

**UGC Guidelines on Academic Calendar for the
First Year of Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate
Students of the Universities for the Session 2020-21
in View of COVID-19 Pandemic**



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Introduction

The University Grants Commission taking a note of the COVID-19 pandemic constituted an Expert Committee in April, 2020 to safeguard the interests of the academic fraternity in general and students in particular to ensure health, safety and security of the students, faculty and staff and also to continue academic activities, conducting the examinations and declaration of results, facilitating the students to participate in further admissions, placement processes, research and training etc. and charting out a plan for the next academic session.

The Expert Committee deliberated on various issues and also consulted other stake holders and noted that the lockdown has been imposed by the Ministry of Home Affairs and the State Governments to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and also the results of the Class XII Board examinations are likely to be declared in the month of July 2020.

The Expert Committee submitted its report in April, 2020, based on which the UGC issued the Guidelines on 29.04.2020.

The University Grants Commission in June 2020 noted that the number of COVID-19 cases was rising exponentially and as per the reports the number would increase further. In view of the then prevalent situation and projected growth of cases due to COVID-19 pandemic, it was not feasible to conduct the examination even in the month of July 2020. Accordingly, the University Grants Commission requested the Expert Committee to review the Guidelines dated 29.04.2020, in view of emerging COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The Expert Committee again deliberated on the specific issues and also after due consultation with other stakeholders submitted its report in July, 2020, based on which the UGC issued the Guidelines on 06.07.2020.

The University Grants Commission in August 2020 requested the Expert Committee to revisit the guidelines dated 29.04.2020 and 06.07.2020 and suggest a revised Admissions and Academic Calendar, and other connected matters, for the first year of UG and PG programmes for the session 2020-2021.

The Commission at its emergent meeting held on 21.09.2020 considered the Report of the Expert Committee and based on the Report approved the "UGC Guidelines on Academic Calendar for the First Year of Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate Students of the Universities for the Session 2020-21 in View of COVID-19 Pandemic".

Guidelines

In continuation of the UGC Guidelines dated 29.04.2020 (including in partial modification thereof) and 06.07.2020, the following guidelines have been framed on academic calendar for the first year under graduate and post graduate students in the Universities and colleges:-

1. The institutions where admissions are solely through entrance tests and have completed the necessary requirements or are likely to complete these requirements in near future, may start their academic session of 1st year at the earliest. If necessity arises, provisional admissions may also be made. The relevant documents of qualifying examination be accepted up to 31.12.2020.
2. Merit/ entrance based admissions to the first year programmes for the session 2020-21 be completed by the end of October 2020. The last date for admissions to fill up the remaining vacant seats shall be 30.11.2020
3. The academic calendar for the first year students' proposed in the Guidelines dated 29.04.2020 stands amended. Hence, the academic Session 2020-21 may commence from 01.11.2020 for first year students. Accordingly, the following calendar is suggested for the academic session 2020-2021:

Admission Process (To be completed)	31.10.2020
Commencement of Classes of above students Fresh batch (First Semester/Year)	01.11.2020*
Preparatory Break	01.03.2021 to 07.03.2021
Conduct of Examinations	08.03.2021 to 26.03.2021
Semester Break	27.03.2021 to 04.04.2021
Commencement of Classes for Even Semester	5.04.2021
Preparatory Break	01.08.2021 to 08.08.2021
Conduct of Examinations	09.08.2021 to 21.08.2021
Semester Break	22.08.2021 to 29.08.2021
Commencement of Next Academic Session for this batch	30.08.2021

* If there is a delay in declaration of result of the qualifying examinations, the universities may plan and start the academic session by 18.11.2020. The teaching learning process may continue in offline/ online/ blended mode.

4. All the universities may follow a 6-day week pattern for the academic session 2020-21 and 2021-2022 to compensate the loss for this batch of students.

5. In order to avoid financial hardship being faced by the parents due to lockdown and related factors, full refund of fees be made on account of all cancellation of admissions/ migration of students, up to 30.11.2020, for this very session as a special case. To be crystal clear, the entire fees including all charges be refunded in totality (Zero Cancellation charges) on account of cancellation/ migration up to 30.11.2020. Thereafter, on cancellation/ withdrawal of admissions up to 31.12.2020, the entire fee collected from a student be refunded in full after deduction of not more than Rs.1000/- as processing fee.
6. The universities are requested to compensate the delay in the start of academic session in the subsequent years by curtailing the breaks/ vacations so that this batch of students would get their final results for award of degree timely.
7. The Guidelines as issued on 29.04.2020 and 06.07.2020 highlighting the modes of teaching, conduct of examinations, importance of physical & social distancing etc. shall remain unchanged and shall remain mandatory in that respect.
8. In view of the present scenario and future uncertainties:
 - i. The universities may adopt and implement these Guidelines in a transparent manner by making alterations/ additions/ modifications/ amendments to deal with particular situation(s) in the best interest of students, educational institution and the entire education system, except in respect of those guidelines that are mandatory.
 - ii. If the university faces difficulty in making admissions as per the existing policy, it may adopt alternative modes of admission process, if otherwise legally tenable.
 - iii. In case of educational institutions located at places where the Government (Centre/ State) have imposed restrictions on gathering of public, the institutions may plan accordingly. In any case, the above recommendations shall not cause any restrictions on the guidelines/directions issued by the appropriate Government/ competent authority.

Notwithstanding the above Guidelines, 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 Central/State Government, MHRD or UGC from time to time to prevent the spread of COVID-19.