

ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT ON ST. EDMUND'S COLLEGE'S

INCUBATION CENTRE

Established in August 2022



COMPILED BY

**The Incubation Centre and the Internal Quality Assurance
Cell (IQAC), St. Edmund's College, Shillong**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Incubation Centre, St. Edmund's College, Shillong, thanks **Br (Dr) Simon Coelho**, Secretary, Governing Body and Principal-in-charge, for his steadfast support to this novel initiative. Former Principal **Dr Sylvanus Lamare** understood the Centre's efforts to enlighten the students with knowledge of contemporary research etiquette.

Dr Samrat Adhikari, Head Department of Biotechnology, played an active role in planning the day-to-day activities of the Centre. Together with **Prof Sumit Deb**, IQAC Coordinator, Dr Adhikari continues to steer the course and encourage the Centre to expand its scope of activities.

With the appointment of **Dr K P Pallavi Malhan**, Vice Principal (Academics), research activities in the college gained another exponent. Her enthusiasm for the Centre's broader scope of activities can be gauged from her participation in various events as an invited resource person.

Prof Goutam Deb, Head, Department of Commerce, **Ms Reema Joshi**, Assistant Junior Professor, Department of Computer Science, and **Mr William B F Lynrah**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, deserve special gratitude for their eagerness to collaborate with the Incubation Centre.

Dr Wandaia Syngkon, Assistant Junior Professor, Post-graduate Department of Social Work; Ms **Krishna Sharma**, 5th semester, Department of Economics; Ms **Sharmistha Sarma**, 5th semester, Department of History, **Mr Liangtong M Hungyo**, 5th semester, Department of History, and **Ms Harshini Saikia**, 1st semester, Department of Sociology, are challenging themselves by attempting to publish their work. They are pioneers in an untread aspect of higher education in Meghalaya.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON THE CENTRE'S PROGRESS OF ACTIVITIES

Objective of the Centre: *To enhance the value of knowledge by promoting a temperament for academic research*

- a. **Date of inception:** 01 August 2022
- b. **Total number of courses organized:** 7
- c. **Number of successful students:** 86
- d. **Number of research students being supervised:** 4
- e. **Number of publications generated/submitted:** 1 (submitted)
- f. **Total number of plagiarism reports generated:** 100
- g. **Number of departments engaged for Value-Added Courses (as of September 2023):** 8

INTRODUCTION

The Incubation Centre at St. Edmund's College, Shillong, was established in August 2022. It is designed to accelerate publications by the faculty and students of the college and organises Value-Added Courses (VACs) to familiarise them with the ecosystem of research. Its nascent origins are guided by its primary objective — *to enhance the value of knowledge by promoting a temperament for academic research*. Although initially intended to work closely with the seven Arts departments, the Centre has extended its network among the Science and Commerce departments. It conducts three VACs across the Odd (July-January) and Even (February-June) semesters. These are:

- ❖ *Academic Writing and Understanding the Ecosystem of Research*
- ❖ *Research Methodology*
- ❖ *Developing Soft Skills: Communication and Critical Thinking (now renamed as Navigating Modern Workplaces)*

The first two courses are designed to familiarise students with elementary research etiquette and enlighten them on the accepted process of publishing their research. A secondary – albeit equally vital objective – is the development of logic-flow amongst students. The third course helps students navigate the intricacies of modern workplaces by imparting ‘functional’ knowledge of prevailing practices in most organisations – private and government.

It organises these courses in collaboration with the college's Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), the Counselling and Placement Cell and various departments. Since its inception, the Incubation Centre has awarded more than fifty students certificates for completing these courses.

Apart from the VACs, the Centre actively encourages students and teachers to focus on generating outputs — in the form of articles, book reviews and studies — targeted for publication, mainly in books and Scopus-listed journals. It believes that channelling research into substantial academic outcomes will impart job-oriented exposure to its students. Moreover, the Centre advocates the adoption of specific best practices for the promotion of ethical research. For instance, since March 2023, the college has embraced a writing tool and plagiarism software to improve the quality of students' internal assignments and reports. Research by teachers is also processed through the software to generate similarity (plagiarism) reports.

Currently (as of September 2023), the Centre is headed by the Research Facilitator, Dr Oliver Nelson Gonsalves. Dr Gonsalves holds a PhD in Energy Studies from the Energy Studies Programme, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi.

He has acquired more than four years of professional experience in research, business-intelligence, publishing and teaching.¹

Through its activities, the Incubation Centre is committed to achieving the College's objective — *to promote flexibility and innovativeness to make our courses of study more occupationally relevant.*

The following sections will outline the profile of the Research Facilitator, the progress of various initiatives taken by the Incubation Centre since August, and the

¹Further information on Dr Gonsalves' profile can be found in the following section.

