

## **Salient Features of “UGC Guidelines for Re-opening the Universities and Colleges Post Lockdown due to COVID-19 Pandemic”**

The University Grants Commission has framed Guidelines for the universities and colleges which they may follow, while reopening their campuses after lockdown and the summer vacations. These Guidelines have been vetted by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Education. The Guidelines may be adopted by the institutions as per the local conditions and directives of the Government authorities.

### **Measures Required before Re-Opening of Campuses**

- i. Before reopening of any campus, the Central or concerned State Government must have declared the area safe for opening of educational institutions. The directions, instructions, guidelines and orders issued by the Central and concerned State Government regarding safety and health in view of COVID-19 must be fully abided by the higher education institutions.
- ii. The universities and colleges shall only be allowed to open if they are outside the containment zones. Further, students and staff living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the colleges. Students and staff shall also be advised not to visit areas falling within containment zones.
- iii. The faculty, staff and students of the university and college should be encouraged to download ‘Aarogya Setu App’.

### **Modalities for Physical Opening of Colleges/Higher Education Institutions**

The Colleges/Higher Education Institutions outside the containment zones may be opened in a graded manner after consultations with concerned State/UT Governments and subject to adherence to the guidelines/SOP for safety and health protocol prepared by UGC, duly incorporating the view/comments of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, as under:

- i. For Centrally Funded Higher Education Institutions, the Head of the Institution should satisfy herself/himself regarding the feasibility of the opening of physical classes and decide accordingly.
- ii. For all other Higher Educational Institutions, e.g., State Universities, Private Universities etc., opening of physical classes to be done as per the decision of the respective State/UT Governments.

## Measures to be taken

- i. Universities and colleges may plan opening the campuses in phases, with such activities where they can easily adhere to social distancing, use of face masks and other protective measures. This may include administrative offices, research laboratories and libraries etc.
- ii. Thereafter, students of all research programmes and post-graduate students in science & technology programmes may join as the number of such students is comparatively less and norms of physical distancing and preventive measures can be easily enforced.
- iii. Further, final year students may also be allowed to join for academic and placement purposes, as per the decision of the head of the institution.

*However, for (i), (ii) and (iii) above, it should be ensured that not more than 50% of the total students should be present at any point of time and necessary guidelines/protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 are observed.*

- iv. For the programmes, other than those mentioned in paras (ii) and (iii) above, online/distance learning shall continue to be the preferred mode of teaching and shall be encouraged.
- v. However, if required, students may visit their respective departments in a small number for consultation with the faculty members, after seeking prior appointments to avoid crowding, while maintaining physical distancing norms and other safety protocols.
- vi. Some students may opt not to attend classes and prefer to study online while staying at home. Institutions may provide online study material and access to e-resources to such students for teaching-learning.
- vii. Institutions should have a plan ready for such international students who could not join the programme due to international travel restrictions or visa-related issues. Online teaching-learning arrangements should also be made for them.

## Safety Measures

### At Entry/ Exit Point(s)

- i. Crowding must be avoided at entry/ exit points. Staggered timings of entry and exit with limited strength for different programmes should be followed.

- ii. For ensuring queue management, inside and outside the premises, specific markings on the floor with a gap of 6 feet may be made and be adhered to.
- iii. Screening of students, faculty and staff, wearing of face covers/ mask, sanitizing of hands etc. must be ensured at all entry points.

### **In Classrooms and other Learning Sites**

- i. Proper sanitization at all learning sites should be ensured. Cleaning and regular disinfection (using 1% sodium hypochlorite) of frequently touched surfaces (door knobs, elevator buttons, hand rails, chairs, benches, washroom fixtures, etc.) to be made mandatory in all class rooms, laboratories, (and also) lockers, parking areas, other common areas etc. before the beginning of classes and at the end of the day. Teaching materials, computers, laptops, printers, shall be regularly disinfected with 70% alcohol swiipe.
- ii. Sitting places in classes, laboratories, computer labs, libraries etc. should be clearly marked, keeping in view the norms of physical distancing. At least one seat should be left vacant between two seats.
- iii. Wearing face cover/ mask is a must at all times and at all places inside the campus.

