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नई दिल्ली, 23 जून, 2017

Ok- I a 2&4@2015 \Mhbch&III½—विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग अधिनियम, 1956 (1956 का तीसरा) की धारा 26 की उप-धारा (1) के साथ पठित धारा 12 के खंड (ज) के माध्यम से प्रदत्त शक्तियों के प्रयोग करते हुए तथा विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग के विनियम, (कला, मानविकी, ललित कला, संगीत, सामाजिक विज्ञान, वाणिज्य और विज्ञान संकाय में गैर-औपचारिक/दूरस्थ शिक्षा के माध्यम से प्रथम डिग्री प्रदान करने के लिए अनुदेशों के न्यूनतम मानक) विनियम, 1985 का अधिक्रमण करते हुए, तथा ऐसे अधिक्रमण से पूर्व किए गए कार्य अथवा किए अथवा जिन्हें छोड़ दिया गया के अलावा, विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग निम्नलिखित विनियम तैयार करता है, अर्थात: —

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(1) इन विनियमों को विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग (मुक्त और दूरस्थ माध्यमों से शिक्षा प्राप्ति) विनियम, 2017 कहा जाएगा।

(2) इन विनियमों में मुक्त और दूरस्थ माध्यमों से शिक्षा प्राप्ति हेतु पद्धतियों के माध्यम से स्नातक और स्नातकोत्तर स्तरों पर डिग्री प्रदान करने के लिए शिक्षा प्रदान करने के न्यूनतम मानकों को निर्धारित किया गया है, और यह आयोग द्वारा समय-समय पर जारी किन्ही अन्य विनियमों, अधिसूचनाओं, दिशानिर्देशों अथवा अनुदेशों को निष्प्रभावी नहीं बनाएंगे बल्कि उनके अनुपूरक होंगे।

(3) यह विनियम, विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग अधिनियम, 1956 की धारा 2 की खंड (च) के तहत विनिर्दिष्ट विश्वविद्यालयों, उक्त अधिनियम के धारा 3 के तहत सम विश्वविद्यालय संस्थानों पर अभियांत्रिकी, चिकित्सा, दंत चिकित्सा, भेषजी, परिचर्या, वास्तुशिल्प,

## UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

### NOTIFICATION

New Delhi, the 23rd June, 2017

**F. No. 2-4/2015 (DEB-III).**—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) and in supersession of the University Grants Commission Regulations, (the minimum standards of instructions for the grants of first degree through non-formal/distance education in the faculties of Arts, Humanities, Fine Arts, Music, Social Science, Commerce and Sciences) Regulations, 1985 except as respect of things done or omitted to be done before such supersession, 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 (Open and Distance Learning) Regulations, 2017.
- (2) These Regulations lay down the minimum standards of instruction for the grant of degree at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels, through Open and Distance Learning mode, and shall be in addition to and not in derogation 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 programmes of learning at the undergraduate and post-graduate level, other than programmes in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, physiotherapy and programmes not permitted to be offered in distance 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.—In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires—

- (a) “Academic session” means duration of twelve months beginning either in January or in the month of July of every year;
- (b) “Act”, means the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956);
- (c) “Centre for Internal Quality Assurance” (CIQA) means a Centre as specified in **Annexure I** established by a Higher Educational Institution offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode for ensuring the quality of programmes offered by it through internal quality monitoring mechanism in accordance with the guidelines as specified in **Annexure II**;
- (d) “Commission” means the University Grants Commission established under the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 (3 of 1956);
- (e) “Credit” means the Unit award gained 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;
- (f) “Degree” means a degree specified under sub-section (3) of section 22 of the Act;
- (g) “Examination Centre” means a place where examinations are conducted for the Open and Distance Learning mode learners and is having the requisite infrastructure and adequate manpower for smooth conduct of examinations, and adhering to such minimum standards as specified in **Annexure III**.
- (h) “Franchising” for the purpose of these regulations, means and includes the practice of allowing, formally or informally, any person or institution or organisation, other than the Higher Educational Institution recognised under these regulations for offering Open and Distance Learning programmes, to offer such programmes of study on behalf of or in the name of the recognised Higher Educational Institution, and the terms ‘franchise’ and ‘franchisee’ shall be construed accordingly;
- (i) “Higher Education” means such education, imparted by means of conducting regular classes or through distance education systems, beyond twelve years of schooling leading to the award of a Degree or Certificate or Diploma or Postgraduate Diploma;

- (j) “Higher Educational Institution” 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, higher education or research therein;
- (k) “Learner Support Centre” means a centre established, maintained or recognised by the Higher Educational Institution for advising, counselling, providing interface between the teachers and the learners, and rendering any academic and any other related service and assistance required by the learners;
- (l) “Learner Support Services” means and includes such services as are provided by a Higher Educational Institution in order to facilitate the acquisition of teaching-learning experiences by the learner to the level prescribed by or on behalf of the Commission in respect of a programme of study;
- (m) “Open and Distance Learning” mode means a mode of providing flexible learning opportunities by overcoming separation of teacher and learner using a variety of media, including print, electronic, online and occasional interactive face-to-face meetings with the presence of an Higher Educational Institution or Learner Support Services to deliver teaching-learning experiences, including practical or work experiences.
- (n) “Open University” means a University which imparts education through distance education or Open and Distance Learning mode using variety of Information and Communication Technology educational aids i.e. on-line education in the form of Open Educational Resources (OERs) or Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) etc.;
- (o) “Programme” means a course or programme of study leading to the award of a Degree at graduate and post-graduate levels in a higher educational institution including Certificate or Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma;
- (p) “Professional programmes” means a programme other than programmes in engineering, medicine, dental, pharmacy, nursing, architecture, physiotherapy and programmes not permitted to be offered in distance mode by any Statutory Councils or Regulatory Authorities to be conducted by the Higher Educational Institutions under Open and Distance Learning mode or Distance Education mode for the purpose of these regulations, if any, should be considered only if the same are approved by the respective Statutory Councils or Regulatory Authorities.
- (q) “Prospectus” includes any publication, whether in print or otherwise, issued for providing fair and transparent information, relating to a higher educational institution and programmes, to the general public (including to those seeking admission in such Higher Educational Institutions) by the management of such Higher Educational Institutions or any authority or person authorised by such Higher Educational Institutions to do so;
- (r) “Self Learning Material” means and includes contents in the form of course material, whether print or non-print, 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;
- (s) “Standalone Institutions” means those institutions which are not affiliated to any of the Universities under the provisions of the Act.