PROFILE OF THE RESEARCH FACILITATOR

Dr Oliver Nelson Gonsalves is a Research Facilitator and, since August 2022, heads the Incubation Centre at St. Edmund's College, Shillong. The Incubation Centre is designed to accelerate publications by the faculty and students of the college and organises Value-Added Courses (VACs) to familiarize them with the ecosystem of research. Dr Gonsalves holds a PhD in Energy Studies from the Energy Studies Programme, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. He also has an M.A. in International Relations and an M.Phil. in Chinese Studies from JNU. He has acquired more than four years of professional experience in research, business-intelligence, publishing and teaching. He was formerly a *Visiting Research Fellow* at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy (ADA University), Baku (2017) and a recipient of the prestigious *Maulana Azad National Fellowship* (2013-18). China's Ministry of Commerce also invited him to China as a delegate for a two-month Mandarin course in 2014. As Research Fellow and Head of the Maritime Energy-Security and Security-of-Energy (MESSE) Cluster at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi, he led the NMF's study of the maritime facets of energy, with a focus on energy geopolitics (2019-2022). His areas of interest include the study of qualitative research methods, energy geopolitics, sustainability, renewable energy and energy transition.



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SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY THE INCUBATION CENTRE

This brief section depicts the Incubation Centre's initiatives since its establishment in August 2022. Although the Centre is independent of departments under the four primary streams (Arts, Commerce, Science and Professional courses), its activities are meticulously coordinated with the latter's schedules. Knowledge of the latest qualitative research methods and an intimate understanding of the ecosystem of research, including publications and exposure to job-relevant skills, anchor the motivation for the Centre's three initiatives. These initiatives are listed below.

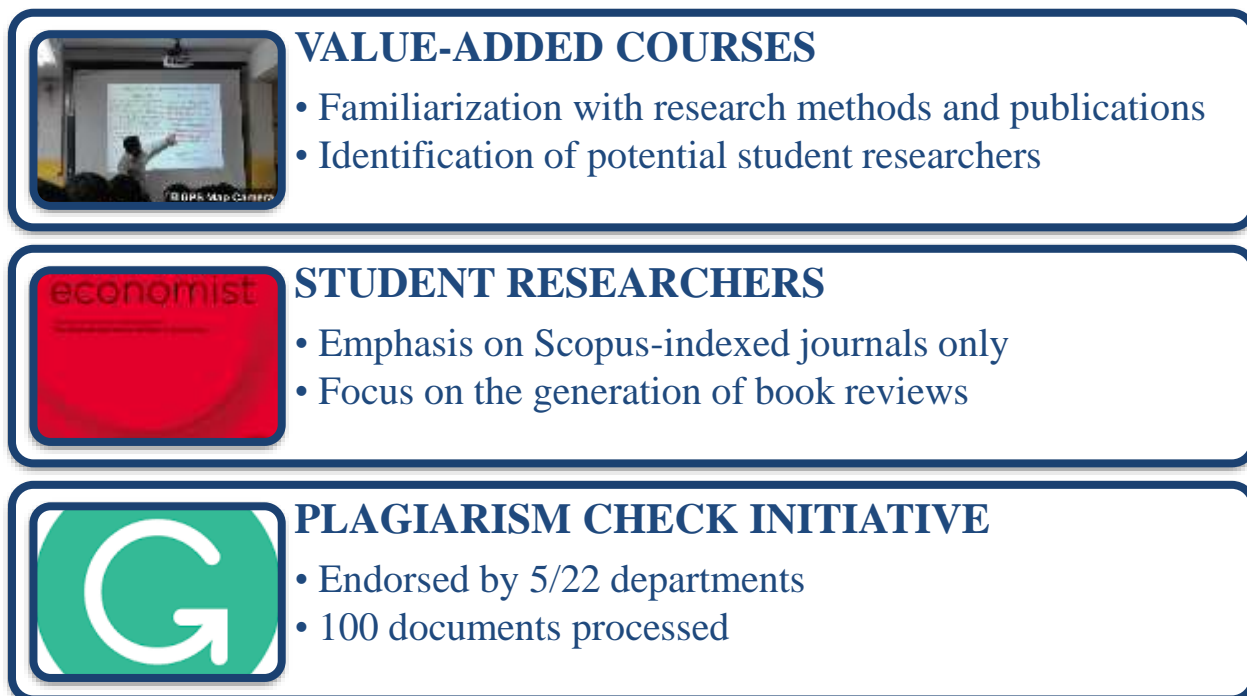


Figure 1: Main features of the Incubation Centre's three initiatives

Figure 1 (above) lists two features each for the Incubation Centre's three initiatives. It is non-sequential and indicates an interlinkage between classroom teaching and one-on-one interaction. For instance, Value-Added Courses (VACs) feed into the initiative to train student researchers. On the other hand, the college's Plagiarism Check Initiative is a coordinated effort between participating departments and the Incubation Centre, wherein the former educates their students on the parameters of what constitutes plagiarism. In contrast, the latter processes student reports through the plagiarism-check software. A detailed description of these initiatives is presented in the succeeding sections.

REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF VALUE-ADDED COURSES

Value-Added Courses (VACs) have been introduced to enhance theoretical knowledge imparted by regular courses. Courses by the Incubation Centre are designed to be job-relevant and conversant with the latest qualitative research methods.² These courses are non-credit. As the Introduction mentions, three VACs are organised by the Incubation Centre. These are:

- ❖ *Academic Writing and Understanding the Ecosystem of Research*
- ❖ *Research Methodology*
- ❖ *Developing Soft Skills: Communication and Critical Thinking (now renamed as Navigating Modern Workplaces)*

Seven VACs on the above topics have been organised since August 2022. **Table 1** (below) gives the department-wise breakdown of courses conducted by the Incubation Centre. It also mentions the dates on which these courses were taught.

