

# An **A+** candidate from a **B+** institute?

*'The more reputed the institute, higher the pay' is the philosophy. Does this mean that a highly competent student from a lesser reputed institute has to pay the price?*

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**W**hen it comes to deciding salary slabs for employees, organisations have a set of rules and regulations to follow. The industry trend has been to hire and subsequently pay different salaries for similarly qualified students but this is creating/likely to create problems if the nature of work is not segregated or is different between candidates hired from different colleges. Should companies have different slabs of salaries for employees from different colleges?

At the entry level, companies generally tend to have different salaries for employees from different colleges, asserts Harpreet Grover, co-founder and CEO of

CoCubes. He says, "Most companies historically have followed this policy. This was primarily driven by the fact that there was no other quality benchmark for shortlisting and hence, colleges served as the filter, i.e. someone who went to NIT/IIT was a good candidate to begin with. Today, there are great assessment tools available, which are easy to implement, but the inertia of the older thought process is still prevalent." According to Mona Cheriyan, COO & head human resources, Thomas Cook (India) Ltd, "Usually, the grading of the institutes is done on the basis of the quality of students, the past history of performance of employees recruited from that institute, quality of projects,

faculty, specialisations, etc. However, during the lateral hiring process when the experience profile is more than five years, most organisations give a higher weightage to the quality of experience and less to the 'institute'."

Nitinchandra Shende, sr GM (HR) – head (talent management), Persistent Systems points out that salary variations based on a candidate's educational institute depend upon individual company policies. "So, companies that value the academic foundation of their employees are quite likely to do this differentiation. On the other hand, companies, which give more

weightage to demonstrable experience than academics are likely to avoid this differentiation," he shares. This obviously puts the HR heads in a dilemma while hiring. So, how do they decide and be fair? HR heads today can rely on available new-age measurement tools to set a benchmark of quality, suggests Grover. "Companies could still have different salaries if the roles are significantly different; for example, R&D v/s plant floor, development v/s testing. But, rather than having college-assigned to roles, different salaries are assigned and candidates are hired on meritocracy," he says.

According to Ronesh Puri, MD, Executive Access, "Candidates from a B-level institute may be better than a worse candidate of an A-level institute. Therefore, not always do candidates from the same college have the same skill-sets. Yes, a lot of companies do have variants in the salary bands, but most of them have clubbed the variants for a fairer decision. HR must ensure that it also takes into account the potential of the student."

Hence, a 'work-to-salary' approach as opposed to a 'college-to-salary' one is certainly the way forward.



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