

## **UGC Guidelines (D.O. 14-8/2020 (CPP-II) Dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2020) for Re-Opening the Universities and Colleges Post Lockdown due to COVID-19 Pandemic and the University of Delhi Recommendations**

Notwithstanding the severity and the scale of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the University of Delhi (DU) has to the best of its abilities remained committed to the needs and demands of teaching and learning process. DU has been passionately and adroitly adapting and adjusting itself to the demands of teaching and learning process. With the advent of the New Year and the beginning of the new semester however, as well as the slowing down of the spread and intensity of the pandemic, it is pertinent to explore the possibilities (if any) of transiting into the blended online-offline mode of teaching and learning. The said explorations are important particularly in the context of a letter dated November 5, 2020 issued by the University Grants Commission (UGC) entailing guidelines that the Universities and Colleges could follow in deliberating and deciding on the same. These guidelines are in the form of necessary steps that institutions could take and have been divided into several parts (Kindly find attached as **Annexure 1**).

The UGC guidelines are comprehensive and well detailed. However, it is pertinent to highlight a few operative parts hereunder:

**In Section 3; Sub-sections 3.3 and 3.4 of the guidelines, certain preventive measures have been given and each College/Department/Center must follow it to ensure safety in their premises and these are:**

- 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 3.3 (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.

#### **3.4. Safety concerns are pre requisite and for this it is important that**

- i. Institutions should train their staff and students to assist and undertake the work related to safety and health to prevent an outbreak of the pandemic in their campuses. Non-resident students should be allowed in campuses only after thermal scanning, sanitization of their hands, wearing of face masks and gloves. Symptomatic persons should not be permitted to enter the campus and should be advised to contact the nearest hospital for clinical assessment.
- ii. Regular visits of a counsellor may be arranged so that students can talk with the counsellor about their anxiety, stress or fear.
- iii. To avoid the risk of transmission, the students, faculty and staff should be screened and symptomatic ones be advised to get clinically assessed before allowing them entry into the campus.
- iv. Isolation facilities for symptomatic persons and quarantine facilities for those who were in contact with the positively tested persons should be there on campus or a tie-up may be made in advance with some Government hospital or approved premises or as advised by the local authorities so that, in case of necessity, prompt action may be taken. Proper arrangement of safety, health, food, water etc. should be ensured for those in quarantine and isolation facilities.
- v. For those who have tested positive, isolation facilities should be in place either on campus itself or as a prior arrangement with some nearby hospital(s) or as advised by the local authorities.
- vi. Universities and colleges should prepare a policy for restricting the outside experts on campuses, study tours, field works etc., keeping in mind the COVID-19 situation.
- vii. All such programmes and extracurricular activities should be avoided where physical distancing is not possible.
- viii. Clean and hygienic conditions, as per safety and health advisories of the concerned government departments, are to be maintained at all places, including hostel kitchens, mess, washrooms, libraries, class rooms etc.
- ix. Proper signages, symbols, posters etc. should be prominently displayed at appropriate places to remind the students, faculty and staff for maintaining physical distancing. The details of COVID-19 cell established by the

institution be prominently displayed containing the emergency number, helpline number, email id and contact details of persons to be contacted in case of any emergency in the institution.

- x. Ensure the norms of physical distancing, sanitization and hygienic conditions for use of common facilities, viz., Auditorium, Conference/Seminar Halls, Sports, Gymnasium, Canteen, Parking Area etc.

**While the University of Delhi is committed** to the concerns of safety, health and wellbeing of its students, teachers and the other supporting and non-teaching staff, yet in the light of the UGC guidelines it took on to itself the task of organizing discussions and deliberations about the same. With that objective, the Office of the Dean Students' Welfare, University of Delhi organized two back-to-back sessions with the Principals of the Colleges and the Heads of the Departments on January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2021, respectively. Both sessions were chaired by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor whereas Dean of Colleges, Director – South Campus and Registrar were also available for their valuable guidance.

The discussions in two sessions on January 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> 2021 reiterated the basic point that any plan of transition to offline mode must take into account the local conditions and peculiarities of an institution (College/Department/Center), in allowing it to deal with any eventuality arising due to the COVID-19. However, keeping the hygiene and safety concerns in utmost priority it was also felt that the following steps are a must for achieving the desired outcome:

1. Theory classes to be continued in the online mode till further notification.
2. Laboratory/Practical/Skill/Library and similar activities may be allowed between 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 in small numbers/batches by following all hygiene and safety recommendations of the UGC Guidelines.
3. January 2021 may be used for the preparations and training of the teaching and non-teaching staff and for conducting mock-drills; the schedule for the same may please be shared with the DSW Office.
4. The physical entry of the students should be completely voluntary.
5. Attendance of the students for the same should be completely voluntary and not compulsory.
6. A COVID-19 Task Group should be constituted in every College / Department / Center with at least one senior faculty member. The said Task Force shall supervise and implement UGC Guidelines and proper safety measures to prevent the spreading of COVID-19.
7. Every College / Department / Center shall notify the contact details of all members of the Task Force on their website and noticeboards.
8. Every College/Department/Center must satisfy themselves with COVID-19 protocols by adopting preventive/safety measures before allowing physical presence of the students, teachers and the other supporting and non-teaching staff in their premises.

9. It is reiterated that the final decision for re-opening shall rest on the respective College/Department/Center, under intimation to the University, since each College/Department/Center may have specific requirements.
10. UGC Guidelines (D.O. 14-8/2020 (CPP-II); Dated 5<sup>th</sup> November, 2020) shall be final in all aspects.

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