in transpersonal psychology covered include Integral Inquiry, Intuitive Inquiry, Phenomenological Inquiry, Organic Research, and approaches to the study of Exceptional Human Experience. The validity of research findings and ethical considerations are also examined.

Qualitative Research Methods for Education

This course helps students become familiar with qualitative research paradigm including methodologies and practical approaches for conducting qualitative inquiry. Emphasis will be given to those methodologies that are more relevant for practitioners. Through the experiential component of the course students will gain practice in narrowing down their research focus, selecting an appropriate methodology, and designing and conducting a small practice research project. Throughout the course, emphasis will be given to research designs, methods, and writing styles that are more meaningful and valid for practitioner research.

TUITION AND FEE POLICY

Learners who enroll with SACAR to undertake a programme of study are required to pay all fees owing to SACAR according to the rules of payment for each programme. We reserve the right to cancel a learner's registration if they fail to pay their fees in accordance with the required deadlines. The learner would then no longer have access to our teaching and learning facilities.

1. The total tuition and fees for all programmes are determined by SACAR.
2. The total tuition payable by the student in a programme is divided in equal annual instalments to be paid at the beginning of every academic year in the programme. These instalments are calculated on the basis of student's enrolment (part-time or full-time).
3. One-time non-refundable application fee is due at the time of submission of completed application form.
4. Students are also asked to pay a one-time non-refundable registration fee, due with their first tuition bill before the start of their programme.
5. At the start of their last academic year in the programme, students are required to pay a matriculation fee.
6. PhD students are also asked to pay special fees for qualifying examination and viva in the appropriate year of their study programme.
7. PhD students for whom certain courses are waived are given appropriate deduction in their tuition fees.
8. For students enrolled in the Certificate Programme, the total amount for tuition and fees must be paid before the start of the programme.
9. For full-time students enrolled in any of the PGD programmes (duration: 1year) and the M.Phil programme (duration: 15 months), the total amount for tuition and fees must be paid before the start of the programme.
10. For all other students enrolled for two or more academic years (including part-time students enrolled in PGD and MPhil programmes) invoices are sent to the students about four weeks before the start of every academic year. The amount due shown in the invoice must reach the SACAR office by the due date mentioned in the invoice.
11. An extension fee per semester is charged if the students are unable to satisfactorily complete the full study programme within the programme duration specified by their enrolment status (full-time or part-time).

12. A re-entry fee is added to the bill for students re-registering in the programme after their sanctioned Leave of Absence. For the academic year 2010-11, the re-entry fee is Rs. 750 (for Indian applicants) or USD 75 (for foreign applicants).
13. All programmes require either one or more personal contact programmes at SACAR. Travel and accommodation expenses are not included in the fee structure and are the responsibility of the student. Accommodations (food and lodging) are available at SACAR at reasonable rates. In some cases, adjustments in these requirements may be made for students residing outside India.
14. Refund Policy: 75% of the tuition is refundable if the student withdraws within the first two weeks after the start of the academic year. After two-weeks, no refund is possible.
15. Fee is subject to change.

TUITION AND FEES FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2009-10

Certificate Programme: Introduction to Sri Aurobindo Studies (20 Credits)

	India*	Foreign**
Tuition	Rs. 1,500	\$350
Application Fee	Rs. 300	\$30
Registration Fee	Rs. 150	\$15
Institutional Fee	Rs 300	\$60
Matriculation Fee	Rs. 250	\$45
Total	Rs. 2,500	\$500

PG Diploma (Studies in Indian Culture); PG Diploma (Integral Education) (38 Credits)

	India*	Foreign**
Tuition	Rs. 6,400	\$2,240
Application Fee	Rs. 300	\$30
Registration Fee	Rs. 300	\$30
Institutional Fee	Rs 500	\$ 200
Matriculation Fee	Rs. 300	\$70
Total	Rs. 7,800	\$2,570

M.A. in Sri Aurobindo Studies (74 credits)

	India*	Foreign**
Tuition	Rs. 12,800	\$4,480
Application Fee	Rs. 400	\$40
Registration Fee	Rs. 500	\$50
Institutional Fee	Rs. 1,200	\$480
Final Exam Fee	Rs. 400	\$90
Matriculation Fee	Rs. 500	\$110
Total	Rs. 15,800	\$5,250

M.Phil in Sri Aurobindo Studies (52 Credits)

	India*	Foreign**
Tuition	Rs. 9000	\$3,150
Application Fee	Rs. 500	\$50
Registration Fee	Rs. 300	\$30
Institutional Fee	Rs. 900	\$360
Final Exam Fee	Rs. 400	\$90
Matriculation Fee	Rs. 500	\$120
Total	Rs. 11,600	\$3,800

Ph.D. in Sri Aurobindo Studies (78 Credits)

	India*	Foreign**
Tuition	Rs. 20,800	\$7,280
Application Fee	Rs. 500	\$50
Registration Fee	Rs. 500	\$50
Institutional Fee	Rs. 1,300	\$520
Qualifying Exam Fee	Rs. 3000	\$300
Viva Exam Fee	Rs. 8000	\$800
Matriculation Fee	Rs. 700	\$150
Total	Rs. 34,800	\$9,150

Notes: * These rates are applicable to learners from India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh. ** These rates are applicable to learners from the U.S., Canada, and West European countries. Applicants from other countries should inquire about rates.

