

IIT Bombay's liberal arts programme for engineering undergrads

October 2, 2023 • vajiramandravi.com



What's in today's article?

- Why in news?
- LASE programme at IIT Bombay
- How can a student get admitted to the LASE programme?
- Why could the program not commence in the past two years?
- What's next for LASE?

Why in news?

- In 2021, IIT Bombay announced a liberal arts programme called '**LASE**' for its undergraduate students admitted via JEE Advanced.
- Touted as the first-of-its-kind in the country, the programme was supposed to give the students a chance to customise their degree as per their interests.
- Two years since the launch, however, the programme has not found enough takers to begin operations.

LASE programme at IIT Bombay

- **About**

- LASE stands for Liberal Arts, Social Sciences, and Engineering, and was a one-of-its-kind multidisciplinary program launched by IIT Bombay in 2021.
- It was aimed at giving the undergraduate students a chance to move out of their respective engineering departments at the end of first year, and customise their degree as per their interests.

- **Degree to be awarded after completion of the course**

- The students under LASE would graduate with a Bachelor of Science at the end of four years in one of the following:
 - Natural Sciences;
 - Engineering Sciences;
 - Social Sciences;
 - Art and Design.
- The institute promised to assign each student with a faculty advisor to help them choose and customise their coursework.

- **Idea behind the programme**

- The idea behind the programme was to give greater flexibility to students who may be interested in disciplines other than their respective streams of engineering.
- It aimed to provide an alternative of a choice-based education to a student at IIT Bombay, as opposed to a predefined branch of engineering.
- The programme also came on the back of the New Education Policy advocating for multidisciplinary education.
 - The recently released school curriculum framework, following from NEP, allows students to choose subjects across streams of Science, Arts, and Commerce in Classes 11 and 12.

- **Difference from a conventional BTech degree at IIT Bombay**

- Students were free to enroll in courses from other departments at IIT Bombay earlier too.
- However, the number of such courses was limited by the requirements of their respective streams of engineering.
- Under LASE, however, a student could take any number of courses from any department at IIT Bombay.
- An undergraduate student pursuing an engineering degree at IIT Bombay graduates with a Bachelors of Technology (BTech) at the end of four years.
- A student admitted to a LASE programme would graduate with a Bachelor of Science (BS) degree.

How can a student get admitted to the LASE programme?

- Students could migrate to LASE from their respective streams of engineering at the end of first year, after having gone through the selection process.
 - Students at IIT Bombay begin studying the courses under their respective branch only from second year onwards, and study common subjects in their first year.
- The programme was to select about 30 students, who would then take up courses from different departments at IIT Bombay.

Why could the program not commence in the past two years?

- The programme was not met with as much enthusiasm as its makers had hoped for.
- As a result, the number of students who made it to LASE in 2022 and 2023 (3 and 6 respectively) were less than the minimum number required to run any course at IIT Bombay i.e., 10.
- There are number of reasons for the low levels of interest:
 - apprehensions about a BS degree in LASE instead of a traditional BTech degree from an IIT,
 - the risk aversion towards something novel and unfamiliar, and
 - the dismissal of liberal arts as a concept.

What's next for LASE?

- IIT Bombay has discontinued branch changes from next year onwards, owing to the suicide of a first-year-student earlier this year.
- In this context, how LASE will function is yet to be decided.

Q1) What is Bachelor of Science?

A Bachelor of Science (BS) degree is an undergraduate degree that focuses on the technical aspects of a field. It's often a requirement for competitive jobs and can open doors to many careers and further study options.

Q2) What is Bachelor of Technology?

A Bachelor of Technology (B.Tech.) is an undergraduate degree program that covers all fields of engineering and technology. The program is designed to provide comprehensive knowledge of: Mathematics, Engineering principles, Computer applications, Programming, Electronics.

Source: [Why IIT Bombay's liberal arts programme for engineering undergrads has not found takers](#)

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/arts-programme/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.