## PART - II

### RECOGNITION OF HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMMES

#### 3. Recognition of Higher Educational Institutions offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode—

- (1) Every Higher Educational Institution offering a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode in pursuance of an approval granted to it for the purpose by the then Distance Education Council or by the Commission or by any other regulatory authority or intending to offer a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode from the academic session immediately after the notification of these regulations shall, for grant of recognition, make an application to the Commission in such form and manner as laid down in sub-regulation (2) on fulfilment of the following conditions, namely :—

- (i) the Higher Educational Institution has the approval of the statutory bodies under the Act for offering the programme in Open and Distance Learning mode;
- (ii) the Higher Educational Institution shall adhere to the policy of territorial jurisdiction as specified in **Annexure IV**;
- (iii) the Higher Educational Institution other than an Open University, is offering similar programme in the conventional mode of classroom teaching;
- (iv) a copy of such application is displayed on the website of the Higher Educational Institutions by way of self-disclosure;
- (v) that the application is accompanied by evidence of having prepared the self learning materials required for the programmes of study, duly approved by the statutory bodies of the Higher Educational Institutions empowered to decide on academic matters;
- (vi) the application is accompanied by evidence of availability of Open and Distance Learning resources adequate for effective delivery of all the proposed programme(s) of study and the expected enrolment of students;
- (vii) the application is accompanied by evidence of the preparedness for establishing Learner Support Centres, providing Learning Support Services, establishing Centre for Internal Quality Assurance, availability of the academic and other staff in the Unit and Learner Support Centres of the Higher Education, availability of qualified Counselors in the Learner Support Centres meeting such standards of competence as specified in **Annexure V**, and the administrative arrangements for supportive services for effective delivery of Open and Distance Learning;
- (viii) the Higher Educational Institution has valid accreditation from National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and has completed five years of existence:

Provided that this clause shall not be applicable to Open Universities till the time they become eligible for National Assessment and Accreditation Council accreditation and it shall be mandatory for Open Universities to get National Assessment and Accreditation Council accreditation within one year of their becoming eligible for the same:

Provided further that an institution Deemed to be a University so declared by the Central Government shall offer the Open and Distance Learning courses or programmes as per the extant Deemed to be a University Regulations and also notified by the University Grants Commission from time to time in the matter.

(2) A Higher Educational Institution intending to offer a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these regulations and for subsequent years shall, notwithstanding that it has obtained permission from the then Distance Education Council or by the Commission for offering a programme in Open and Distance learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these regulations and for subsequent years, shall make an on-line application in the format specified by the Commission, and upload the same on the specified portal along with 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.

(3) The Commission shall process the application received under sub-regulation (2) of regulations 3 in the following manner, namely:—

- (i) any deficiency or defect in the application shall be communicated by the Commission to the Higher Educational Institution preferably within one month from the date of receiving the application and the Higher Educational Institution shall be required to remove or rectify such deficiencies or defects with the necessary documents or information, if any within fifteen days;
- (ii) where the Higher Educational Institution has made an application for offering programme (s) in Open and Distance Learning mode, notwithstanding that in respect of such programme(s) the Distance Education Council (DEC) or Commission had caused the inspection of the institute in the past or prior to coming into force of these regulations, the Commission may cause an inspection, in respect of such programme(s), of the Higher Educational Institutions at its discretion through an Expert Committee; and
- (iii) the Commission shall examine the application with the help of an Expert Committee constituted by Chairman of the Commission and the recommendations of the Committee shall be placed before the Commission for its consideration.

(4) After processing the application in the manner laid down under sub-regulation (3) of regulation 3, the Commission shall—

- (i) if it is satisfied that such Higher Educational Institution fulfils the conditions laid down and the quality parameters specified under these regulations, pass an order granting recognition to such Higher Educational Institutions for a period of five years in respect of such programmes as it may specify in the order, and subject to such conditions as it may specify:

Provided that while passing an order, 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:

Provided further that before passing an order, the Commission shall provide a reasonable opportunity to the concerned Higher Educational Institution of being heard.

- (ii) if it is of the opinion that such Higher Educational Institutions does not fulfil the requirements laid down in clause (i) in respect of any of the programme 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.

(5) Every order granting or refusing recognition to a Higher Educational Institutions for programme(s) in Open and Distance Learning mode under sub-regulation (4) shall be communicated in writing for appropriate action to such Higher Educational Institutions and to the concerned State Government and the Central Government.

(6) Every Higher Educational Institution, in respect of which recognition for programme(s) has not been granted by the Commission, shall discontinue the programme(s) in Open and Distance Learning mode with immediate effect.

(7) No Higher Educational Institution shall offer a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these regulations and for subsequent academic session and admit students thereto unless it has been granted recognition for the programme under clause (i) of sub-regulation (4).