Department/s	Name of the course	Dates
Biotechnology	Academic Writing and Understanding the Ecosystem of Research	16-26 August 2022
Political Science, Economics and Sociology	Academic Writing and Understanding the Ecosystem of Research	17-27 October 2022
Bachelor of Computer Applications	Research Methodology – Beginner Level	16-22 March 2023
Commerce	Developing Soft Skills: Communication and Critical Thinking	23-29 March 2023
Political Science	Academic Writing and Understanding the Ecosystem of Research	01-06 April 2023
History	Research Methodology	01-06 May 2023
Khasi	Khasi for Everyday Life	11-17 May 2023

Table 1: Department-wise breakdown of Value-Added Courses conducted by the Incubation Centre since August 2022

VACs are conducted over 16 hours (including assessment of assignments). With the exception of the VAC with the Department of Biotechnology, all VACs are conducted offline. Moving to the mode of the evaluation, only students who had scored a minimum of 40% and above are deemed

² The Research Facilitator is also pursuing a course in QGIS through Spoken Tutorial by IIT Bombay

successful and are, thereby, eligible for certificates. **Figure 2** (below) shows that 36.44% of the participants have met this requirement.

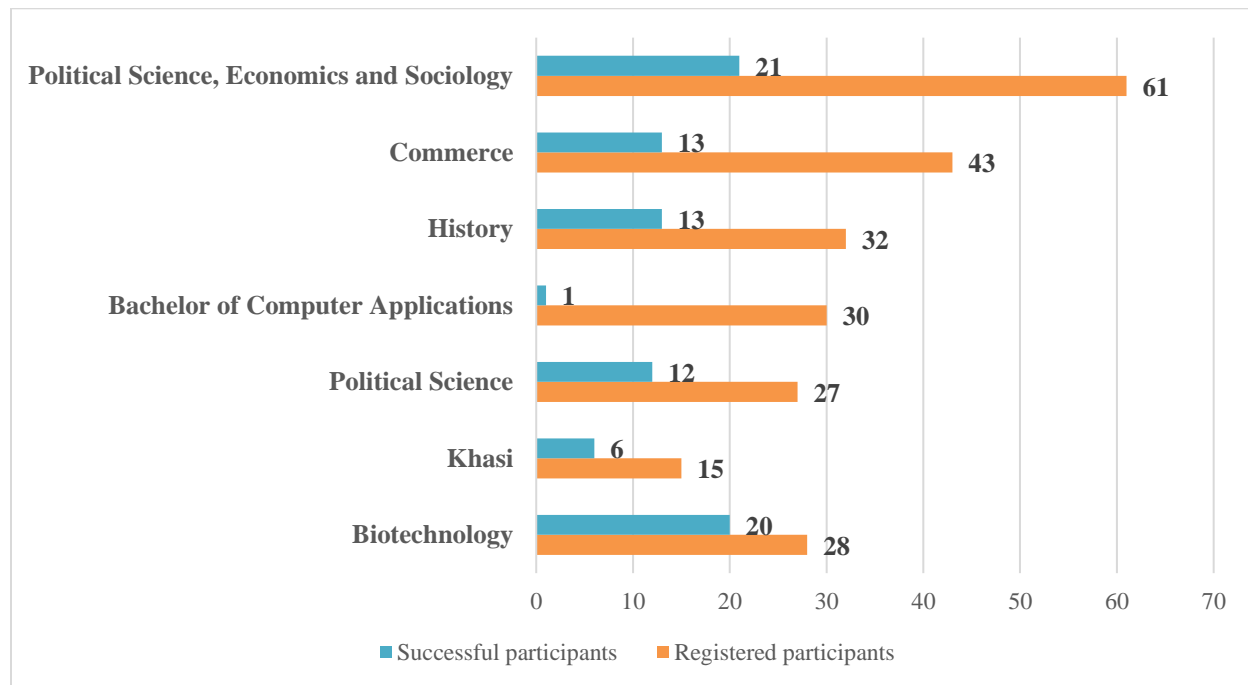


Figure 2: Success rate of participants in various Value-Added Courses (VACs)

External subject-matter experts conduct a few modules unfamiliar to the Research Facilitator. These sessions may be offline or online, depending on the availability of the expert in Shillong. Further, feedback (through Google Forms) is sought from the students on the conduct of the course. Responses are incorporated into the report and, more importantly, *followed through*. For instance, one of the participants, who had attended the VAC with the Department of Political Science in April 2023, suggested the circulation of reading material in advance. This practice was adopted in all following VACs.

In addition to these courses, the Centre also assists other departments in the organisation of their independent VACs. For instance, the Department of Khasi organised a VAC entitled *Khasi for Everyday Life* in May 2023. The Research Facilitator assisted the department's teaching faculty with planning various modules and preparing the report and certificates.

Similarly, the Research Facilitator conducted one module on *Research Outputs* with the students of the Department of Sociology. This two-hour module was part of the eight-day VAC on *Basic Concepts of Social Research*, held between 15-23 March 2023. Furthermore, the Research Facilitator also moderated a one-hour discussion (on 1 April 2023) on a book entitled *Seeds and*

Food Sovereignty: Eastern Himalayan Experiences. This book was published by the North Eastern Social Research Centre, Guwahati.

