No.F.1-1/2017(Secy) 18th July, 2017

PUBLIC NOTICE

University Grants Commission (UGC) has drafted *University Grants Commission (Online Education) Regulations, 2017*. These draft Regulations are attached alongwith for seeking feedback/comments from general public/stakeholders.

It is requested to send your feedback/comments on the above draft Regulations to UGC by email on **ugc.online2017@gmail.com** on or before **18th August, 2017**.

(Jaspal S. Sandhu)
Secretary

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the _____ of _____, 2017

In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 26 read with clause (j) of section 12 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956), the University Grants Commission makes the following regulations, namely :-

PART - I

PRELIMINARY

1. **Short title, application and commencement –**
    1. These regulations may be called the University Grants Commission (Online Education) Regulations, 2017.
    2. These Regulations lay down the minimum standards of instruction for the grant of degree or diploma, through online mode, and shall be in addition to and not in violation of any other Regulations, Notifications, Guidelines or Instructions issued by the Commission from time to time.

    3. These regulations shall apply to a University referred to under clause (f) of section 2 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, an Institution Deemed to be University under section 3 of the said Act, for all degree or diploma programmes, other than programmes in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, physiotherapy and programmes not permitted to be offered in online mode by any other regulatory body.

    4. These regulations shall come into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. DEFINITIONS AND INTERPRETATION

   2.1   'Act', unless otherwise specified, means the University Grants Commission Act, 1956;

2.2 'Academic Council/Senate' is the body empowered to take decisions regarding all academic matters in a Higher Education Institution including the decision regarding permitting online courses of studies in compliance to these regulations;

2.3 'Commission' means the University Grants Commission established under the University Grants Commission Act, 1956;

2.4 'Credit' means the Unit award gained as learning outcome by a learner by study efforts of a minimum of thirty hours required to acquire the prescribed level of learning in respect of that Unit and satisfactory performance in the prescribed assessment;

2.5 'Degree' means a degree specified under sub-section (3) of section 22 of the Act;

2.6 'Diploma' means such award, not being a degree, granted by a higher educational institution, certifying that the recipient has successfully completed a course of study of minimum one year and above duration or as prescribed by the Regulatory Authority as the case may be or has acquired equivalent credits prescribed;

2.7 'Higher Educational Institution (HEI)' means a university covered under clause (f) of section 2 and an institution deemed to be a university covered under section 3 of the University Grants Commission Act, 1956, which is imparting by means of conducting regular classes or through open and distance learning systems or through online system, higher education or research therein.

2.8 'Learner Support Services' (LSS) means and includes such services as are provided by a Higher Educational Institution in order to facilitate the teaching-learning experiences by the learner to the level prescribed by the Commission in respect of a programme of study;

2.9 'MOOCS' means Massive Open Online Courses as provided under UGC (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM) Regulations 2016;

2.10 'online programme' means the recognized course(s) of studies leading to award of a degree or diploma by approved institutions under these regulations imparting online learning instruction by such institutions through learning management system using e-tutorials, web resources,

multimedia technology interface, web-based applications and e-learning materials designed towards providing flexible learning opportunities by overcoming separation of teacher and learner.

2.11 'e-Learning Material' (eLM) means and includes contents in the form of readable course material, in digital format delivered mainly through learning management system (LMS), which is inter- alia self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed at the learner, and amenable to self-evaluation, and enables the learner to acquire the prescribed level of learning in a course of study, but does not include text-books or guide-books;

2.12 'Study Module' means a modular unit of learning material (eLM) which is inter- alia self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed at the learner, and amenable to self-evaluation, and enables the learner to acquire the prescribed level of learning in a course of study and includes contents in the form of a combination of any of the following e-Learning content, Video Lectures, Virtual Classroom sessions, Audio Podcasts, Virtual Simulation, Virtual Lab sessions, and Self-Assessment Tests.

3. ONLINE LEARNING PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION:

3.1. Institutions may design, develop and deliver Online Programmes leading to the award of a Degree or Diploma via the Internet, once recognized for the same as under these regulations.

3.2. The Programmes may be designed for conventional learners, as well as working professionals and other individuals aspiring to acquire knowledge and associated academic credentials.