OTHER ACADEMIC POLICIES

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is the copying or close paraphrasing of ideas, phrases, words, or sentences of others without acknowledging them as such or referencing the original author. It is plagiarism to copy, without due reference being made to the author, from books, articles, CD's, any electronic media, the spoken word or another student's written work. We regard plagiarism in assessed work as a dishonest practice that will result in downgrading the work, and in severe cases, cessation of further studies with SACAR.

Acknowledgement of an original source of all quoted material used in written work is made through the use of indented paragraphs, or by placing the quotation in quotation marks, followed by the reference. Paraphrased material too must be followed by a reference to the original work or author. Sources to which the student does not make direct personal reference should be referenced according to the text in which they were cited. Full bibliographies should be attached to all written work. Learners should use the conventions explained below in order to properly acknowledge your sources, but if the learner has doubts about the correct way to write an essay and avoid plagiarism, they should consult their facilitator.

CITATION CONVENTIONS

Each use of the ideas or words of another must be individually acknowledged in the text. In addition, each work consulted must be listed in the bibliography. The mere presence of a work in the bibliography does not override the need for acknowledging each individual use of that work in the text and, though necessary, is by itself insufficient.

Students may either follow the APA or MLA style manual for proper citations and referencing. They are strongly advised to consult their course facilitators and/or research guides to seek guidance on the selection of the appropriate citation style. Some general guidelines are presented below for consideration by all students at SACAR.

1. Any use of the exact words of another must be acknowledged by enclosing them in quotation marks, or, for longer quotes, citing the quotation in the form of an indented paragraph, and by stating the source of the quotation in the text or at the end of the indented paragraph. For example of the former: "The human spirit has ever oscillated between two extreme and opposite ideals." (Mukherjee 1990: 26)
2. If only part of a passage from a book is being used, this should be indicated by replacing the omitted words with a short series of dots. For example: "All that is ordinarily knowable in phenomena is function ... It does not and cannot tell us anything about being." (Mukherjee 1990: 29) This applies however long or short the quotation and however long or short the omissions.
3. You may wish to alter the words being quoted so as to fit them into the context in which you are using the quotation, or to overcome the problem that the quotation may not make sense when taken out of its own context. Omitted words should be dealt with as above. Any words added should be enclosed in square brackets. For example: "Trouble is bound to arise if there is an unwarranted and illegitimate intrusion of [Science or Spirituality] into the other's arena. Science cannot dictate its conclusion to the man of Spirit any more than Spirituality has the right to impose its own on the scientist ..." (Mukherjee 1990: 76) The words in square brackets have been added so that the quotation makes sense, and to avoid quoting a longer passage than necessary simply to set it in its context. The series of dots at the end indicates that the quotation has been truncated.
4. If you do not have access to the original source of a quotation but have found it quoted in the work of someone else, you should give the original source (which the author you have found should have quoted) and the reference where you found it. For example, a reference might read like this: Bonner (1958: 12), quoted by Mukherjee (1990: 208)
5. If you are not using the exact words of another, but are making use of one of his/her ideas, this should be acknowledged with a full reference in the bibliography and a page reference in the body of the essay: As Bonner has

argued (Bonner 1958: 35), etc. It must be possible to trace where you acquired this line of thought.

Notes:

I. In the writing of the above policy on Plagiarism we would like to acknowledge Cardiff University on whose guidelines this policy has been modelled, and whose guidelines on citation conventions have been reproduced in full above.

II. We reserve the right to update, add to, and change this policy statement at any time.

**EXTENSIONS, INCOMPLETES, SUSPENSIONS,
AND EXCLUSIONS FROM STUDY**

1. Study periods are not extendable except in rare situations and at the facilitator's discretion. Learners are strongly encouraged to complete all requirements for their courses in the allotted semester/course period. Any extenuating circumstances which may prevent the learner from completing a course in time should be immediately brought to the attention of the course facilitator.
2. In such circumstances where the learner is unable to complete a course during the allotted semester, an Incomplete status comes into effect.
3. Under the Incomplete Policy, learner and facilitator jointly discuss and determine the extension period (it may range from 2 to 6 weeks depending upon the amount of work remaining in the course). The learner must complete all the course requirements during this mutually agreed extension period.
4. If the learner fails to complete the course during the extension period, he or she will be given a failing credit and must repeat the course when it is offered next time.
5. An extension fee per semester is also charged if the students are unable to satisfactorily complete the full programme within the programme duration specified by their enrolment status (full-time or part-time).
6. In some situations learners may also request a Leave of Absence for a semester. A re-entry fee may be applied in such cases when the learner returns to the programme.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *What distinguishes SACAR from other higher educational institutions?*
SACAR specializes in the thought and yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother and in studying how the vision embodied in their work can be made applicable to the development of human beings and human life.
2. *What kind of research learners may pursue at SACAR?*

The research work of SACAR scholars may focus on any area concerned with the human condition from the perspective of Sri Aurobindo, and in the light of his studies in various fields of philosophy, yoga, psychology, sociology, polity, culture, literature, education, and future.