### **Inside the Campus**

- i. Cultural activities, meeting etc. may be avoided. However, such extra-curricular and sports activities may be allowed where physical distancing is feasible and is in accordance with the Ministry of Home Affairs guidelines, issued under Disaster Management Act, 2005 from time to time
- ii. Adequate arrangements should be made for sanitizing the entire campus, including administrative and academic buildings, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, common rooms, toilets, water stations, furniture, learning material, teaching aids, sports equipment, computers etc.
- iii. Proper sanitization of buses, other transport and official vehicles of the institution should be done.
- iv. Dustbin for collection of used facemasks, personal protective equipment, hand gloves and their disposals should be ensured as per safety norms. Provision for proper disposal of used personal protection items and general waste should be followed in accordance with CPCB guidelines (available at: [https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Projects/Bio-Medical-Waste/BMW-GUIDELINES-COVID\\_1.pdf](https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Projects/Bio-Medical-Waste/BMW-GUIDELINES-COVID_1.pdf)).

- v. For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which emphasizes that the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30°C, relative humidity should be in the range of 40-70%, intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and cross ventilation should be there.
- vi. Gymnasiums shall follow MoHFW guidelines (available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesonyogainstitutesandgymnasiums03082020.pdf>).
- vii. Swimming Pool (wherever applicable) shall remain closed.
- viii. All employees who are at higher risk, i.e., older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions to take extra precautions. They should preferably not be exposed to any front-line work requiring direct contact with the students.

### **Hostels**

- i. Hostels may be opened only in such cases where it is necessary while strictly observing the safety and health preventive measures. However, the sharing of rooms may not be allowed in hostels. Symptomatic students should not be permitted to stay in the hostels under any circumstances.
- ii. Since residential students may be coming from different locations, they shall remain in quarantine and self-monitor their health for a period of 14 days before being allowed to attend classes or as per the policy opted by the respective State Government for quarantine (even if they bring a negative test report or the university/college plan to test them on arrival).
- iii. There should be no crowding in hostel areas where students live in close proximity and share common facilities and utilities. Hence, their numbers need to be limited appropriately to avoid crowding. Also, hostel students should be called in phases.
- iv. Cleanliness is to be maintained in dining areas. Meals should be served in small batches, avoiding over-crowding. Take away options should be available for students and staff.

### **Counselling & Guidance for Mental Health**

- i. All the faculty members, students and staff should be made aware of the Web page named “Manodarpan” - created on the Ministry of Education website to provide psychosocial support for Mental Health & Well-being during the

COVID – 19 outbreak and beyond. The web page contains advisory, practical tips, posters, videos, do's and don'ts for Psychosocial support, FAQ and online query system. Also, a National Toll free Helpline (8445440632) for country wide outreach to students from schools, colleges and universities has also been set up which will provide tele-counselling to address their mental health and psychosocial issues.

- ii. Set up helplines for mental health, psychological concerns and well-being of students in Universities/ Colleges which need to be regularly monitored by Counsellors and other identified faculty.
- iii. Share the following video links of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/> on the University/ College website and with students and faculty via e-mail, through social media like Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter etc.

Practical tips to take care of your Mental Health during the Stay In  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHB3WJsLJ8s&feature=youtu.be>

Minding our minds during the COVID-19  
<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/MindingourmindsduringCoronaeditedat.pdf>

Various Health Experts on how to manage Mental health & Well Being during COVID-19 outbreak  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuKhtSehp24&feature=youtu.be>

Behavioural Health: Psycho-Social toll free helpline – 0804611007

In view of the present scenario and future uncertainties:

- i. The universities may adopt and implement these Guidelines in a transparent manner by making alterations/ additions/ modifications/ amendments to deal with particular situation(s) in the best interest of students, educational institution and the entire education system, except in respect of those guidelines that are mandatory.
- ii. In case of educational institutions located at places where the Government (Centre/ State) have imposed restrictions on gathering of public, the institutions may plan accordingly. In any case, the above recommendations shall not cause any restrictions on the guidelines/directions issued by the appropriate Government/ competent authority.

*Notwithstanding the above Guidelines, every university/ college has to ensure that it is prepared in all respects to carry out the academic activities following necessary advisories/guidelines/directions issued by the Central/State Government, Ministry of Education (earlier referred to as MHRD) or UGC from time to time to prevent the spread of COVID-19.*