

# AM Campus Program

*Employability Assessment: Filling a gap in Higher Education*

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This white-paper discusses the adequacy of the current Indian Higher Education System to produce employable individuals, who can get a job of their choice and lead a dignified life. The author identifies a gap in the current education system, which is the missing component of Employability Assessment. The author describes how a solution comprising of training by campuses and trustworthy employability assessment by industry can fill this gap. In this context the author introduces the Aspiring Minds Campus Program.

## ***I. Education: Training and Assessment***

There are two vital components of Education:

- a. Teaching and Training
- b. Assessment, more popularly called exams.

Teaching comprises of imparting knowledge to students and assessment is a yardstick to measure how much of what was taught has been assimilated and synthesized by the student. It helps both the student and teacher to realize whether the teaching has been effective and for what topics the student needs further improvement. This **diagnosis** leads to intervention in form of putting additional effort on certain weak topics and use of different teaching methodology for the same. Thus, teaching and assessment form parts of an ecosystem, dependent and feeding into each other.

Assessment is also a yardstick to ascertain as to what tasks the candidate is equipped to undertake with his/her current skill set, to which he/she can effectively and constructively contribute. Exposing the candidate to these task leads to proper completion of the job and provides professional satisfaction of the candidate.

Thus Assessment is helpful for two purposes: **Diagnosis and Task-Matching**

## ***II. Employability Assessment***

Many educators including the former President, Dr. Kalam believe that the purpose of education is two-fold: intellectual understanding of the world and

secondly, as an enabler of dignified employment. All institutions of higher education need to dedicate themselves to these goals of education.

Our higher education institutions have done very well to achieve the first goal. We have a university-wide setup of course structure, proper teaching by faculty members and final conduction of university-wide exams providing assessment of how well the students have learnt the subject matter. The ecosystem is complete and works well.

However, the second goal i.e. *education for employment* is in need of greater and stronger partnership between academia and industry. Herein, the step of teaching/learning comprises of portions from matter taught in the curriculum, self-learning by candidates and external trainings. These components are very much available and in practice.

What is missing is *Assessment for Employability*. A set of tests which students could take to find out how well they are equipped to get a good job in the market and which jobs in the market match their skill-set. Such a test should enable students to learn about their weaknesses with respect to the job market and provide a yardstick to find out whether they are gaining the right skills for the job market. Once pointed out, intervention shall help students gain those skills which they are missing right now and achieve a dignified job in the market.

Such an assessment platform is completely missing in the current system. Thus students get no feedback, diagnosis or guidance while they are in colleges. They have no clue whether they are acquiring the right skills for the job market and whether they would get a job of their choice on graduating. Without existence of an employability assessment platform, the student's study for employability is unguided, ad-hoc and hay-wire which doesn't necessarily lead to a dignified job.

### ***III. AMCAT: Filling the gap***

Aspiring Minds, an initiative devised with the expertise of IIT, MIT (USA) and Harvard graduates, seeks to fill this gap with a standardized and scalable assessment platform for employability. Taking lead from the side of the industry, Aspiring Minds with inputs from several industry partners such as HCL, Microsoft Research, Manpower (with global recruitment expertise), Kritikal Solutions has put together a rigorous and fair test for employability.

The multi-dimensional Computer Adaptive Test accurately assesses the employability of students and provides them with detailed feedback about their strengths and weaknesses. The test not only provides a skill diagnosis, but generates a personalized guidance report for each test-taker suggesting him/her how to improve the weak areas. The student gets to know how he is performing with respect to the skills required by the industry and how to acquire them in

greater depth. Thus AMCAT serves well the *Diagnosis* aspect of assessment, also additionally providing *Guidance*.

AMCAT also serves well the second requirement of an Assessment Solution, i.e. of *Job-Matching*. Many different companies hiring for different job profiles use AMCAT for recruiting candidates. AMCAT Assessment scores act as parameters to match candidates to job profiles, where candidates with diverse skill-sets get matched to appropriate jobs suiting them. The wide acceptance AMCAT has got from the industry as a tool to scientifically assess candidates for jobs shows the credibility it has established as a test of Employability.

## ***V. About the AMCAT***

AMCAT is a *standardized test* for employability delivered to students on a computer. A standardized test can be taken any time, any where and provides valid scores without any risk of leakage, bias or tampering. It is conducted around the year with every candidate seeing different questions and provides standard scores which are valid for several years.

AMCAT designed by MIT and IIT alumni is a 2½-hour test with multiple modules assessing all skills required for good employment. It is a Computer Adaptive Test with dynamic content, module-wise question balancing and personalization to each candidate. The test changes for each candidate becoming tough for the smart candidates, simple for the weaker delivering very accurate assessment.

