

1. Considerations Guiding the Committee

1.1 This is the second part of the Covid Undergraduate Committee report on when and how the Academic Session should be conducted in June-October 2020. The Committee in making its recommendations recognising that it is doing so for an extraordinary and unprecedented situation.

1.2 Since it was in nobody's interest that we lose the semester, the effort is to do our best to save the semester with the most inclusive procedures of education and evaluation. The Committee is aware of the fact that one size does not fit all; hence diverse options of education and evaluation are being suggested. These measures cannot be claimed to be perfect but we hope that they are good enough to help us cope with an extraordinary situation.

1.3 The pandemic has made us uncertain of the future at several levels and this uncertainty has caused a lot of anxiety. We are trying to lessen this anxiety by factoring the fact of uncertainty in the teaching-learning plan for the coming semester. Consequently, be it teaching-learning or evaluation diverse options have been provided.

2. Start of Academic Session and Mode of Transaction

2.1 The Committee has consulted with the student body both directly as well as through its representatives. The consultation brought home the umpteen challenges faced by the students. Absence of access to the internet; crowded or toxic home spaces; high personal distress making studying from home especially difficult for some. At the same time, it was generally recognised that given the absolute necessity of social distance as a precautionary measure, it was not possible to open the university campus **for all** anytime soon in this semester

2.2 However, once the governmental restrictions on opening of hostels is lifted and safe travel is possible, those students who believe that they would be able to function more effectively from campus will be allowed to return. Such return will need to be regulated

by the University administration keeping in view the difficulties faced by the student and the need to fulfil the demands of social distance.

2.3 The Committee had at first proposed that the Academic Session begin as **originally** indicated in the University calendar with classes being conducted in the **online** mode only. However, after consultations with the students especially those facing heightened exclusion it is now being proposed that the university may **virtually reopen for the faculty on 15th of June but be virtually opened for students from 1st July** and classes continue till October. The November- December period is being kept free as a back-up measure in case any of the planned activities cannot happen for some or all students. This provides greater chance of the January -April 2021 semester to begin on time.

2.4 The fortnight gap in the opening of the university for teachers and students is being introduced so that:

- faculty can prepare for the online classes and provide the materials to be employed in the classes in advance especially to students who have internet constraints
- when prohibitions are lifted and safe travel possible then the campus could be selectively opened for students who have sent in their requests in accordance with para 2.2 above.

2.3 In order to minimise the hardship of internet access, it is recommended that the University opt for a **software with a phone in facility**. As it has been extensively checked for its effectiveness by the Student Academic Committee, the purchase of Cisco Webex (even though it is more expensive) is recommended because it has a phone-in option which enables students to join the classes with their phones. This feature will be beneficial to everyone.

2.4 The practise of sending materials through pen drives for those with no internet access should be continued.

2.5 The University scheme providing monetary support for upgradation of internet packages should continue. Support for upgrading phone plans may be added in the scheme for those students who cannot avail of internet upgradation.

3. Scheduling of Classes, Tutorials and Duration of Class Hours

3.1 It is proposed that the duration of every class be 45 minutes with a 15 minutes break between lectures. This is being recommended as the offline system of class hours was found to be burdensome by all.

3.2 In order to maximise the use of teaching expertise and to keep both sections on the same page, separate timetables shall not be created for each section. Instead faculty should make a topic level division and share teaching duties. The time table shall

3.3 In recognition of the domestic responsibilities of both students and teachers, all lectures should be scheduled from 9am to 2.00 pm.

3.4 By reason of the strong demand from both senior and junior students' it is recommended that tutorials should be continued. However, keeping in view the need to maximally utilise airtime, tutorials should not be conducted for small groups on an everyday basis. Instead one tutorial of an hour's duration should be conducted every week for each subject.

3.5 The tutorials shall be separately conducted for each section. In addition to the tutorials, tutors should also moderate discussions on particular topics on the message forum which is being set up by the Student Academic Committee. All the documents, recordings etc should also be housed in the message forum in order to allow for ease of access and to keep a robust connection between the materials and the discussion.

3.6 Students are expected to engage with the materials at times and ways, which works for them. Consequently, there should be no insistence on attendance and maintenance of attendance records.

4. Evaluation

4.1 In order to ensure a continuous connection between teaching and testing, it is recommended that four short tests of ten marks each should be administered in each subject at the conclusion of every three weeks of teaching. **Each test should only examine from the topics / materials covered in the previous three weeks**

4.2 In addition to these four tests every student should be required to undertake one project of 20+5 marks in every subject according to the present staggered system. In approving project topics, the students access to internet resources should be taken into consideration. A student not having adequate access should be asked to prepare a project on the basis of materials available with the student or provided by the faculty.

4.3 A schedule stating the dates of the tests and projects should be provided. The 10 marks tests should be scaled up to 25. Whilst all students shall be required to do all 5 components of the evaluation, the final grade should be constituted by the best 4 of the 5 testing components.

4.4 In case a student is unable to do a particular test or tests or fails to clear them, an opportunity to appear or reappear in such test shall be provided in the last week of November. Keeping in view the constraints within which some people may operate, docking of marks shall not be imposed on late submission of project. In recognition of the fact that all students are not similarly situated, students are at liberty to devise their preferred mode of submitting to evaluation be it the semester long or November tests or a combination of both methods. **However, the computation of the final grade will not be undertaken till all 5 components have been completed. This requirement should be met even if a student clears the course without attempting all five components.**

4.5 Since each continuous evaluation test will be designed according to the teaching undertaken before the test is administered, in order to ensure that all students engage with each part of the curriculum, the repeat exams will also be conducted similarly.

4.6 No R will be affixed on the repeat result. There will be no system of improvement. A repeat can be only attempted if a student has not attempted the particular unit test earlier.

4.7 Students who are not able to clear the course even after the repeat exam will be provided one more opportunity to clear the course in December by either attempting an essay or redoing the project, however this attempt should be affixed with an R. Students who attempt the exam for the first time in November should be allowed to do the December repeat without an R. By way of abundant caution, it is stated that R will be affixed only for the third attempt made by a student.

5 Other Recommendations

5.1 With the adoption of the online mode of teaching, there is need for enhanced systems support for both students and faculty. It is therefore recommended that additional software personnel be hired in the IT department.

5.2 The Scholarship Fund may on a case to case basis provide some aid to those facing special hardships by reason of the pandemic.

5.3 Whilst the aforesaid recommendations are meant to minimize tension and distress for all students, student who by reason of their life circumstances need accommodation or support not mentioned in this scheme may write in confidence to the Convener of the Academic and Examination Committee, seeking such support. The Convener should presume that the student is acting in good faith and respect confidentiality.

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