**Explanation**—for the purpose of this regulations “Distance Education Council” means the Distance Education Council constituted under statue 28 under the Indira Gandhi National Open University Act, 1985 vide notification GSR No. 692 dated 22.11.1991 (which has since been repealed vide notification number IG/Admn(G)/DEC/2013/3148 dated 14.08.2013 published in Part III, Gazette of India dated 31.08.2013.

#### **4 Withdrawal 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 programme(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 programme in Open and Distance Learning mode after the coming into force of the order withdrawing recognition under sub-regulation (1) or where a Higher Educational Institution offering a programme in Open and Distance Learning before the commencement of these regulations, fails to obtain recognition under these regulations for offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode for academic session immediately after the notification of Regulations and subsequent academic sessions, the degree obtained pursuant to such programme or after undertaking a programme in Open and Distance 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 programmes or courses in Open and Distance 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.

### 5. Appeals –

- (1) Any Higher Educational Institution aggrieved by an order made under sub-regulation (4) of regulation 3 or withdrawal of recognition under sub-regulation (1) of regulation 4 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.

## PART-III

### MAINTENANCE OF INFRASTRUCTURAL, ACADEMIC AND OTHER QUALITY STANDARDS BY HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

#### 6. Systems Management: Structure and Processes—

- (1) A Higher Educational Institution shall have a designated School or Centre of Distance Education for operationalising the programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode, which shall be headed by a regular functionary not below the rank of a Professor and shall have appropriate and adequate academic, technical, administrative staff and infrastructural resources as specified in **Annexure VI**.
- (2) A Higher Educational Institution shall plan, implement, coordinate and monitor operationalisation and quality assurance of the programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode, including monitoring the conduct and programme delivery by the Learner Support Centres and shall ensure adherence to the regulations and guidelines of the Commission and other regulatory authorities.

#### 7. Self-regulation through disclosures, declarations and reports—

- (1) A Higher Educational Institution offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode shall display on its website a declaration by an authorised signatory, not below the rank of the Registrar, authenticating that the following documents have been uploaded on the Institute website, namely:—
  - (i) the establishing Act and Statutes thereunder or the Memorandum of Association, as the case may be or both of the Higher Educational Institution, empowering it to offer programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode;
  - (ii) copies of the letters of recognition from Commission and other relevant statutory or regulatory authorities;
  - (iii) programme details including brochures or programme guides inter alia information such as name of the programme, duration, eligibility for enrolment, programme fee, programme structure etc.;
  - (iv) programme-wise information on syllabus, suggested readings, contact points for counseling, programme structure with credit points, programme-wise faculty details, list of supporting staff, list of Learner Support Centres with addresses and contact details, their working hours and counseling schedule etc.;

- (v) important schedules or date-sheets for admissions, registration, re-registration, counseling, assignments and feedback thereon, examinations, result declarations etc.;
- (vi) detailed strategy plan related to On-line course delivery, if any including learning materials offered through On-line and learner assessment system and quality assurance practices of e-learning programmes;
- (vii) the feedback mechanism on design, development, delivery and continuous evaluation of learner-performance which shall form an integral part of the transactional design of the Open and Distance Learning mode programmes and shall be an input for maintaining the quality of the programmes and bridging the gaps, if any;
- (viii) information regarding any new programmes launched and those proposed for the next two years;
- (ix) data of year-wise or programme-wise student enrolment details and degrees or certificates or diplomas or post graduate diplomas awarded;
- (x) complete information about 'Self Learning Material' including name of the faculty who prepared it, when was it prepared and last updated, source of Self Learning Material, references of Self Learning Material, etc.;
- (xi) a compilation of questions and answers under the head 'Frequently Asked Questions' with the facility of 'on-line' interaction with learners providing hyperlink support;
- (xii) list of the 'Learner Support Centres' along with the number of students who shall appear at any examination centre and details of the Information and Communication Technology facilities available for conduct of examination in a fair and transparent manner;
- (xiii) list of the 'Examination Centres' along with the number of students in each centre; and
- (xiv) period of the admission process along with the academic session and dates of the term end examinations.

#### 8. Quality Assurance—

(1) A Higher Educational Institution offering programme(s) in Open and Distance learning mode shall, take the following steps, namely :-

- (i) establish a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance exclusively for programmes in the Open and Distance Learning mode within one year from the coming into force of these regulations;
- (ii) follow the Quality Assurance Guidelines on learning materials in multiple media, human resources, curriculum and pedagogy, as specified by the Commission in **Annexure VII** or by any other agency authorised by it for prescribing such guidelines, and shall post its quality assurance mechanism on the website;
- (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 programmes of study offered through Open and Distance Learning mode are maintained at par with standards obtaining in the conventional mode of class-room teaching as provided by the Commission or the appropriate statutory authority;
- (v) shall award only such degrees as specified under section 22 of the Act, and permitted in the Order of recognition under clause (i) of sub-regulation (4) of regulation 3. However, the Higher Educational Institutions may continue to offer Certificate or Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma programmes subject to the condition that all the Certificate or Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma programmes are duly approved by the statutory authorities or bodies of the respective Higher Educational Institutions and the delivery mechanism conforms to the quality standards of the Open and Distance learning education as specified by the Higher Educational Institutions and further, the Higher Educational Institutions may offer Certificate or Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma in professional programmes (other than in engineering, medicine, dental, nursing, pharmacy, architecture and physiotherapy etc. and programmes not permitted to be offered in distance mode by any other regulatory authority) subject to the condition that the concerned Higher

Educational Institution has already obtained or received the requisite approvals from the concerned statutory regulatory authorities or councils before the actual start of such courses or programmes through Open and Distance Learning mode;

- (vi) the Higher Educational Institutions shall have to exhibit the copies of the approval letters duly obtained or received from the concerned statutory regulatory authority or council to run the professional courses or programmes on the Higher Educational Institutions website as well as against the name of the each professional Certificate or Diploma or Post Graduate Diploma programmes in the brochure or bulletin of the respective Higher Educational Institution and inform the same to the University Grants Commission from time to time in the matter:

Provided that in case of violation of these regulations, the provisions specified under sub-regulation (3) of regulation 4 shall apply; and

- (vii) shall ensure that the academic and instructional facilities at its Learner Support Centres, and information resources for on-line delivery of programmes meet the guidelines laid by the Commission from time to time, and are commensurate with the number of programmes and enrolments thereto.