Reports of all VACs and any collaborative efforts are forwarded to the IQAC Coordinator, the Vice Principal (Academics), the concerned Head of the Department and Dr Samrat Adhikari, Head, Department of Biotechnology and in-charge of the preparation of the college's Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR). These reports are also available on the college's website.

REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF STUDENT RESEARCHERS

Another initiative taken by the Incubation Centre is the advancement of research among students. The summary of activities (on page 8) highlights how *interested* students are identified during VACs and approached by the Research Facilitator. Likewise, students may also approach the Research Facilitator. This initiative is promoted at all VACs as an independent student-oriented initiative where student researchers are trained to write in academically-accepted language, analyse complex arguments and simplify them, make logically sound arguments, and acquaint themselves with the publication process.

Some of the features of this initiative are listed below:

- Students are encouraged to write book reviews only
- Students must propose works of non-fiction only
- Manuscripts are only sent to Scopus-indexed journals
- Relaxed submission deadlines
- Full authorship (and any remuneration by the journal) to the students

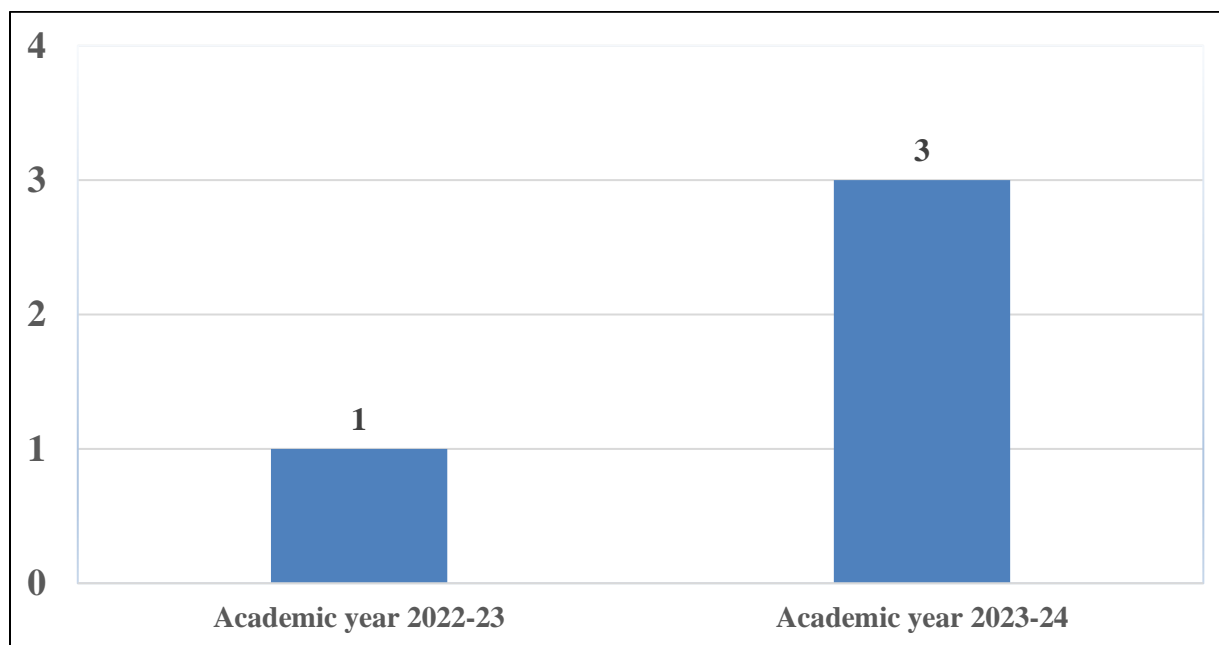


Figure 3: Intake of student researchers by the Incubation Centre

Emphasis on book reviews — instead of research articles — stems from existing shortcomings in capacity. Currently, students are untrained in contemporary research practices as these are not part of the recommended syllabus by North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU). Moreover, the VAC conducted by the Incubation Centre comprises introductory modules which are spread over only 16 hours.

Figure 3 (above) shows the intake of student researchers. Although it shows a minute increase, the Centre is optimistic about this effort's acceptance as an integral aspect of students' capability-enhancement. Due to the novelty of this enterprise, the college has not created a formal mechanism for recognising student researchers. However, this process is underway. St. Edmund's College recognizes the significance of publications in the development of cognitive abilities and the broader impact such initiatives can have on morale and the dissemination of knowledge among students and teachers.

Table 2 (below) depicts the progress of the four student researchers since the inception of this initiative in November-December 2022.

Sr No	Name of the student researcher	Department	Semester	Name and year of publication of the book under review	Date of joining as a student researcher	Status of review
1	Krishna Sharma	Economics	V	Chip War: The fight for the world's most critical technology (2022)	10 December 2022	Manuscript rejected by <i>The American Economist</i> (Sage Publications); alternative platform being considered.
2	Sharmistha Sarma	History	V	Smoke and Ashes: A Writer's Journey through Opium's Hidden Histories (2023)	09 June 2023	Review underway
3	Liangtong M Hungyo	History	V	World Upside Down: India Recalibrates its Geopolitics	23 August 2023	Review underway
4	Harshini Saikia	Sociology	I	Lies Our Mothers Told Us: The Indian Woman's Burden	27 August 2023	Review underway

Table 2: Details of student researchers

Next, this report will analyse the progress of the Plagiarism Check Initiative, another first by St. Edmund's College, Shillong.

REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF THE PLAGIARISM CHECK INITIATIVE

This section outlines the College’s internal process for the generation of plagiarism reports. It was developed at a discussion between five heads of various departments at the Department of Biotechnology, in March 2023. The Research Facilitator was designated as the point-of-contact for generating plagiarism reports.

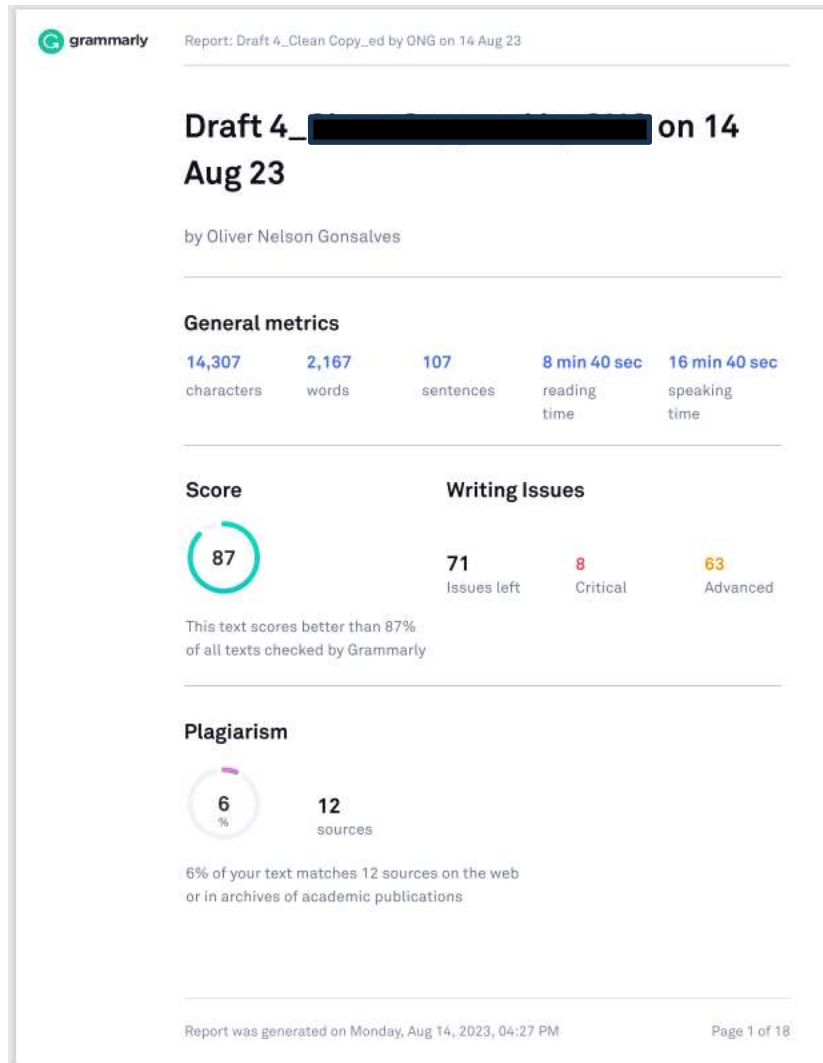


Image 1: Cover page of a plagiarism report
Note: Text redacted to protect privacy

Image 1 (above) shows the first page (of an 18-page report) of a plagiarism check for a document submitted in August 2023. The software also provides users with suggestions to improve grammar

and other writing-related issues. It also shows the percentage of plagiarism (6%). **The College has fixed 20% as the threshold for similarity.**

Figure 4 (below) depicts the implementation of St. Edmunds' Plagiarism Check Initiative. A plagiarism report is generated by the Research Facilitator and e-mailed to the students (keeping her supervisor in Cc) within three days of receiving the request.