3.3. The entire Program delivery process shall be conducted online via a suitably designed online technology platform.

3.4. The above mentioned platform shall be integrated with UIDAI-AADHAAR, in order to verify the identity of learners, at the time of application as well as through the duration of the programme including examinations. A LMS should be used as part of the above platform, in order to allow the administration/management and tracking of courses and students learning activities.

3.5. Study Modules may be made available to the learners for each of the courses that form a part of the Program.

3.6. Apart from the actual program delivery, other components such as Counseling Process, Online Application Processing and Fee Payment etc should also be provided Online..

3.7. Continuous assessment should be adopted.

3.8. Examinations shall be conducted online, in technologically supervised mode. Online computer based testing platforms with provisions for integration with UIDAI-AADHAR and live audio/video monitoring via webcam and screen capture shall be used. Wherever possible, proctored examination shall be conducted.

3.10. Examinations may also be conducted on campus of the HEIs, with UIDAI – AADHAAR biometric authentication of each student, screen capture of the systems used for the exam, and CCTV Recording along with live online supervision.

3.11. Institutions shall upload the mandatory self disclosure for online programmes on its website every year and undergo third party audit every two years and internal quality audit every year.

4. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR AN INSTITUTION TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR ONLINE PROGRAMMES:

4.1. The HEI should have been in existence as a University for at least five years.

4.2. The HEI should be NAAC Accredited with a valid minimum score of 3.25 on 4 point scale.

4.3. An HEI may apply for approval to offer online programmes in only those disciplines in which it has already been offering the same or similar programmes in regular mode (of classroom teaching) except the programmes disallowed as in clause 1.3 and from which at least one batch been graduated.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR ONLINE PROGRAMMES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Eligible HEIs applying for recognition to offer Online Programmes would be required to fulfill the following requirements:

i. 'Program Development & Planning' for each of the Programs being applied for.

ii. Provisioning and Establishment of the Technology Infrastructure required for program development and delivery.

iii. Fulfill the Staff Requirements as detailed herein.

iv. Ensure establishment of a Quality Assurance Process as detailed herein.

5.1. **Program Development and Planning:** The institutions are required to prepare a Program Project Report (PPR) before applying to introduce any online program duly approved by its academic council. The main contents of the PPR would be the following.

(a) Program's mission & objectives: The Higher Educational Institution (HEI) should define the mission statement and objectives for the program to be launched, which should reflect the strategic direction and the academic goals of the HEI.

(b) Relevance of the program with HEI's Mission and Goals: The HEI should plan for such a program to be offered through online mode that is relevant to the HEI's mission & goals and should prove to be major contributing factor in its achievement.

(c) Nature of prospective target group of learners: The HEI should identify the target group of learners. It is required to understand their learning needs and the curriculum should be designed accordingly.

(d) Appropriateness of program for the online mode to acquire specific skills and competence: The HEI should clearly identify the learning outcomes for the program which should cover the specific skills and competence to be acquired by the learner. The program should be aimed appropriately to those learning outcomes.

(e) Curriculum Development, Instructional Design and Assessment: Instructional Design includes developing the outcome based education curriculum, detailed modular syllabi and expected learning

outcomes mapped to each module, credits and duration of the program.

(f) Procedure for admissions: The HEI should define the admission policy for the program with minimum eligibility and fee structure.

(g) Requirement of the Skilling Support: The HEI shall provide clear statement about the skilling support to the learners to perform the practical learnings prescribed in the program.

(h) Quality assurance mechanism and expected program outcomes: The HEI should implement quality assurance and quality enhancement practices to ensure continuous quality improvement.

5.2. **Technology**

The HEIs are required to have following technology enabled infrastructure for online programs:

I. Technology for Content Development

(i) Video studio set-up with recording and related facilities including technical editing facility for graphics/ animation creation.

(ii) live video-conferencing/ live lecture facilities for conducting online classes/ webinars.