(2) A Higher Educational Institution offering programme in Open and Distance Learning mode shall, in order to facilitate the pace of learning and multiple choice for learners, prepare Self Learning Material taking into consideration the following, namely :—

- (i) Self Learning Material has clearly stated objectives, intended learning outcomes, study guidance and advice for the learners as to how to optimally use the material and suggestive related reference material to enhance the learning experience, and linkage within the text with other media (for digital SLM) is maintained for easy referencing and progress;
- (ii) Self Learning Material developed and offered by it is self-explanatory, self-contained, illustrative, easily comprehensible, and in manageable modules such as units and blocks;
- (iii) Self Learning Material provides adequate mechanism for the learners to provide feedback on their understanding of the subject;
- (iv) Self Learning material is revised periodically from the perspective of improving quality and learner support; and
- (v) Guidelines on preparation of Self-Learning material as shown in **Annexure VIII**:

Provided that a Higher Educational Institution shall prepare the Self Learning Material only after approval of the Programme Project Report:

Provided further that no programme in Open and Distance Education mode shall be launched by a Higher Educational Institution unless it has prepared the Self Learning Material taking into consideration the above factors.

### **9. Teachers and Academic staff working in Higher Educational Institutions—**

(1) Teacher and equivalent academic positions in the School or Centre for distance education Learner Support Centres shall be appointed or as per the minimum qualifications laid down in the University Grants Commission (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in the Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulations, 2010 as modified; and there shall be positions for Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor in the School or Centre for Distance Education for performing academic functions.

(2) Every teacher, beside his or her academic responsibilities shall participate in teaching, curriculum and course material development undertake examination or test or evaluation or invigilation work, general assistance to learners in removing their academic difficulties, and participate in extracurricular and institutional support activities as required.

(3) The workload of a teacher shall take into account teaching, research and extension activities, preparation of lessons, evaluation of assignments, term papers etc. and shall be in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Commission from time to time:

Provided that the time spent on extension work where it forms an integral part of the course specified shall count towards the teaching load.



(4) The number of full time teachers, academics and other administrative and technical staff shall be provided, keeping in view the type of programme offered as per guidelines issued by Commission from time to time.

(5) The details of the faculty in the School or Centre for Distance Education of the Higher Educational Institutions and in the Learner Support Centres shall be declared on the website of the HEI and linked to Aadhaar details or other Government identifiers.

#### **10. Use of technology—**

(1) A Higher Educational Institution offering programme(s) in Open and Distance Learning mode shall take such measures as are necessary to blend Information Communication Technologies (ICT) including those developed by national mission on education through Information and Communication Technology, for enhancing effectiveness of teaching – 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 on-line support for interactive learning with learner feedback, to facilitate the use of Open Educational Resources (OER), Massive Open Online Courses and for continuous as well as comprehensive evaluation, certification, and other aspects of student support.

(2) A Higher Educational Institution may allow up to twenty percent of the total courses being offered in a particular programme in a semester through the Online Learning courses/Massive Open Online Courses as per University Grants Commission (Credit Framework for Online Learning Courses through SWAYAM) Regulations, 2016.

#### **11. Programme Launching Process and Approval—**

(1) Every Higher Educational Institution offering programme in Open and Distance Learning Mode shall publish on its website complete details of each programme on offer including fee structure, minimum eligibility condition for admission as prescribed by Commission from time to time, schedules of activities and academic calendar viz. dates for registration, re-registration, counseling sessions, assignment submissions, receipt of feedbacks on assignments, examination, list of Learner Support Centres for different programmes.

(2) Before offering any programme, the Higher Educational Institution shall prepare a Programme Project Report for each programme which shall include the following, namely :—

- (i) information on relevance of programme to the Institution's mission and goals, objectives of the programme, nature of prospective target group of learners, and appropriateness of Open and Distance Learning mode for acquiring specific competencies or skills;
- (ii) instructional design which shall include duration of programme(s), faculty and support staff requirements, instructional delivery mechanisms, identification of media – print, audio or video, online, computer aided, and student support service systems;
- (iii) procedure for admissions, curriculum transaction and evaluation;
- (iv) details of laboratory support required for the programme(s), if any;
- (v) library Resources;
- (vi) cost estimate of the programme and the provisions therefor, indicating the amount assigned for programme development, delivery and maintenance;
- (vii) quality assurance mechanism and expected programme outcomes;
- (viii) curriculum and detailed syllabi of the programme(s); and
- (ix) guidelines on launching programme(s) design, development and any such matters as specified by the Commission in **Annexure IX** and other regulatory bodies which shall be followed by the Higher Educational Institutions.

(3) The Programme Project Report shall be approved by the appropriate authority of the Higher Educational Institutions, which shall put in place a monitoring mechanism to ensure its proper implementation.