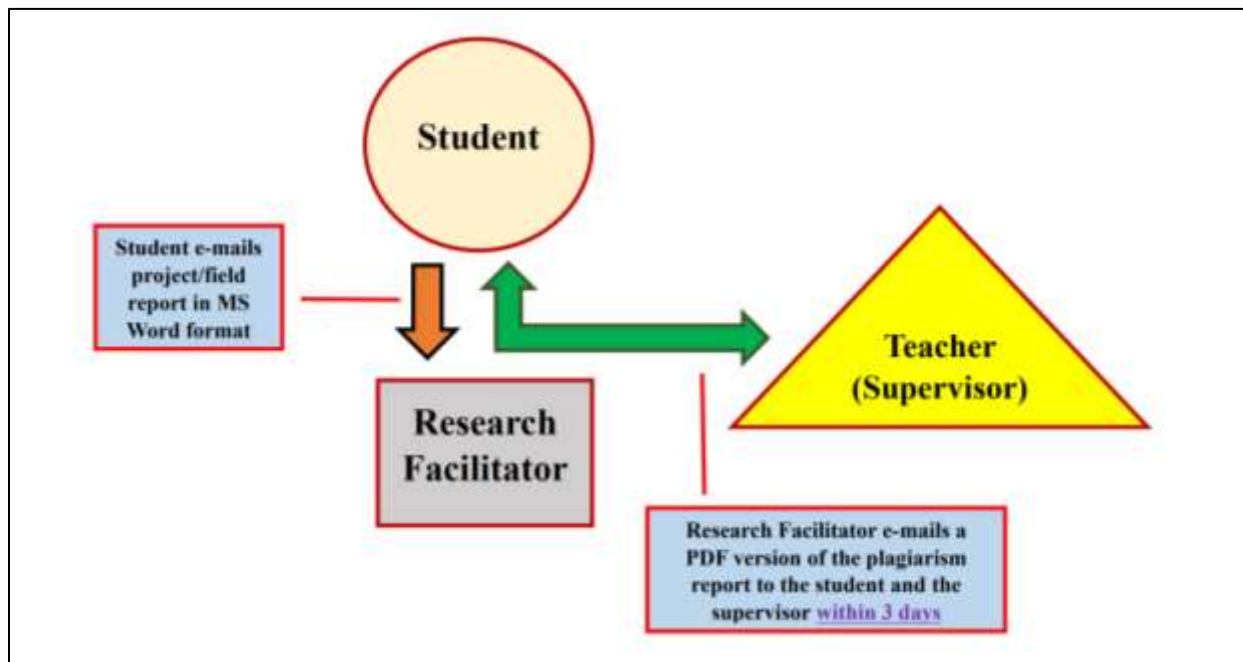


Figure 4: Flow chart of the implementation of St. Edmunds' Plagiarism Check Initiative

Although the report is detailed and could cover several pages, only the first three pages are forwarded if the threshold is not breached. However, if a student exceeds the 20% threshold, she (and her supervisor) is e-mailed the comprehensive plagiarism report and directed to rewrite her original submission. Project/field reports unaccompanied by a plagiarism report from the Incubation Centre are excluded from end-semester assessments.

Since May 2023, the Incubation Centre has processed 100 plagiarism reports. The department-wise breakup of these reports is depicted in **Figure 5** (below). It indicates that, so far, seven out of the twenty-two departments of St. Edmund's College are participants in this initiative.

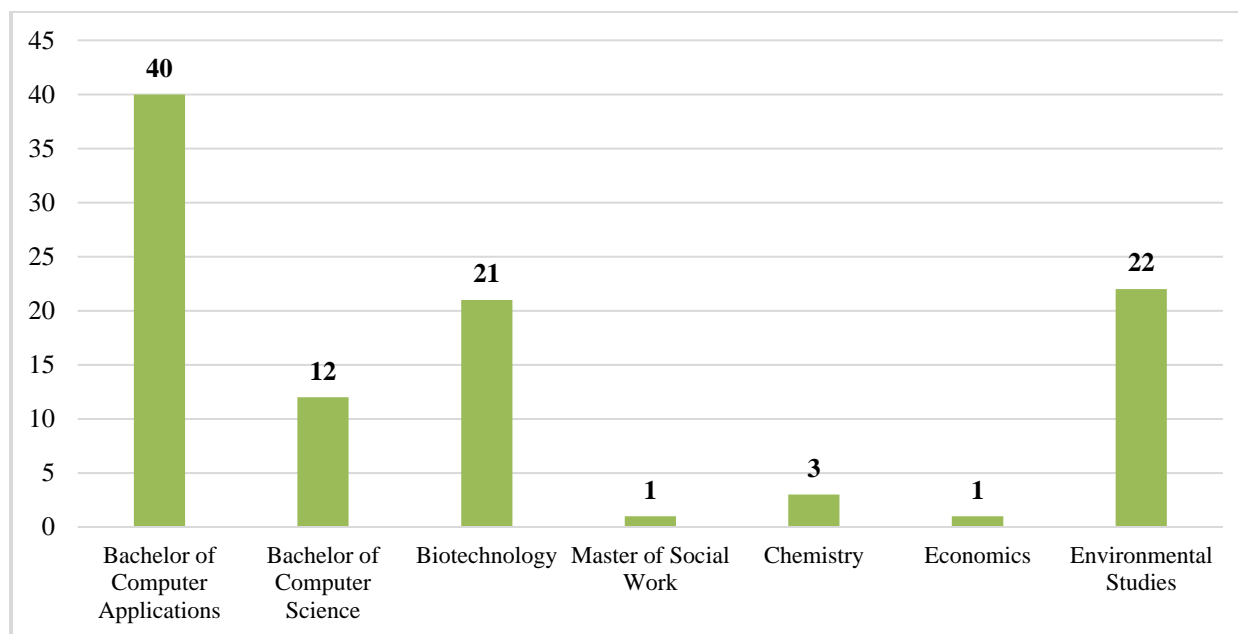


Figure 5: Total number of similarity reports generated by the Incubation Centre

Only five departments (Computer Applications, Biotechnology, Computer Science, Environmental Studies and Chemistry) have endorsed this process by forwarding student assignments for review by the plagiarism software. Documents from the Post Graduate Department of Social Work (MSW) and the Department of Economics comprised individual academic pursuits to be submitted to various Scopus-indexed journals for publication.

