

Report of the UG Committee

on

Conduct of Exams for Jan-April 2020

In the Wake of Covid 19

Amita Dhanda (Chair)

N Vasanthi

Neha Pathakji

Sourabh Bharati

Ashish K James

I.1 Introduction

Pursuant to the circular dated 6th May 2020 whereby you had constituted a committee to recommend examination pattern for the BA LLB (hons) programme for the current semester as also related issues in relation to commencement of the next academic session in the light of the UGC Guidelines. Considering the urgency of the matter, this report is primarily concentrated on the examination pattern and only incidentally looked at the issues concerning the next academic session. **We will consider issues in relation to the next academic session in a supplementary report.**

I.2 Principles and their Rationale

- 1.** The Committee is faced with an unprecedented situation. A crisis of this nature has never been experienced by any of us in living memory. Most of us have reflected on suchlike situation by teaching and learning Act of God in our tort law courses. An Act of God primarily waives out the traditional grounds of liability and the damage rests where it falls. To draw from this defence would have meant that we just accept the vagaries of life and ask the student body to accept what life's lottery had dealt out to them. The other way of approaching the same situation was to see how to minimise the impact of an Act of God. And let each person benefit from divine mercy rather than be besieged by the wrath of God. Life is uncertain and there is need to roll with the punches but rules are efforts to maximise the justice of a situation. We recognised that we were in a sui generis situation and to address the problems of the situation needed to extrapolate from analogical principles.
- 2.** The UGC had set up a Committee to address the examination situation during the pandemic and it is important to note that the Committee primarily laid down guidelines and asked every University to adapt the guidelines to their particular situation. Since we were halted halfway, we had undertaken half the activities of this semester. To just go with the CGPA awarded till date meant that we were rendering null what had been done by both students and faculty. And to only rely on the efforts of this semester on the logic that everyone is always meant to work hard was adopting a moral standard which was impractical. Moreover, it was not so much rewarding effort as the luck which accompanied the pursuit of the effort.
- 3.** Consequently, the Committee decided to adopt the following guiding principles. Firstly, the UGC Guidelines which were the closest to positivist normative support available to us. The fact that the Guidelines provided guidance but allowed for flexibility in their application made relying on them even more suited to our goal of searching for as fair a solution as possible. In order to lessen the impact of the pandemic on each situation we decided to adopt a No Detriment Policy which was driven by the goal of minimising the adverse impact of the pandemic on the opportunities available to each student. Lastly, we felt that each student should be judged by their own effort, whether in the present or the past. The No Detriment Policy enables all students to put their best foot forward by allowing them to benefit from both their academic track record as indicated by their CGPA as well as their performances in this semester. We were not attempting to see that no one was unfairly advantaged but trying our best to ensure that to the extent humanly possible

no one was unfairly disadvantaged. At least, each person should be allowed to rely on the best versions of themselves.

I.3 Process

The committee had three virtual meetings in addition to several email and WhatsApp exchanges. In these meetings the Committee considered several alternatives such as requiring essays to be written only on the strength of the provided course materials; a pass-fail option; a scale up of the examination component already completed in the semester; extrapolation from the CGPA. Each of the options had their advantages and disadvantages; hence, it was evident no one method could be employed. After intensive consultations with the students the Committee decided (as suggested by the UGC guidelines) to place emphasis on the already completed components of this semester and also appropriately incorporate the students' performance in previous semesters. In line with the other two principles adopted by the Committee of minimising adverse impact and foregrounding performance indicated by students' track record, a No Detriment Policy was formulated and the adoption of the same is being recommended. The details of the method of evaluation are as follows.

I.4 The Evaluation Scheme for Jan-April 2020

- 1 The scheme adopts a scale up system coupled with a No Detriment Policy
2. The system shall operate as follows

Method of Evaluation

- (i) The project and mid-semester score of each subject will be added up. This score will then be compared to a score out of 50 derived from the students CGPA by dividing the corresponding percentage value in the attached table by 2. The two scores will be compared **and the higher of the two scores** be it this semester's performance or the performance of the previous semesters shall be the end semester mark for the student. The mid-semester and project marks will be retained as it is.