### **PART-IV**

#### **ADMISSIONS, EXAMINATIONS AND LEARNER SUPPORT**

##### **12. Admission and fees—**

(1) In order to provide opportunities for Higher Education to a larger segment of the population and to promote the educational well being of the community in general, the fee structure shall be devised by the Higher Educational Institutions in such a manner that it is affordable to all the stakeholders and the Higher Educational Institutions shall comply with the following:—

(a) A Higher Educational Institution shall, for admission in respect of any programme in Open and Distance Learning mode, accept payment towards admission fee and other fees and charges —

- (i) as may be fixed by it and declared by it in the prospectus for admission, and on the website of the HEI;
- (ii) with a proper receipt in writing issued for such payment to the concerned student admitted in such Higher Educational Institutions;
- (iii) only by way of online transfer, bank draft or pay order directly in favour of the Higher Educational Institution.

(b) It shall be mandatory for the Higher Educational Institutions to upload the details of all kind of payment or fee paid by the students on the website of the HEI.

(c) The fee waiver for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Persons with Disabilities category of students shall be in accordance with the instructions or orders issued by Central Government or State Government:

Provided that a Higher Educational Institution shall not engage in commercialisation of education in any manner whatsoever, and shall provide for equity and access to all deserving learners.

(d) Admission of learners to a Higher Educational Institution for a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode shall be offered in a transparent manner and made directly by the headquarters of the Higher Educational Institution which shall be solely responsible for final approval relating to admissions or registration of students:

Provided that a Learner Support Centre shall not admit a learner to any programme in Open and Distance Learning for or on behalf of the Higher Educational Institution.

(e) Every Higher Educational Institution shall –

- (i) record Aadhaar details or other Government identifiers of learner;
- (ii) maintain the records of the entire process of selection of candidates, and preserve such records for a minimum period of five years;
- (iii) exhibit such records on its website; and
- (iv) be liable to produce such record, whenever called upon to do so by any statutory authority of the Government under any law for the time being in force.

(f) Every Higher Educational Institution shall publish, before expiry of sixty days prior to the date of the commencement of admission to any of its programme in Open and Distance Learning mode, a prospectus containing the following for the purposes of informing those persons intending to seek admission to such Higher Educational Institutions and the general public, namely :—

- (i) each component of the fee, deposits and other charges payable by the learners admitted to such Higher Educational Institutions for pursuing a programme in Open and Distance Learning, and the other terms and conditions of such payment;
- (ii) the percentage of tuition fee and other charges refundable to a learner admitted in such Higher Educational Institutions in case such learner withdraws from such Higher Educational Institutions before or after completion of course or programme of study and the time within, and the manner in, which such refund shall be made to the learner;
- (iii) the number of seats approved in respect of each course or programme of Open and Distance Learning mode, which shall be in consonance with the resources;
- (iv) the conditions of eligibility including the minimum age of a learner in a particular course of programme of study, where so specified by the Higher Educational Institution;
- (v) the minimum educational qualifications required for admission in programme(s) specified by the relevant statutory authority or body, or by the Higher Educational Institution, where no such qualifying standards have been specified by any statutory authority;

- (vi) the process of admission and selection of eligible candidates applying for such admission, including all relevant information in regard to the details of test or examination for selecting such candidates for admission to each course or programme of study and the amount of fee to be paid for the admission test;
- (vii) details of the teaching faculty, including therein the educational qualifications and teaching experience of every member of its teaching faculty and also indicating therein whether such member is employed on regular or part time or visiting or contractual basis;
- (viii) pay and other emoluments payable for each category of teachers and other employees;
- (ix) information in regard to physical and academic infrastructure and other facilities, including that of each of the Learner Support Centres and in particular the facilities accessible by learners on being admitted to the HEI;
- (x) broad outline of the syllabus specified by the appropriate statutory body or by Higher Educational Institution, as the case may be, for every course or programme of study; and
- (xi) activity planner including all the academic activities to be carried out by the Higher Educational Institution during the academic session and the details of July cycle and January cycle shall be notified separately:

Provided that the Higher Educational Institution shall publish informations referred to in clause (i) to (xi) on its website, and the attention of the prospective learners and the general public shall be drawn to such publication on its website and Higher Educational Institutions admission prospectus and the admission process shall necessarily be over prior to the beginning of the session:

Provided further that the Higher Educational Institution may publish prospectus at any time before the expiry of sixty days.

- (g) No Higher Educational Institution shall, directly or indirectly, demand or charge or accept, capitation fee or demand any donation, by way of consideration for admission to any seat or seats in a course or programme of study conducted by it.
- (h) No person shall, directly or indirectly, offer or pay capitation fee or give any donation, by way of consideration either in cash or kind or otherwise, for obtaining admission to any seat or seats in a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode offered by a Higher Education Institution.
- (i) No Higher Educational Institution, who has in its possession or custody, of any document in the form of certificates of degree, diploma or any other award or other document deposited with it by a person for the purpose of seeking admission in such Higher Educational Institutions, shall refuse to return such degree, certificate award or other document with a view to induce or compel such person to pay any fee or fees in respect of any course or programme of study which such person does not intend to pursue or avail any facility in such Higher Educational Institution.
- (j) In case a learner, after having admitted to a Higher Educational Institution, for pursuing any programme in Open and Distance Learning mode subsequently withdraws from such Higher Educational Institutions, no Higher Educational Institution in that case shall refuse to refund such percentage of fee deposited by such learner and within such time as has been mentioned in the prospectus of such Higher Educational Institution.
- (k) No Higher Educational Institution shall, issue or publish—
  - (i) any advertisement for inducing learners for taking admission in the Higher Educational Institution, claiming to be recognised by the appropriate statutory authority or by the Commission where it is not so recognised; or
  - (ii) any information, through advertisement or otherwise in respect of its infrastructure or its academic facilities or of its faculty or standard of instruction or academic or research performance, which the Higher Educational Institution, or person authorized to issue such advertisement on behalf of the Higher Educational Institution knows to be false or not based on facts or to be misleading.