Figure 6 (below) shows the documents forwarded to the Incubation Centre for plagiarism checks. Four departments alone account for the 77 project reports submitted (Computer Applications, Computer Science, Environmental Studies and Chemistry). Evaluation of field trip reports was sought only by Department of Biotechnology. Only one research paper was submitted by a faculty member from the Postgraduate Department of Social Work (Dr Wandaia Syngkon, Assistant Junior Professor). A plagiarism report was generated for a book review of a student from the Department of Economics (Ms Krishna Sharma, B.A., 5th semester, Enrollment number – 21/ECON/068).³

³ Dr. Wandaia Syngkon submitted a manuscript titled, “A study of the psychological well-being of University students amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic”, to [Social Change](#) (Sage Publishers) on 14 August 2023. Ms. Krishna Sharma submitted a review of Chris Miller’s “Chip War: The fight for the world’s most critical technology” to [The American Economist](#) (Sage Publishers) on 23 August 2023.

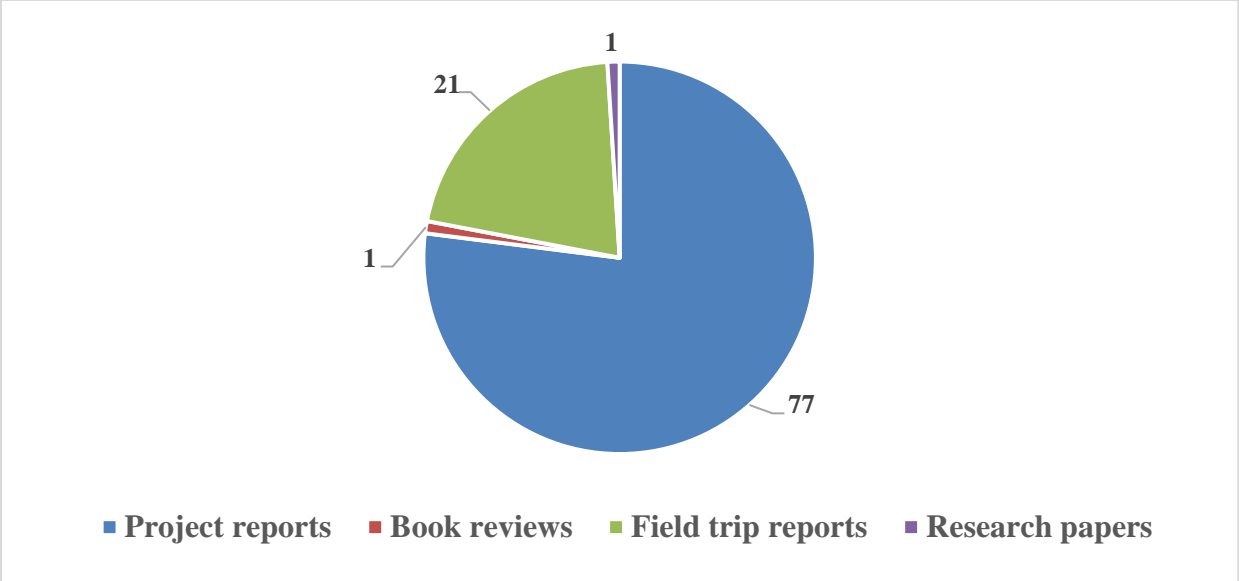


Figure 6: Categories of documents processed by the Incubation Centre

The following section outlines the near-term objectives of the Incubation Centre in the academic year 2023-24.

OUTLOOK FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-24

St. Edmund's College, Shillong, has marched in step with the latest developments in the field of education. This initiative has shown that a primarily undergraduate-level college is ahead of the curve and attempting to expose its students to global ethical research and learning standards.

Therefore, it is essential to keep the momentum going by setting near-term objectives for the continued success of this initiative. The Incubation Centre is resolved to achieving the following goals:

- Encourage the college's Arts teaching faculty to submit research papers and book reviews to the Incubation Centre for proofreading and plagiarism checks, and forward them to Scopus-indexed journals
- Advise students and teachers on the platforms for publication of their research
- Expand the absorption of the students into the formally recognized Student Researcher initiative

