UGC Guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar in view of the COVID-19 Pandemic

University Grants Commission
Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg
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I. Introduction

Keeping in view the prevailing situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic; the order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India regarding the cancellation of School Board examinations for class/grade-XII; the earlier order of the Hon'ble Supreme Court upholding the UGC's guidelines of July 6, 2020 regarding terminal semester/ final year examinations; the earlier UGC guidelines on examination and academic calendar dated April 29, 2020, July 6, 2020 and September 24, 2020; and, the larger interest of students, the following guidelines are being issued by the UGC in respect of examinations and the academic calendar for universities, colleges and institutions deemed to be universities (who are collectively called "**Higher Education Institutions**" in these guidelines) in continuation of the earlier guidelines.

II. Examinations

The provisions as contained in the guidelines issued earlier as mentioned above shall apply for the current academic session 2020-21. Further, the Terminal Semester/ Final Year Examinations (2020-2021) be compulsorily conducted in offline (pen & paper)/ online/ blended (online + offline) mode by no later than August 31, 2021 following the prescribed protocols/ guidelines related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

For intermediate semester/year students, assessment shall be based on internal evaluation and previous semester as suggested in 2020 guidelines.

III. Academic Calendar

The provisions contained in the UGC Guidelines dated 24.09.2020 shall be applicable for the academic session 2021-2022. For students of the intermediate semester/year, the Higher Education Institutions may start their academic session (in online/offline/blended mode) as early as possible, following the guidelines/directions related to the COVID-19 pandemic issued by the appropriate government/competent authority.

In addition, the following guidelines shall also apply regarding the academic calendar for the first-year under-graduate and post-graduate students in Higher Education Institutions:

1. The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's order dated June22, 2021 in Writ Petition(s) (Civil) No. 522 of 2021 (Mamta Sharma versus Central Board of Secondary Education & Others) has noted as follows:

"....Attorney General for India by pointing out that U.G.C. will be issuing necessary instructions to ensure that the admission process by the colleges and institutions should commence only after the declaration of results by the C.B.S.E. and I.C.S.E., including the State Boards."

Accordingly, Higher Education Institutions shall ensure that the admission process for undergraduate courses/programmes for the academic session 2021-2022 commences only after the declaration of results by the CBSE, ICSE and State Boards. It is expected that all the School Boards will declare their results for the class/grade-XII examinations by July 31, 2021.

2. Admissions to the first year courses/programmes for the session 2021-2022 shall be completed by no later than September 30, 2021. The last date for admissions to fill up the remaining vacant seats shall be October 31, 2021. The relevant documents of the qualifying examination can be accepted up to December 31, 2021.

3. The academic session 2021-2022 shall commence latest by October 1, 2021 for first semester/year students.

4. Accordingly, Higher Education Institutions shall follow the calendar given below for the academic session 2021-2022:

<table>
<tr><td>Admission Process for Undergraduate Level Programmes (in view of point no. 1 of Academic Calendar)</td><td>To Commence only after the declaration of results by the C.B.S.E. and I.C.S.E., including the State Boards. It is expected that School Boards will declare the results of the class/grade-XII examinations by 31.07.2021.</td></tr>
<tr><td>Completion of Admission Process for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Programmes in online/offline/blended mode</td><td>30.09.2021</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commencement of Classes for intermediate semester/year students in online/offline/blended mode</td><td>As early as possible</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commencement of Classes of Undergraduate and Postgraduate students' Fresh batch (First Semester/Year)</td><td>*Latest by 01.10.2021</td></tr>
<tr><td>Preparatory Break</td><td rowspan="8">**To be planned by the Higher Education Institutions</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conduct of Examinations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Semester Break</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commencement of Classes for Even Semester</td></tr>
<tr><td>Preparatory Break</td></tr>
<tr><td>Conduct of Examinations</td></tr>
<tr><td>Semester Break begins</td></tr>
<tr><td>Semester Break ends</td><td>31.07.2022</td></tr>
<tr><td>Commencement of Next Academic Session for this batch</td><td>01.08.2022</td></tr>
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*If there is a delay in declaration of result of the qualifying examinations, Higher Education Institutions may plan and start the academic session by October 18, 2021. The teaching-learning process may continue in offline/ online/ blended mode.

**Higher Education Institutions may plan for classes, breaks, conduct of examinations, semester break etc. during the period October 1, 2021 to July 31, 2022 following necessary protocols/guidelines/directions/advisories issued by the Central/State Governments and competent authorities from time to time, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

5. In view of the financial hardships being faced by parents due to lockdowns and related factors, a full refund of fees should be made on account of all cancellations of admissions/ migrations of students up to October 31, 2021 for the academic session 2021-2022 as a special case. It is made clear that the entire fee, including all charges, should be refunded (i.e. there should be zero cancellation charges) on account of cancellations/ migrations up to October 31, 2021. Thereafter, on cancellation/ withdrawal of admissions up to December 31, 2021, the entire fee collected from a student should be refunded in full after deducting not more than Rs.1000/- as processing fee.

6. The guidelines issued by the UGC on April 29, 2020 and July 6, 2020 highlighting the modes of teaching, conduct of examinations, importance of physical & social distancing etc. should be read along with the present guidelines and shall remain mandatory, but the present guidelines shall prevail in the event of any conflict.

7. The present guidelines are subject to the advisories/directives issued by the apex statutory bodies/councils concerned, e.g., AICTE, NCTE, BCI, NMC, DCI, INC, PCI, AYUSH etc. regarding examinations and academic calendars.

Notwithstanding the present guidelines regarding the conduct of examinations and commencement of the next academic session, every Higher Education Institution shall ensure that it is prepared in all respects to carry out the academic activities following necessary protocols/guidelines/directions/advisories issued by the Central/State Governments or competent authorities from time to time, in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.