(1) On being granted recognition under clause (i) of sub-regulation (4) of regulation 3, a Higher Educational Institution shall admit students to its approved programmes only from the academic session specified in the recognition order:

Provided that enrolment of learners to the Higher Educational Institution, for any reason whatsoever, in anticipation of grant of recognition for offering a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode, shall render the enrolment invalid.

**13. Evaluation and Certification—**

(1) The Higher Educational Institution shall adopt the guidelines issued by the Commission from time to time in regard to the conduct of examinations.

(2) There shall be home assignments, students' response sheets, contact programmes and semester or year-end examination, and the marks or grades obtained in home assignment and response sheets shall be shown separately in the grade card.

(3) A Higher Educational Institution offering Open and Distance Learning Programmes shall have a mechanism well in place for evaluation of learners enrolled through Open and Distance Learning mode and their certification.

(4) A Higher Educational Institution offering a Programme in Open and Distance Learning mode shall adopt a rigorous process in development of question papers, question banks, assignments and their moderation, conduct of examination, evaluation of answer scripts by qualified teachers, and result declaration, and shall so frame the question papers as to ensure that no part of the syllabus is left out of study by a learner.

(5) The examination of the programmes in Open and Distance learning mode shall be managed by the examination or evaluation Unit of the Higher Educational Institution and shall be conducted in the examination centre approved by the Higher Educational Institution.

(6) The evaluation shall include two types of assessments continuous or formative assessment in the form of assignments, and summative assessment in the form of end semester examination or term end examination:

Provided that no semester or year-end examination shall be held in a subject unless the Higher Educational Institution is satisfied that at least 75% of the programme of study stipulated for the semester or year have been actually conducted:

Provided further that the weightage for "Term End Examination" shall not be less than 70%.

(7) The 'Examination Centre' shall be established within the territorial jurisdiction of the Higher Educational Institutions, subject to the following:—

- (i) The Examination Centre shall be located in Government schools such as Navodaya Vidyalaya, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sainik school etc. including approved affiliated colleges under the University system in the country and no Examination Centres shall be allotted to any private organisations or unapproved Higher Educational Institutions.
- (ii) The Examination Centre shall have proper monitoring mechanisms for Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) recording of the entire examination procedure and biometric system and in case of non-availability of the Closed-Circuit Television facilities, the Higher Educational Institution shall ensure that proper videography be conducted and video recordings are submitted by particular incharge of examination centre to the concerned Higher Educational Institution.
- (iii) The Higher Educational Institution shall retain all such Closed-Circuit Television recordings in archives for a minimum period of ten years.
- (iv) The attendance of examinees shall be authenticated through biometric system as per Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) records or Unique Identification Number (UIN), issued by the University.
- (v) There shall be an observer for each of the Examination Centre appointed by the Higher Educational Institution and it shall be mandatory to have observer report submitted to the Higher Educational Institution.

(8) The Learner Support Centres, within the territorial jurisdiction, may also be used as examination centres provided they fulfil the criteria of an examination centre and it shall be mandatory for the Higher Educational Institution to mention the name and place of 'Learner Support Centre' and of 'Examination Centre' on all the certificates or mark sheets issued to the students.

(9) The Higher Educational Institution shall make a mention in the mark sheet and degree about the mode of delivery i.e. Open and Distance Learning and the photograph and the Unique Identification or Aadhaar number of the learner shall be mandatorily mentioned in all the documents issued by the Higher Educational Institution to the learner.

(10) It shall be mandatory for the Higher Educational Institution to mention 'Date of Admission' and 'Date of Completion' on each of the certificates (in semester or end of the semester or end of the programme or course) issued by it.

#### **14. Learner Support Centre—**

(1) A Higher Educational Institution offering programme in Open and Distance mode shall, within one year from the date of commencement of these regulations, ensure that a Learner Support Centre is established only in a college or institution affiliated to a University or in a government recognised Higher Educational Institution offering programmes in the same broad areas having the necessary infrastructure and human resources for offering the programme:

Provided that a Higher Educational Institution may establish a special Learner Support Centre for imparting instruction to persons referred to in the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 and other persons in difficult circumstances, including jail inmates:

Provided further that a Learner Support Centre shall not be set up under a franchisee agreement in any case.

(2) A Learner Support Centre shall be the contact point or centre managed by the Higher Educational Institution for providing academic as well as administrative support to its learners, and shall perform such other functions as specified in **Annexure X**.

(3) The Learner Support Centre shall be headed by a Coordinator who shall be a regular teacher not below the rank of a qualified Assistant Professor of the concerned College or Higher Educational Institution and assisted by the counselors as decided by the Higher Educational Institution.

(4) The Higher Educational Institution shall have a Standard Operating Procedure for the smooth functioning of the Learner Support Centre which shall include functions of the Learner Support Centres and its different functionaries, monitoring mechanism of different services provided by the Centre, and it shall be mandatory for the Learner Support Centre to maintain the learner data related to conduct of counseling sessions, evaluation of assignments and grievance redressal.

#### **15. Learner Support Services –**

(1) A Higher Educational Institution offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode shall have guidelines for learner support services which is made available to all Learner Support Centres and accessible to the learners.

(2) The learner support services to be provided by the Higher Educational Institution shall include the following, namely:—

- (i) pre-admission counselling for prospective learners to provide information to facilitate them in taking an informed decision on joining a specific programme;
- (ii) support for admission related matters;
- (iii) details of study material and information shall also be available on the website of the Higher Educational Institution;

- (iv) arrangement to ensure the delivery of study material to learners within a fortnight from the date of admission.
- (v) A full time dedicated help desk well versed with the learner information data base providing single window services for all learner related queries.