(iii) The content / e-learning material may be created for posting on the LMS in the following forms :

- E Learning Modules
- Video Lectures
- Audio Podcasts
- Virtual Labs
- Virtual Simulations
- eBooks
- Live Virtual Classroom Sessions

II. Technology for Course / Program Delivery & Administration

The entire Program delivery process shall be conducted online via a suitably designed online platform. The platform should have the following capabilities / features -

a) Learner Authentication – Platform shall be integrated with UIDAI- AADHAAR, in order to verify the identity of learners, at the time of application as well as through the duration of the

program, and during examination via biometric authentication integrated with AADHAR.

b) Online Application - Students would be required to enroll via an online application system supporting uploading of scanned documents.

c) Payment Gateway - Cashless / Digital Payments should be mandatory, and Payments toward program fees should be accepted via an Online Payment Gateway.

d) Learning Management System - The HEIs must have an efficient Learning Management System (LMS) which provides ability to keep track of delivery of eLearning courses, learner's engagement, assessment, results, and reporting all in one centralized location. The LMS should be enabled with facility of analytical tools, other advanced tools and teachers should be trained to extract the relevant reports.

e) The system should also ensure tracking of Learners engagement with features such as logout with no interaction for certain time, capturing videos of interactions etc.

III. **Technology for Evaluation & Assessment:**

HEI's shall be required to establish a robust Computer Based Testing System for 'Proctored Online Examinations', with the following features

- Integration with AADHAAR for learner authentication
- Screen and Web Cam Recording for Live Invigilation & Proctoring as well as archival / record keeping.
- Provisions for storage of all exam proctoring/ invigilation videos recordings for at least 10 years.
- Randomized / Adaptive testing using both Objective and Subjective type of questions.
- Provision for scheduling and conducting exams over multiple test dates.

HEI shall ensure conduct of in-semester and end-semester examinations using technology enabled interface with all the security arrangements ensuring transparency and credibility of the examinations.

Compliance with IT Policy of Government of India

- All software and data relating to the application, learning and exam portal shall be hosted on servers within India, either at a Data Center at the University or a third party Data Center located in India.

- The Institutions should ensure compliance with CERT-IN guideline in terms of cyber security and acquire certification for the same.

Other / Interoperability

Additional Information Communication Technologies (ICT) including those developed by National Mission on Education Through Information and Communication Technology (NEMICT) may also be harnessed, for efficiently providing learning process, and administrative functioning and for maintenance of updated information at all times in respect of status of admissions, registration, for managing teaching-learning activities through online support for interactive learning with learner feedback, to facilitate the use of Open Educational Resources (OER), Massive Open Online courses (MOOCs) and for continuous as well as comprehensive evaluation, certification, and other student support.

5.3. **Staff Requirement (Full-Time):** The HEI intending to offer the online programs has to appoint requisite staff as prescribed below:

a) **Administrative Staff:**

i) **Director**:

Director (Online Programs) will be a senior level administrative officer responsible for the overall coordination of the Online

programs and shall have the Qualifications and Experience as prescribed for Registrar under the UGC regulations as amended from time to time.

ii) **Deputy Director / Deputy Registrar**:

There will be one Deputy Director or Deputy Registrar with the Qualifications and Experience as prescribed for Deputy Registrar under the UGC regulations as amended from time to time.

iii) **Assistant Director (AD)/Asstt. Registrar (AR)**:

Initially two AD/AR may be appointed with the Qualifications and Experience as prescribed for Assistant Registrar under the UGC regulations as amended from time to time.

b) Academic Staff:

i) **Program Coordinator:**

There will be one Program Coordinator for each of the academic program offered through online mode. The program coordinator will be senior academic staff at the level of Professor / Associate Professor with specialization in the subject area of the concerned program. He/she will be responsible for all academic issues pertaining to the particular program.

ii) **Course Coordinator:**

There will be a course coordinator for each course /paper in the program offered online. The course coordinator will be academic staff at the level of Assistant Professor in the relevant subject area. The course coordinators will be responsible for delivery of the courses concerned and developing in-semester online assessment and to evaluate the learners in an online program.

iii) **Teaching /Learning Assistant (TAs):**

There will be one teaching assistant if the number of learners in a course become > 500. One TA will be appointed for every additional 500 learners in the course to support the course coordinators. The TAs should have Masters degree in the concerned subject and

should be techno-professionally competent for imparting online learning activities.