3. *Why was SACAR established?*

SACAR envisioned a wide forum for making the vision, thought and yoga of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother more accessible and realisable. Requests to this effect had been coming in from learners, researchers, and others interested in this philosophy and yoga, and so work to develop the online higher education programmes was officially started in 2003. SACAR aims to provide programmes of study on these topics with a learner-oriented approach that is designed to accommodate two aspects of the learner: intellectual demands, and the search for spiritual knowledge and development.

4. *Where is SACAR exactly located?*

SACAR is located in the Vaithikuppam area of the city of Pondicherry and is quite close to the key places of interest to visitors and scholars. SACAR is approximately 1.5 kilometers from Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 7 kilometers from Auroville, and about 200 meters from the beach.

5. *What computing infrastructure and expertise does a learner require to study online?*

Learners will require the following infrastructure:

- A computer with at least 128MB of RAM (recommended 256 MB)
- 56Kb internet connection (DSL or cable preferred)
- Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher, or Netscape 6.0 or higher
- A word processing application preferably Microsoft Word.
- An audio application e.g. Windows Media Player, Real Audio, or Winamp
- An active e-mail account that will accept attachments up to 2MB
- Printing facility to print forms and course materials from the internet

No special expertise is required to study online. A good working knowledge of working on the internet (www searches, messaging, e-mailing, etc), of word-processing documents and sending them to others via e-mail will be sufficient for learners to begin their online study. Necessary additional skills can be easily learned with this basic knowledge.

6. *Is it possible for the learners to study and do their research at SACAR?*

The online and distance learners can stay for short or extended periods at the International Scholars Home at SACAR campus at reasonable cost. SACAR doesn't offer completely residential programmes but many of its programmes do require a personal contact period for which learners are required to visit SACAR campus.

7. *What facilities are available on site for visiting learners and researchers?*

SACAR premises has large lecture halls, meeting rooms, library, work spaces, offices, meditation room, garden and the International Scholars Home which has several guest rooms with attached bathroom, kitchen, dining area and sitting lounges.

FACILITATORS

CORE FACULTY

Ananda Reddy, Ph.D. (Philosophy, Madras University, India, 1988)
Primary subjects: Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy and Metaphysics, Vision of the Future, Science of Living, Psychological Approach to Gita.

Larry Seidlitz, Ph.D. (Psychology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, 1993) Primary subjects: Integral Yoga Psychology, Spiritual poetry and poetics, Research Methods in Philosophy and Transpersonal Inquiry.

Beloo Mehra, Ph.D. (Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA, 1998). Primary subjects: Indian Culture, Integral Education, Sri Aurobindo's Social Thought, Qualitative Research Methods, Academic Writing.

Sivakumar, Ph.D. (Philosophy, University of California at Santa Barbara, USA, 1997)
Primary subjects: Sri Aurobindo's Social and Political Thought, Science of Living, Introduction to Sri Aurobindo Studies Correspondence Programme.

Vladimir Yatsenko, Master's level diploma (Oriental-Philology, Philology of Hindi and Specialist in Theoretical Linguistics, State University of St. Petersburg, Russia, 1992). Primary subjects: Indian Scriptures.

ADJUNCT FACULTY

Martha Orton, Doctor of Sri Aurobindo Studies (Sri Aurobindo Darshan: The University of Tomorrow, SACAR, 2007). Primary subjects: Sri Aurobindo's Philosophy and Metaphysics.

Margaret Phanes, M.A. (Psychology, University of San Francisco, California, USA, 1972) Primary subjects: Integral Yoga Psychology, Sri Aurobindo and His Essential Thought.

Chhalamayi Reddy, Ph.D. (English Literature, Pondicherry University, India, 1992). Primary subjects: Integral Education.

Priya Vaidya, Ph.D. (Philosophy of Education, University of Mumbai, India). Primary subjects: Integral Education, Comparative Educational Philosophy.

Soma Kundu, M.Phil (French, CIEFL, Hyderabad, India, 2003). Primary subjects: Indian Tradition Comparative Literature.

Manasi Pahwa, pursuing Ph.D. (Psychology, University of Delhi, Senior Research Fellow). Primary subjects: Yoga Psychology.

Daryl Paulson, Ph.D. (Psychology, Sierra University, California, USA, 1989; Human Science, Saybrook Research Institute and Graduate School, USA, 1992). Primary subjects: Sri Aurobindo's Social and Political Thought; Integral Yoga Psychology.

Kalpana Bidwaikar, Ph.D. (English, Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri*, G. G. University, Bilaspur, India, 2007). Primary subjects: Spirituality and Creative Expression, Savitri.