(3) The University Grants Commission (Grievance Redressal) Regulations, 2012 shall be adopted and operationalised by the Higher Educational Institution, and the Higher Educational Institution shall institute a system of Grievance Redressal, in accordance with the guidelines specified in **Annexure XI**.

(4) The Higher Educational Institution shall provide facilities for on-line guidance and counselling facilities to the learners.

(5) The Higher Educational Institution shall create 'on-line' discussion forum for learners.

(6) The 'Self Learning Material' in printed form shall be provided compulsorily to the learners and in addition, the Higher Educational Institution may provide additional learning resources through on-line mode, Compact Disks etc.

### PART-V

#### ASSESSMENT, ACCREDITATION, AUDIT, INSPECTION AND MONITORING

##### **16. Assessment, Accreditation and Audit—**

(1) A Higher Educational Institution offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode shall comply with University Grants Commission (Mandatory Assessment and Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012 and in any case shall apply for assessment and accreditation under those regulations for assessment and accreditation of the programmes offered by it in Open and Distance Learning mode:

Provided that this sub-regulation shall not be applicable to Open Universities till the time they become eligible for National Assessment and Accreditation Council accreditation shall be mandatory for Open Universities to get National Assessment and Accreditation Council accreditation within one year of their becoming eligible for the same.

(2) A Higher Educational Institution recognised under these regulations for imparting programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode shall get all its programmes assessed through the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance once in a year in the format prescribed by the Commission 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.

##### **17. Powers of inspection and calling for information –**

(1) The Commission shall periodically review the performance of the Higher Educational Institution and for the purpose may direct the Higher Educational Institution to provide such information as it may require from the viewpoint of ensuring adherence of the regulations by the Higher Educational Institution, and the Higher Educational Institution shall be under obligation to provide such information in such time period as may be specified.

(2) 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, 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 programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode and take appropriate action to get compliance enforced against the erring Higher Educational Institution.

### PART-VI

#### MISCELLANEOUS

##### **18. Authority –**

(1) The Commission may authorise the officials of the Commission to perform various functions for implementing these regulations.

(2) For the purposes of regulation 4, the Commission may delegate its power to hear and decide appeal to such person or persons, including officials of the Commission, as it may specify in writing.

**19. Savings –**

(1) Nothing in these regulations shall prejudicially affect a Higher Educational Institution in regard to the programme in Open and Distance Learning mode offered by it under permission of the Distance Education Council or the Commission, the students admitted in such programmes, and the Degrees or Diplomas or Post Graduate Diplomas in Open and Distance Learning mode awarded under permission of the then Distance Education Council or of the Commission, prior to coming into force of these regulations.

(2) Certificates or Diplomas or Post Graduate Diplomas awarded by the Standalone Institutions which also have been approved by the Commission based on the policies of the then Distance Education Council of the Indira Gandhi National Open University for running Open and Distance Learning programmes till the academic session as specified in the recognition letters already issued at the level of the Commission shall remain valid programmes in the field of Open and Distance Learning mode of education and once the recognition period to these Standalone Institutions ceases, such Institutions cannot offer Open and Distance Learning programmes; provided, they shall be free to get converted their Standalone Institution status to University or Deemed to be University for the purpose of these Open and Distance Learning regulations, failing which, the Commission shall not accord any approval to the Open and Distance Learning programmes of Standalone Institutions.

**20. Interpretation Clause –**

In the event of conflict of opinion with regard to interpretation of these regulations, the opinion of the Commission shall be final.

JASPAL S. SANDHU, Secy., UGC

[ADVT.-III/4/Exty./122/17]

**Annexure I****Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA)****Objectives and Functions:**

1. The objective of establishment of Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) is to develop and put in place a comprehensive and dynamic internal quality assurance system to provide high quality programmes of higher education in the Open and Distance Learning mode. Its functions would inter alia include the following:-

- (i) To maintain quality in the services provided to the learners.
- (ii) To ensure continuous improvement in the entire operations of the Higher Educational Institution.
- (iii) To identify the key areas in which the Higher Educational Institution should maintain quality.
- (iv) To disseminate information on quality assurance.
- (v) To devise mechanisms for interaction and obtaining feedback from various Departments or Centres or Schools in the Higher Educational Institution.
- (vi) To suggest to the authorities of the Higher Educational Institution, measures for qualitative improvement.
- (vii) To ensure the implementation of its recommendations through regular monitoring.
- (viii) To ensure participation of all stakeholders namely, learners, teachers, staff, parents, society, employers, and Government in quality improvement processes.
- (ix) To prepare Programme Project Report and ensure another launch of programme(s).
- (x) Collection, collation and dissemination of accurate, complete and reliable statistics about the quality of the programme(s).