iv) **Certified Examiners:**

In addition to the program coordinator and course coordinators the HEIs may, if required, appoint certified examiners for the assessment of the online learners from among the qualified faculty and staff of the institution on part time basis with appropriate honorarium.

c) **Technical and Support Staff:**

Following Technical Staff will be required:

(i) Technical Manager (Production)-1

- o Technical Associate (Audio-Video recording & editing) -1
- o Technical Assistant (Audio-Video recording) -2
- o Technical Assistant (Audio-Video editing) -2
- o Technical Associate (Graphics/Animation) -1
- o Technical Assistant (Graphics/Animation) -1

(ii) Technical Manager (Admission, Examination & Result)-1

- o Technical Assistant (Admission, Examination & Result)-3

(iii) Technical Manager(LMS& Data Management)-1

- o Technical Assistant (Uploading LMS& Data Management)-3

(iv) There will be one Section Officer with appropriate support staff for administrative support.

5.4. **Requirements of Courses to be Fit for Online Mode:**

5.4.1. There should be clearly defined modular course contents, to be delivered online, with uniform minimum standards for performance of objectively measurable skills which must be achieved at the end of particular module. Such outcome based curriculum should be mapped with the learning outcomes set out sequentially on a gradation of increasing complexity that students are expected to acquire at the end of course / program.

5.4.2. The course, unless meant for specific class of working and experienced professionals, should not have component of hands on

skills / laboratory based learning in the curriculum and nomenclature of the program should not reflect domain knowledge in such areas.

5.4.3. Course architecture: - The course architecture should be adaptive for non-synchronous/ synchronous learning and to accommodate multiple learning cycles / school calendars. Architecture has to permit the online teacher/instructor to add content, activities and assessments to extend learning opportunities and should be easy to navigate. It should provide for maximum use of the capabilities of the online medium.

5.4.4. Instructional Strategies: Instruction includes activities that engage students in active learning. It should provide students with multiple learning paths to master the content, based on student needs. The teacher, through the LMS, be able to engage students in learning activities that address a variety of learning styles and preferences. The course must provide opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasingly complex ways. Instructional strategies and the contents should reflect multicultural education and shall be accurate, updated and adaptive to learning activities.

5.4.5. Availability of assessment mechanism: Courses must have a precise assessment mechanism for the identified learning outcomes at each level for both continuous in-semester assessment and for the end semester examinations.

5.4.6. Identified technological interface and interoperability: The course should be able to utilize variety of technology tools, has a user friendly interface and meet accessibility standards for interoperability and access for learners with special needs.

There should be identified hardware, Web browser and software requirements specified along with the prerequisite skills in the use of technology. Interoperability technical standard has to allow sharing content, questions, assessments and results among different learning

management systems with appropriate content-specific tools and software.

5.4.7. Legal / professional considerations:

The course in the area governed by the professional councils should not be offered without prior approval of the concerned professional / statutory council. In case HEIs intend to offer courses in such subject areas, the PPR submitted along with the application for approval must include copy of the permission granted by the concerned professional / statutory council for offering such programs. Compliance to the requirements of the appropriate professional / statutory council for the programs covered in their domain will be responsibility of institution offering such program and the Commission will not be held responsible for any juridical issues arising out of non-compliance to such requirements.

5.5. **Learners Requirements for Enrollment to Online Programs:** Learners to be enrolled for the online courses are to be acquainted with requisite information literacy and communication skills in order to effectively participate in the online learning environment. However, for the learners, who are not appropriately tech savvy, some hands-on training / virtual demo may be provided to ensure that they have acquired relevant IT competencies to participate in online learning. There must be a help-line for technical assistance throughout the semester.

5.6. **Learner's Authentication Requirements:**
The HEIs shall require exercising proper learner's authentication practice to ensure the academic integrity. The students, at the time of enrolment, will be required to provide the ADHAAR Number and verify their information for authentication. The HEIs have to observe following mechanisms to verify the identity of online students using Aadhaar OTP mechanism throughout the cycle of an online course including registration, learning, participation, assignments, examination and academic credit. Necessary infrastructure / software need to be available.