Provided that this scheme will not apply to courses for which evaluation has been completed.

Justification

The end semester has not taken place and marks are being provided by a fiction. The No Detriment Policy requires that those marks should be inducted which represent the academic track record of the student. The effort put in the courses of this semester is being recognised by incorporating the actually obtained marks.

Non -Appearance in mid-semester exam

- (ii) In case a student has missed a mid-semester exam for medical or other approved reason but has submitted the project, the mid-semester score would be deemed to be the same as the project score. After settling this score the procedure outlined in (i) above shall be followed for settling the end semester marks.

Justification

The student had been allowed an end semester scale up. The opportunity of making the score has been lost because the end semester is not taking place due to the pandemic. This method is still evaluating on the present and past actual performance of the student.

Repeat Exams

- (iii) Since the repeat end semester will also not take place, if a student does not pass the course by using the procedure followed in (i) above then in lieu of the repeat exam the student can either redo their project to replace the marks obtained in the project or write an essay to replace the mid-semester score. The procedure on (i) shall be then be applied to the new score. No R will be affixed on the obtained score. In case the student fails to clear the course despite this effort a second attempt will be allowed but with an R.

Definition

An **essay** will evaluate the general understanding of subject on the strength of the provided course materials.

A project is a researched effort on a particular topic.

Justification

The loss of opportunity to attempt the end semester exam is being compensated by allowing the student to make up. For the first exam of the semester the student is being allowed to make the effort without an R. But the R will be affixed to the second effort.

Reregistered students

- (iv) A student who has appeared in the repeat mid-semester exam in this semester can obtain a scale up by clubbing the repeat mid-semester and project marks. In case that does not enable the student to clear the course then the procedure outlined for repeat exams in (iii) above shall apply.

Provided that for a student who has not appeared in the repeat mid-semester the marks obtained by the student in the original mid-semester for the course shall apply.

Provided further NDP will not apply to re-registered students

Justification

Since the lack of end semester exam impacts more harshly on the reregistered student an opportunity to clear the exam is being provided however NDP is not being allowed as it would equal to a double advantage.

Residuary Clause

- (v) In case there is any student whose evaluation difficulties are not incorporated in the aforesaid clauses then the case of such student/students shall be addressed by analogically applying the principles outlined in this scheme and the reasoned recommendation shall be placed before the vice chancellor for final approval.

Justification

To provide for unexpected and rare situations.

I.5 General Guidelines

1. In view of the stress experienced by the students the procedure of docking of marks shall not be followed in relation to any project submitted in this semester.
2. The deadline of 31st May provided by the vice chancellor in his 2nd April directive shall apply to all pending projects, seminar papers and other assignments.
3. Students who are unable to complete the assignments mentioned in 1.5.2 by reason of net accessibility, lockdown related difficulties, then such student may seek an extension stating the reason for the same to the Convener of the Academic Examination Committee who will then make a reasoned submission to the Vice Chancellor. All such requests shall be considered by applying the No Detriment and Reasonable Accommodation Policy in letter and spirit.

Provided that the application should be made only after all possibilities of being able to do the assignment has been exhausted.

4. Whilst all support will be provided to all students to complete their academic responsibilities, students are required to do so by following the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. The Academic Misconduct regulations will be applied with full rigour and the sanctions outlined in the Regulations shall be strictly enforced. Students are therefore advised to seek support confidentially or otherwise. **Confidentiality will be respected but academic misconduct will not be condoned.**

In line with your directive of 6th May we submit the aforesaid report on how to address the matter of examinations for January- April 2020 in the wake of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

(Ashish K James) (Sourabh Bharati) (Neha Pathakji) (N V Vasanthi) (Amita Dhanda)

13.5.2020