



स्वास्थ्य एवं परिवार कल्याण मंत्रालय के तहत सांविधिक निकाय
Statutory Body under the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

F.No. 1-6/2020-INC

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CIRCULAR

INC GUIDELINES ON ACADEMICS AND EXAMINATIONS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC & LOCKDOWN

Introduction

The entire nation is facing an unprecedented crisis due to outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. Social distancing, one of the key components in the fight against this infection, is creating a challenging situation for students studying in various nursing programmes under various Nursing Educational Institutions. Most of the Nursing Educational Institutions have been closed since the lockdown from mid-March and nursing students have been unable to attend classes and clinical areas. In this context, INC reiterates that the quality of nursing education should not be compromised at all times. The principles of hygiene, social distancing and restricted movements must be advocated by all at all times to ensure the health, safety and security of the students, faculty and staff and also to continue academic activities.

The following guidelines are being issued for implementation to ensure adequate syllabus coverage so that the current academic session does not get affected, and continuity of nursing education is maintained.

I. Guidelines for Academics

1. Teaching-Learning Process

1.1 Online modes of teaching can be used to continue the educational process by making effective use of technology and other available options as long as the Nursing Educational Institutions have been asked to remain closed by the Government and State authorities in different parts of the country. (Online modes such as Google Classroom, Google Hangout, Cisco Webex Meeting, You tube streaming, College website, e mails, Internet and social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook groups etc. could be used)

- a. **Theory:**
 - i. Institutions should plan to share learning resources such as lectures, study materials, topic assignments and assessments via online, maintaining communication with the students on a regular basis.
 - ii. The Institutions will be responsible to maintain the details of classes taken subject wise, attendance, assignments given and submitted by students etc.

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b. Clinical:

- i. Wherever possible, virtual clinical learning can be delivered by sharing recorded visuals of clinical procedures/skills or any digital resources available.
- ii. Once the institutions re opens, the students should be given exclusive clinical experience blocks in order to gain clinical expertise in various clinical areas as per revised master plan and clinical rotation plan.

1.2 Attendance: The lockdown period can be used as theory block to cover the theory portion of the syllabus in various subjects. In case the institution has not done the online teaching, then the institution shall give assignments/materials through email or as indicated in 1.1.

The period of lockdown may be treated as 'deemed to be attended' by all the students while calculating the requirement of minimum percentage of attendance.

2. Academic Calendar

The dates suggested are based on the extension of lockdown period and restrictions laid down by the GOI and state governments with specific emphasis on social distancing norms.

2.1 Academic session 2019-2020

Two months extension is granted for conduct of examination ensuring completion of clinical requirements.

Conduct of examinations	
Annual/Year	September/October, 2020
Evaluation and Declaration of the result	
Annual/Year	October/November, 2020

Summer vacation can be counted during Lockdown period

2.2 Academic session 2020-2021

Admission process and last date of admission	
Annual	October/November, 2020

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Commencement of classes	
Annual	October/ November,2020
2 nd year onwards	
Conduct of examinations	
Annual	August/September, 2021
Commencement of next academic session	
Annual	August /September, 2021

II. Guidelines for Examination

1. Internal assessment and attendance requirements:

It is presumed that by March, before the lockdown, all the institutions would have completed College/sessional examinations, all of these are to be considered in the internal assessment calculation/evaluation of students. Online classes and assessments done during lockdown can also be considered.

- a. Attendance requirements for clinicals: The theory attendance remains the same. Owing to the extraordinary conditions, the norm of a candidate having 100% attendance in each practical area is relaxed to 80%. However, all essential clinical areas should be covered as per the prescribed syllabus. Whatever essential clinical experience is missed due to COVID lockdown, to be completed in internship period of final year except for final year students.
- b. Clinical requirements:
 - i. Skill lab and clinical procedures ratio in the logbook can be relaxed by allowing skill lab procedures up to 30%.
 - ii. Other written assignments relevant to care note/care study that need to be done in the clinical area can be replaced by allowing up to 30% in the skill lab using written scenarios/vignettes or virtual learning.
 - iii. If clinical experience is not feasible in respect to MLHP clinical requirements, the institution shall ensure completion through skill lab or simulation.

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- c. Internal practical examination can be in the form of Observed Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) with minor modifications in the format such as reduced number of skill stations to ensure **social distancing norms** and to include only clinical skills.

2. External/Final Examination:

Simplified modes and methods of examinations may be adopted in order to complete the current academic session in time, as mentioned below.

- Theory examination may be conducted after lockdown opens, by maintaining social distancing norms, in staggered time-table form, with less number of students, preferably batchwise, without compromising the quality, so that the examination process may be completed in multiple shifts. The duration may be reduced to 2 hours.
- Practical examination will be conducted either after the relaxation in lock down period in the clinical settings or in the simulation set up using OSCE approach e.g in skill labs maintaining proper social distancing and hygiene norms.
- Any student failing in subject/s/examination will be provisionally promoted to next year. However, such students will have to appear in the supplementary examination along with term examination whenever examination is held next and clear the pending examination.
- The Students should be informed well in advance (at least one week) about the conduct of examinations and other related activities.**
- The examining bodies are given relaxation to appoint external practical examiners from local Deemed Universities or local Colleges from the same city/town/zone, if out of State examiners are unable to travel due to COVID restrictions.

Final year students

- f. The students in the final year passing out of nursing course will have to mandatorily undergo the theory and Practical examination before the declaration of the result. The examining authority may as soon as possible conduct the theory and practical examinations of the Final year of the said program and announce the results in a time bound manner so that students are able to pursue their careers without disruption.

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III. Guidelines for Thesis submission

The post graduate nursing students and their guides will ensure that the work done for the thesis is in compliance with regulatory requirements and ready for submission in time. The universities may adopt appropriate strategies like online submission of dissertation to facilitate the UG/PG students pursuing Projects/ Dissertations, in view of the prevailing circumstances.

IV. General guidelines

- There should be no additional costs to students as a result of the disruption occurred in the teaching, learning and evaluation process
- The faculty and non-teaching/ supportive staff will continue to be on the payrolls of the institution and work from home utilizing this period to connect to nursing students through various teaching learning platforms using digital technology and are paid their monthly salary as per the GOI guidelines.
- The Institutions will be responsible to maintain the details of classes taken subject wise, percentage of attendance, assignments given and submitted by students etc. The State Examining Boards/ Universities as Examining Authorities should accept these records as being eligible for internal assessment and are to take these records towards fulfilment of academic requirements for calculating attendance for appearing for examination.
- Based on the broad INC guidelines, each University/ Examining Authority may chart out its own plan of action taking into consideration the issues pertaining to COVID-19 pandemic. Notwithstanding the above Guidelines regarding the resumption of session, conduct of examinations and commencement of next academic session, every university college has to ensure that it is prepared in all respects to carry out the academic activities following necessary advisories/ guidelines/ directions issued by the Centre/State Government, MHRD or UGC from time to time to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- These guidelines are only applicable as one-time measure during this academic year due to COVID-19.



Lt Col (Dr) Sarvjeet Kaur
Secretary

Copy for information & necessary action:

- Vice chancellor of all Universities.
- Registrars of all State Nursing Council.
- Examination Boards.
- Principal of all Schools / Colleges of Nursing.
- INC website.