AUTHENTICATION MECHANISM	Software / Infrastructure Required	Processes
At time of Application/Enrollment	UIDAI-Aadhaar Integration with Online Application System	Applicant enters Aadhaar Number and verifies the same using UIDAI's OTP based authentication system. University to fetch students data as authenticated by Aadhaar and use the same for Registration.
During course	UIDAI-Aadhaar integration with portal. SMS based OTP system. Biometrics / single print facility.	Student to verify identify at each login, and also randomly at different times, while online on the learning portal.
For Internal Assessment/Continuous Assessment Tests	UIDAI-Aadhaar webcam based photo surveillance	Student to identify himself using Aadhaar based OTP/biometric authentication. Webcam to capture photo of test taken.
Exam at Examination Centre	UIDAI-Aadhaar live video surveillance archiving.	Exam Sessions to be monitored by live video feed to University Staff. Recordings to be archived for 10 years. UIDAI-Aadhaar Biometric verification for all test taken.
Exam using web based online proctored test portal	UIDAI-Aadhaar integration. Live Video using webcam and broadband line screen monitoring.	Student to verify identity using aadhaar authentication. Test session to be monitored live by test proctor at university using webcam. Video and screen recording to be archived for 10 years.

5.7. **Active Engagement of the Learners:**

Active engagement in online classroom may be monitored via three primary avenues: participation in asynchronous / synchronous discussions, assignment activity and course involvement. The monitoring should be done using ICT facilities such as Biometric, Webcam, Recordings, Auto Log-Offs, Authentication at each stage and whole duration of the stage.

5.8. **Technical Know-how / Skills Requirements for Instructors:**

The HEIs should have defined criteria / guidelines for the technical know-how and skill requirements of the online instructors/ teaching assistants, course coordinators and program coordinators to ascertain that all the resources are competent to deliver Online education effectively from the student learning perspective.

5.9. **Contents, Instructional Design and Course Management:**

The HEIs will have in place all the course contents, online deliverables, technology tools and interface for proposed instructional design and course management platform before the final approval is accorded to offer a particular program.

5.10. **Requirements for Outcome Based Assessment:**

Knowledge or content of courses may no longer be the principal focus in assessment but instead the focus to be on the application of that knowledge and the demonstration of the required skills and values within specific contexts. These outcomes have to be explicit to ensure that learners clearly understand what is being assessed and what is to be achieved.

HEI shall ensure that all the assessment methodologies shall be based on assessing the performance of the learners from the perspective of outcome attainments of the Learners.

HEI shall also ensure that outcomes are defined for each of the modules in a course and accordingly assessment methodologies may be devised and implemented.

5.11. **Learner's Support and e-Learning Materials:**

HEI shall provide adequate support for advising, counseling, guidance, etc. so as to ensure best possible learning experience for the Learners.

The 'e-Learning Material' (eLM) has to be provided compulsorily to the learners. In addition, the HEI may provide additional learning resources through LMS. The Self Learning Material to be developed with the

approach of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating and self-evaluating.

The eLM, downloadable to learners, should be developed in defined formats with following features:

    i. Consistent layout and format

    ii. Inclusion of overview of content

    iii. A unit structure at the beginning of the unit

    iv. Plenty of examples

    v. Reference to prior learning

    vi. Inclusion of national / international caselets and case studies

    vii. Content in segments synchronized with learning objectives and outcome

    viii. Explanation of icons used in content

    ix. Appropriate sequence of material

    x. Explanation on technical, new, difficult terms/word in a glossary section

    xi. Inclusion of adequate suggested reading

The digital content should be of good quality with proper synchronization of Sound and Image in AV Material. The appropriate graphics and animations relevant to course content may be incorporated. The 'visual texture' and rate of change of image should be apt to keep the learner involved. The HEI should prepare and disseminate to the learners, a separate AV manual for giving the guidelines of using the AV material in study.

There should be clear guidelines on academic integrity and netiquette (internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, group discussions, chats and plagiarism.

5.12. **Program Monitoring and Review:**

The Commission shall periodically or at any time based on the information received, review the performance of the HEIs offering online program through an Expert Committee ensuring adherence to these regulations. It may issue directions to comply with a set of requirements and quality guidelines for online course content, instructional design, technology,

student assessment, and course management. The periodic reviews will be conducted by the Commission for renewal of approval initially after a period of two years and thereafter at the interval of five years. Institutions shall be required to apply, to the Commission, for such renewal, along with the required information and documents following the specified procedure under these regulations.