The test is completely leak and tamper proof and the underlying algorithms automatically correct for prior knowledge of questions and guessing by students. The test is based on a large statistically rated question bank that evolves over time. The over-exposed questions in the bank are periodically weeded out, whereas new questions are statistically rated and phased in.

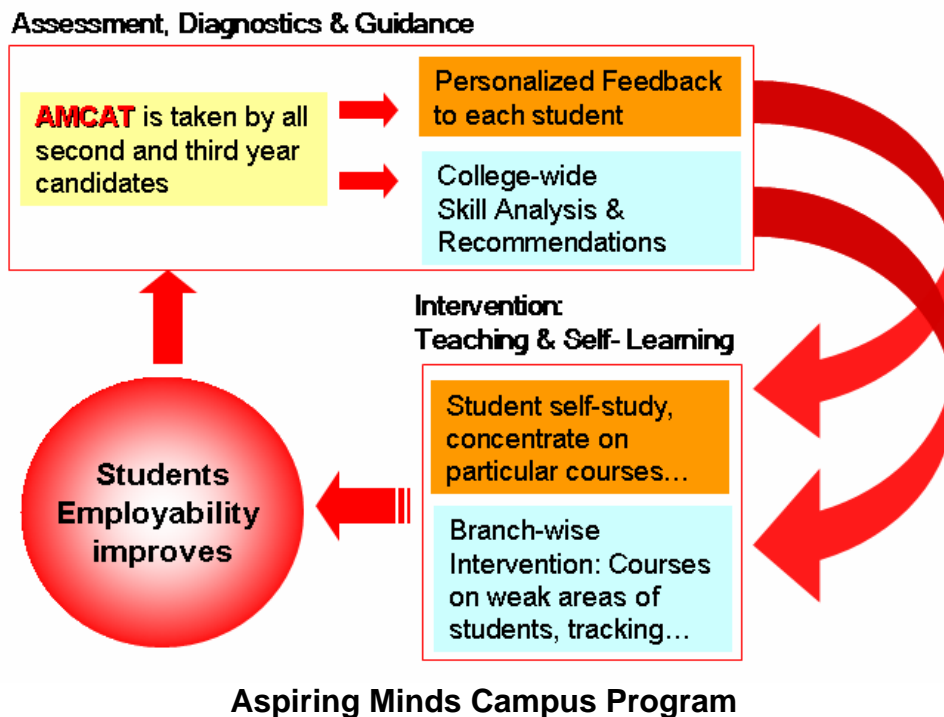
It contains both aptitude and job-specific modules. These include:

- a. English Comprehension
- b. Logical Ability
- c. Quantitative Ability
- d. Computer Literacy
- e. Computer Programming Principles and Application
- f. Electronics and Semiconductor

## ***IV. AM-Campus Program***

Aspiring Minds has devised a unique program for campuses to incorporate *Employability Assessment* into their System of Education.

The methodology is shown in the figure below.



- a. **AMCAT Conduction:** AMCAT is conducted once a year for second and third year students.
- b. **Student Self-learning:** The second year students get to know their strengths & weaknesses with respect to the industry early and can start working on their weaknesses. They have one complete year to improve themselves and become more suitable for the jobs of their choice. Also, they may get internship offers if their scores are good.
- c. **Job Opportunities:** The third year students get opportunities from multiple companies who use AMCAT as a basis for selection. They get matched to the job appropriate given their skill set through Aspiring Minds. They also get feedback and guidance to further improve.
- d. **Institute Intervention:** The institute gets a campus-wide feedback together with detailed analysis as to students from which branches are weak in which subjects and how do the students compare with students of other colleges. Aspiring Minds recommends to campus various steps it could take to improve the students' employability. The campus gets a good amount of time to take measures to improve the employability of the students.
- e. **Program Effectiveness:** AMCAT is conducted again next year. The second year students are now in third year. Through AMCAT, one finds out how

much the teaching/learning has improved the students over the last year and how to further develop the student skills.

- f. **Better Job Opportunities:** Students from third year must have improved over the last year due to the feedback, guidance from AM and college efforts. They score higher in AMCAT and get much better job opportunities from companies hiring through AMCAT and otherwise.

This scientific approach to assessment from Aspiring Minds and training/self-study by students can improve their employability manifolds. The students will be well-equipped to get a job and work in the industry.

## ***V. Conclusion***

Employability assessment is an essential need of the Higher Education System in India. Without this, all training is unguided and misguided many-a-times. To fill this gap, a standardized and scalable multidimensional platform developed by the industry is required. AMCAT designed by experts from the industry is an ideal platform to fill this gap. It can be combined in the institute education system to improve the employability of students through scientific methodologies. Through this program, the Indian Education System can equip the students better to face the industry and succeed in it.

## ***Author Information***

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