APPENDICES

7.1 Appendix B (Geo-tagged photographs of sessions taken during various Value-Added Courses)

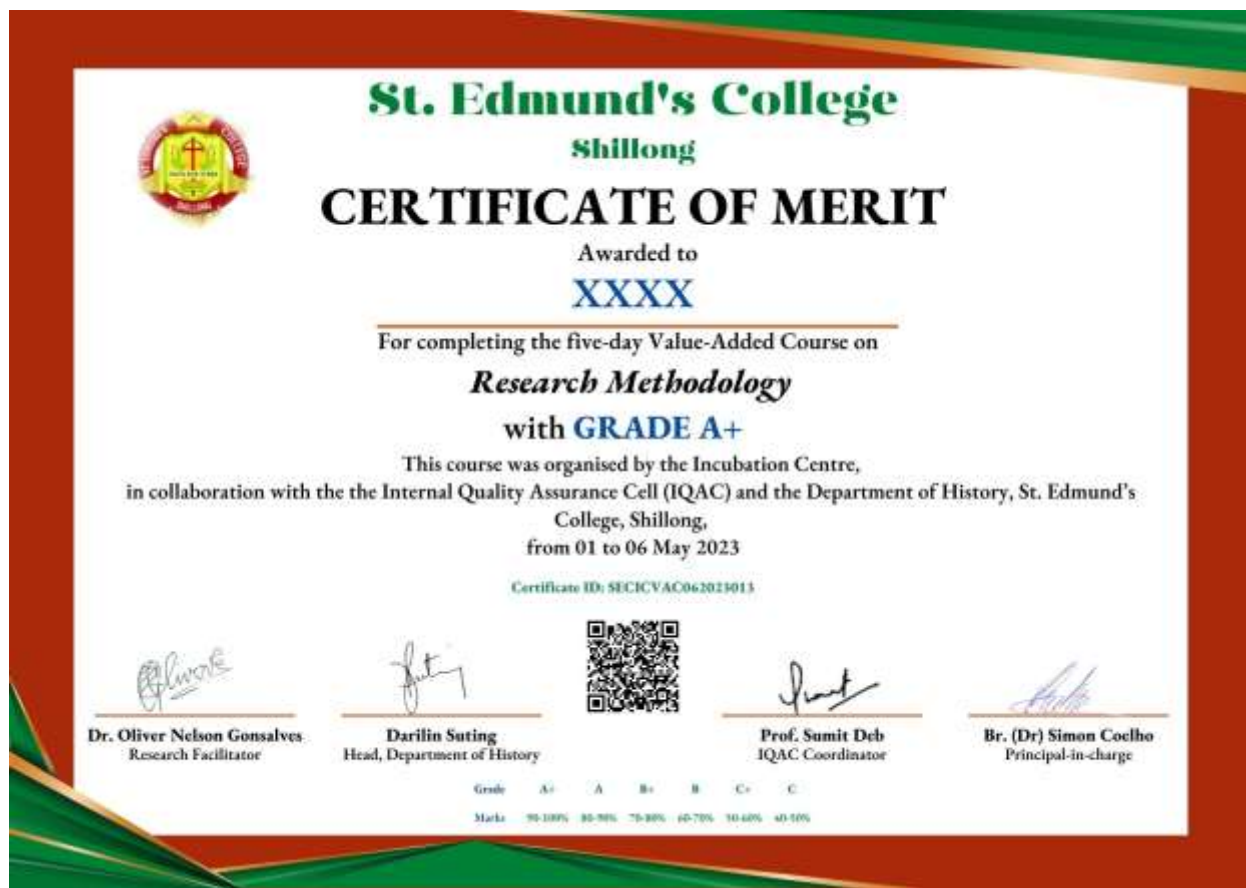


Image 2: Group photograph of the participants and the faculty of the Department of Commerce at the Inaugural Session on 23 March 2023.



Image 3: Dr Shelley Christine Lamare, Assistant Professor, Department of History, St Anthony's College, Shillong, discussing the significance of archival work (02 May 2023.)

7.2 Appendix B (Sample template of a certificate for a Value-Added Course)



7.3 Appendix C (Sample brochure of a Value-Added Course)



Value-Added Course on Research Methodology
Organised by the Incubation Centre,
in collaboration with the Department of History, St. Edmund's College, Shillong

Introduction
As higher education in India gradually moves towards a more holistic and interdisciplinary model, research – especially at the undergraduate level – has become the focus of capability-enhancement activities within Indian universities. It is being promoted to enhance the skill sets of Indian graduates and prepare them for opportunities in higher education and industry. Such an initiative requires not only familiarity with contemporary research practices but also an understanding of the “ecosystem of research” (National Education Policy 2020, 45).

Target Participants
The course is only open for the 4th semester (Honours) students of the Department of History, St. Edmund's College, Shillong

Course Content

Content	Hours
Module I: Introduction to research	2
Module II: Publishing the Right Way*	2
Module III: Research Methods	2
Module IV: What is Plagiarism?	2
Module V: Grasping the craft of scientific communication	2

*This module will be conducted by the external resource-person (Dr. Shelley Christine Lamare)

Objectives
This five-module Value-Added Course is designed to familiarise students with elementary research etiquettes and enlighten them on acceptable and ethical practices in the field of research.

Course Fees
No Course Fee

Presenter(s)
 Oliver Nelson Gonsalves, PhD, Research Facilitator, St. Edmund's College, Shillong
 Dr. Shelley Christine Lamare, Assistant Professor, Department of History, St Anthony's College, Shillong, Meghalaya, India

Assessments**
Each module will have short assignments based on the practical knowledge disseminated during the class. The results shall be graded accordingly with an analysis of the feedback. Assignments and feedback will be circulated using Linways.

Mode
This course will be conducted OFFLINE

****Participants who have completed ALL modules of the 16-hour course (including assignments) will be provided with certificates**

*****Kindly note that all correspondence will be through e-mail only**

How to Apply
REGISTER HERE

For queries, please contact***
Oliver N Gonsalves, PhD
Research Facilitator
Incubation Centre
St. Edmund's College, Shillong
Email id:
secincubationcentre@gmail.com

Important Dates

Registration Opens	10 Apr 2023
Registration Closes	29 Apr 2023
Commencement of the Course	01 May 2023
Timings	2:00 – 4:00 p.m.
Module I	01 May 2023
Module II	02 May 2023
Module III	03 May 2023
Module IV	04 May 2023
Module V	06 May 2023



Research Facilitator
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