6. **CREDIT FRAMEWORK FOR ONLINE PROGRAMMES:**

The credit requirement for the award of the degrees will be governed by the UGC guidelines for the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) as may be amended from time to time. The UGC may prescribe guidelines for Curricular Aspects, Assessment Criteria and Credit Framework for the courses offered through online mode based on CBCS.

7. **PROGRAM DURATION:**

Learners need to complete Program in 'N+3' years where N is duration of the program in the formal mode of Education.

8. **RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS FOR OFFERING ONLINE PROGRAMMES:**

The eligible HEIs intending to offer a programme in Online Learning mode from the academic session immediately after the notification of Regulations onwards may, for grant of recognition under this Regulation, make an application to the Commission in such form and in such manner as notified by the Commission through website notification every year, and on fulfilment of the following conditions: -

   (i) the Higher Educational Institution has the approval of the statutory bodies under its Act or Memorandum of Association governing the institution for offering the program in Online Learning mode;
   (ii) a copy of such application along with PPR displayed on the website of the Higher Educational Institution by way of self-disclosure;

(iii) that the application is accompanied by evidence of having prepared the e- Learning Materials required for the programs of study, duly approved by the statutory bodies of the Higher Educational Institution empowered to decide on academic matters;

(iv) the application is accompanied by evidence of availability of Online Learning technology (LMS etc), resources adequate for effective delivery of all the proposed program(s) of study and the expected enrolment of students and other requirements as specified under para 5 of these regulations;

(v) the application is accompanied by, PPR and evidence of the preparedness for implementation of the proposed programs, providing Learning Support Services, establishing Internal Quality Assurance Cell for online programs, availability of the academic and other staff, availability of qualified Counselors, and the administrative arrangements for supportive services for effective delivery of Online programs.

(vi) The HEI has valid accreditation from NAAC (with a score of 3.25 on a 4 point scale) and has completed five years of existence.

A Higher Educational Institution intending to offer online programme(s) for academic session immediately after the notification of Regulations and for subsequent years shall, make an application in the format prescribed by the Commission, and upload the same on the specified portal along with, PPR, scanned copy of the documents specified therein, at least six months before the commencement of the academic session of the programme intended to be offered by such Higher Educational Institution.

There will be **two stage** approval process for the online programs. In the first stage, the Commission shall process the application and any deficiency/defect in the application shall be communicated by the Commission to the Higher Educational Institution preferably within two months and the Higher Educational Institution would be required to remove/rectify such deficiencies/defects with the necessary documents/information as communicated. On receipt of the relevant information / document, the Commission shall examine the application with

the help of an Expert Committee constituted by Chairman, UGC for first stage of the approval process.

The <u>first stage</u> will be a gap audit assessment for the academic /technical / infrastructural / HR compliance as per the requirements for offering the intended programmes(s). At this stage, complete implementation plan for the courses proposed along with the infrastructure available / created, staff deployed for the intended online programmes a statement of para-wise comments on institutional requirements under these regulations with at least one fully developed course content and delivery set including LMS should be presented before the Expert Committee by authorized representative of the institution.

The Expert Committee comprising of the <u>Academic</u>, <u>Technical</u> and <u>Administrative</u> Experts shall examine the (1) fitness of courses intended to be offered (2) suitability of the target groups vis-a-vis to the type of program and delivery mechanism (3) curricular aspects, credit framework, instructional design and course management plan (4) effectiveness of the assessment criteria proposed (5) technology & infrastructure created (6) administrative / academic / technical staff deployed for the online programme(s) and (7) implementation plan in light of these regulations.

The Committee after careful assessment will give its recommendation on fitness of programme(s) with respect to the target groups, standards of the curriculum and contents of the program, suitability of delivery mechanism and assessment criteria, availability of technology, status of compliance, deficiencies/gap to be fulfilled by a HEI for intended programme(s).

The recommendations of the Committee shall be placed before the Commission for consideration. If the institution is considered to be on right path then the UGC concurrence will be communicated to the institution along with the deficiencies/gap to be complied for final approval. However, the first stage clearance must not be projected as to be UGC approval for the

proposed program and institutions should start offering online courses only after the final approval is granted by the Commission.

The institutions, for <u>final / second stage</u> of approval will submit full compliance of requirements for the intended programmes and will apply to the UGC indicating reference to the first stage approval with pointwise fulfilment of the requirements/deficiencies communicated therewith. The complete delivery set, fully functional LMS, curriculum, contents, course ordinances, audiovisual material, learner's authentication and support mechanism, staff and infrastructure required to be in place before the final approval granted to the institution for offering intended programmes. The HEIs, therefore, will submit complete e-learning material, audio visual material, integrated assignments, proof of appointment of staff, information and documents with regard to the infrastructure and technology available and an affidavit on oath of compliance to implementation requirements and approval of professional / statutory bodies, if any, to the UGC before the institution to be considered for final approval.

The Commission, on receipt of relevant information / documents as above will place the matter before Expert Committee for consideration. The UGC, on recommendation of Expert Committee may constitute a Compliance Committee to physically visit the institution in view to verify the compliance to requirements under these regulations.

After receiving the Expert Committee recommendations & report of the Compliance Committee, where constituted, the Commission, if it is satisfied that such Higher Educational Institution fulfils the conditions laid down and the quality parameters specified under this Regulation, shall pass an order granting recognition to such Higher Educational Institution for a period, initially for two years and subsequently for the five years, in respect of such programmes as it may specify in the order, and subject to such conditions as it may specify; or if it is of the opinion that such institution does not fulfil the requirements laid down in sub-clause (a) in respect of any of the programmes intended to be offered by the Higher Educational Institution,

pass an order refusing recognition to such Higher Educational Institution for reasons to be recorded in writing. Provided that while passing an order under where the Commission does not grant recognition in respect of one or more programmes, the Commission shall specify the grounds of such refusal in the order.

Every Higher Educational Institution, in respect of which recognition for a programme has been refused, shall discontinue the online programme(s) from the end of the academic session next following the date of issue of the order refusing recognition passed by the Commission. However, all existing registered students shall be permitted to complete all the requirements within N+3 years for the award of degree. No Higher Educational Institution shall offer online program (s) for academic session immediately after the notification of Regulations and for subsequent academic session and admit students thereto unless it has been granted recognition by the Commission.

9.   **QUALITY ASSURANCE:**

(1)   The HEIs offering program (s) in online mode shall, take the following steps, namely :-

   (i)   establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) exclusively for programs in online mode;

   (ii)   the HEIs recognized under these Regulations for imparting online programs shall get all the programs assessed through the Internal Quality Assurance Cell once in a year in the prescribed format and the report on quality assurance shall, before the end of the academic year, be prominently placed on its website and a copy furnished to the Commission;

   (iii)   take adequate measures for training and capacity building of its teaching and administrative staff and counselors at regular intervals;

   (iv)   shall ensure that the quality of programs of study offered through online mode are maintained at par with standards prescribed by the Commission or the appropriate statutory authority;

   (v)   shall award only such degrees as are specified under section 22 of the UGC Act, 1956 and permitted in the order of recognition under

sub-clause (a) of clause 4 of regulation 3;

(vi) shall ensure that the technical and instructional facilities with information resources for online delivery of programs in compliance to the Guidelines laid by the Commission from time to time, and are commensurate with the number of programs and enrolments thereto.

Provided that a Higher Educational Institution shall prepare the eLearning Material only after approval of the Program Project Report.

Provided further that no online program shall be launched by a Higher Educational Institution unless it has prepared the e-Learning Material and approval granted to it by the Commission taking into consideration the above factors.

The UGC shall, from time to time, provide the guidelines on Quality Assurance Mechanism and Good Practices for online programs.

10. EVALUATION AND CERTIFICATION:

Each Online course shall be semester based and will consist of **14-16 weeks** of academic work proportionate to award of credits and the level of Program.

In-Semester Assessment: 25 - 30% weightage: The use of technical interface must be preferred for this component to the maximum extent.

- Computer marked assignment (CMA) – At least TWO per course, automatic graded with feedback for correct and incorrect options to enhance self-learning and self-assessment
- Tutor marked assignments (TMA) – At least TWO per course, subjective questions to be preferably typed and submitted by the student or scanned and uploaded.
- The learner's engagement index may be a component of the in-semester assessment.
- Any other component (project, wiki, discussion forum participation, chats, queries and responses *etc.*) as required for the successful implementation of the online course.

End Semester Examination: 70 - 75 % weightage

- This shall be a technologically supervised online proctored examination conducted by the University approved for offering the program.

- The schedule will be announced by the Directorate in consultation with the examination branch of the university.

- The University shall be responsible for the conduct of proctored examination in terms of the paper setting monitoring and evaluation with human resources required.

11. INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATIONS:

Academic collaborations with the universities / institutions abroad will be governed by the UGC (Promotion and Maintenance of Standards of Academic Collaboration between Indian and Foreign Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2016.

12. POWERS OF INSPECTION AND CALLING FOR INFORMATION:

The Commission shall periodically review the performance of the HEIs offering online program and for the purpose may direct the Institutions to provide such information as it may require from the viewpoint of ensuring adherence of the Regulations by the HEIs, and the Institutions shall be under obligation to provide such information in such time period as may be specified.

Where the Commission, either *suo-motu* or on the basis of information received by it, considers it necessary, for reasons to be recorded in writing, it may cause an inquiry through inspection or otherwise by such body of experts or as it may deem fit, to satisfy itself that all the mandatory requirements under these Regulations are being complied with by the Higher Educational Institution imparting online programs and take appropriate action to get compliance enforced against the erring Higher Educational Institution.

13. WITHDRAWL OF RECOGNITION:

(1) Where the Commission is, on its own motion or on any representation received from any person, or any information received from any authority or a statutory body, or on the basis of any enquiry or inspection conducted by it, satisfied that a Higher Educational Institution has contravened any of the provisions of these regulations or guidelines and orders made or issued thereunder, or has submitted or produced any information and documentary evidence which is found to be false at any stage or any condition subject to which recognition under clause (i) of sub-regulation (4) of regulation 3 has been granted, it may withdraw recognition of such Higher Educational Institution in respect of such program(s) as it may specify, for reasons to be recorded in writing:

Provided that no such order against the Higher Educational Institution shall be passed unless a reasonable opportunity of making representation against the proposed order has been given to such Higher Educational Institution:

Provided further that the order withdrawing or refusing recognition passed by the Commission shall come into force with immediate effect.

(2) If a Higher Educational Institution offers any program in Online Learning mode after the coming into force of the order withdrawing recognition under sub-regulation (1) or where a Higher Educational Institution offering a program in Online Learning before the commencement of these regulations, fails to obtain recognition under these regulations for offering programs in Online Learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of Regulations and subsequent academic sessions, the degree obtained pursuant to such program or after undertaking a program in Online Learning mode in such Higher Educational Institutions, shall not be treated as a valid qualification.

(3) In the event of any Higher Educational Institution found offering programs or courses in Online Learning mode without the approval of the Commission or in violation to any of the provisions of these regulations and guidelines or orders made thereunder, the Commission may -

(i) issue Show Cause Notice or withdraw the recognition for an academic session or withdraw the recognition, maximum up to next five academic sessions or withdraw the recognition permanently;

(ii) if, in spite of above, the Higher Educational Institution is found continuing the violations, a First Information Report may be lodged against the officials or management of the errant Higher Educational Institution to take action as per law.

(iii) withhold or debar from receiving University Grants Commission grants;

(iv) refer the matter to the State Government concerned or Central Government as the case may be; and

(v) take action as per the provisions of the Act or Rules or Regulations as applicable to the Higher Educational Institution.

14. APPEALS:

(1) Any Higher Educational Institution aggrieved by an order passed by the commission may prefer an appeal to the Commission within a period of thirty days.

(2) No appeal after the expiry of the period prescribed therefore shall be accepted.

(3) Every appeal made under these regulations shall be accompanied by a copy of the order appealed against accompanied by such fees as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.

(4) The procedure for disposing of an appeal shall be as laid down by the Commission from time to time.

(5) The Commission may confirm or reverse the order appealed against.

(6) The decision of the Commission shall be final and binding on the Higher Educational Institutions.

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