**Activities of Centre for Internal Quality Assurance:**

2. To fulfill the above objectives the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance shall -

- (i) prepare a Programme Project Report for each programme according to the norms and guidelines prescribed by the Commission and wherever necessary by the appropriate regulatory authority having control over the programme;
- (ii) get the Programme Project Report approved by the appropriate authority of the Higher Educational Institution and the Commission before launch of the programme;
- (iii) oversee the development of Study Learning Material (SLM), integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), setting up of Learning Centres and coordination with the parent institution and relevant Regulatory authorities;
- (iv) put in place monitoring mechanism to ensure the proper implementation of Programme Project Reports;
- (v) design annual plans for quality level enhancement at the level of the Higher Educational Institution and ensure their implementation;
- (vi) arrange for feedback responses from students, employers and other stakeholders for quality related institutional processes;
- (vii) develop quality benchmarks or parameters for the various academic and administrative activities of the Higher Educational Institution;
- (viii) obtain information from other Higher Educational Institutions on various quality benchmarks or parameters and best practices;
- (ix) organise workshops or seminars on quality related themes and Higher Educational Institution wise dissemination of the proceedings of such activities;
- (x) suggest restructuring of programmes in order to make them relevant to the job market;
- (xi) develop and implement innovative practices in major areas leading to quality enhancement in services to the learners;
- (xii) create learner centric environment rather than institution centric environment;
- (xiii) cultivate creativity and innovation in the faculty and staff;
- (xiv) adopt measures to ensure internalisation and institutionalisation of quality enhancement practices through periodic accreditation and audit;
- (xv) conduct or encourage system based research to bring about qualitative change in the entire system;
- (xvi) coordinate between the Higher Educational Institution and the Commission for various quality related issues or guidelines;
- (xvii) record activities undertaken on quality assurance in the form of an annual report; and
- (xviii) to coordinate recognition and accreditation of the Higher Educational Institution.

3 It will be mandatory for all Higher Educational Institution to submit Annual Reports to its Statutory Authorities or Bodies about the activities undertaken by Centre for Internal Quality Assurance during the financial year.

**Establishment of Centre for Internal Quality Assurance:**

4. The Centre for Internal Quality Assurance will be established in all Higher Educational Institutions offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode and should be headed by a full-time Director, being a senior academician of the rank of Professor, who shall be supported by adequate number of academic and other staff.

5. A Centre for Internal Quality Assurance Committee should be constituted which shall be chaired by its Director, and consisting of academic staff and internal quality auditors nominated from various functions or departments of the Higher Educational Institution. It shall perform following functions:-

- (i) decide policies for programme development methodology and programme delivery mechanism that are aligned with the vision and mission of the Higher Educational Institution;
- (ii) advice on any issues related to programme development, Information and Communication Technology intervention and implementation, learning and teaching, collaboration referred to the Committee;
- (iii) supervise academic approval and related modification procedures and to ensure that programmes satisfy stated design requirements and academic standards appropriate to the type and level of award as per philosophy of the Open and Distance Learning mode of education;
- (iv) promote automation of academic and administrative activities of the Higher Educational Institution, Regional Centres and Study Centres or Learning Support Centres;
- (v) oversee and report on the effectiveness of systems for self-evaluation and monitoring;



- (vi) appoint external subject experts or agencies or organisations for validation and annual review of its in-house process, its Learner Support Centres, Open and Distance Learning mode programmes etc.;
- (vii) appoint third party auditing bodies for quality audit of programme(s);
- (viii) approval of Self-Appraisal Report to be submitted to the Assessment and Accreditation agencies on behalf of Higher Educational Institution;
- (ix) promote collaboration and association for quality enhancement of Open and Distance Learning mode of education and research therein; and
- (x) encourage industrial involvement and industry-institution linkage for providing exposure to the learners.

## **Annexure II**

### **QUALITY MONITORING MECHANISM**

The guidelines on quality monitoring mechanism are required to be adopted by the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance for conducting institutional quality audits, to promote quality assurance and enhance as well as spread best-in-class practices of quality assurance. Quality monitoring needs to be addressed under the following broad areas, namely:-

#### **(a) Governance, Leadership and Management**

This relates to the policies and practices of Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) in the matter of planning, human resources, recruitment, training, performance appraisal, financial management and the overall role of leadership, with a focus on the following key aspects :

- (i) **Organisation Structure and Governance** : The Higher Educational Institution is ultimately responsible for quality programmes and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is required that the Institution should fill all required positions in the Directorate or Centre or Department and in the Learner Support Centres as prescribed by the Commission, and establish a credible governance system.
- (ii) **Management** : Effective leadership by setting values and participative decision-making process is the key to achieve the vision, mission and goals of the Higher Educational Institution. Therefore, it is required to assess and review the organisational culture to support the management and leadership of the institution to achieve such vision, mission and goals.
- (iii) **Strategic Planning** : The leadership of the Higher Educational Institution is expected to provide clear vision and mission. Its functions are to be governed by the principles of participation and transparency. Therefore, the Higher Educational Institution is expected to do strategic planning of its activities and implementing by aligning those with academic and administrative aspects to improve the overall quality.
- (iv) **Operational Plan, Goals and Policies**: The Higher Educational Institutions derives the operational plan from its strategic plan that defines targets and measures of the programmes to be achieved by the Institution. The Operational Plan is used as a guideline for the annual planning of programs and activities. The Higher Educational Institution needs to have well defined goals which are realistic and measurable. Equally important is to have well-defined policies that are in sync with its strategic plan and are realistic and achievable. The Higher Educational Institution needs to have clearly stated guidelines in the implementation of its policies and plans. Further, the institution needs to have a transparent and accountable system for its policies and planning that are well communicated to its stakeholders.

#### **(b) Articulation of Higher Educational Institutions Objectives**

The Higher Educational Institutions are expected to provide holistic and quality education with a professional focus, the creation of knowledge and innovation, and the practical application of the knowledge to support the business and professional community. Accordingly, the Higher Educational Institution should articulate a clear vision, mission, ethos and

broad strategy consistent with the goals to strengthen its position for offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode.

**(c) Programme Development and Approval Processes**

This area of concern relates to programme development and approval mechanism for the programme(s) to be launched, covering the following key aspects:

- (i) **Curriculum Design** : The Higher Educational Institution plays the foremost role in the curriculum design and development of learning content and therefore, it is expected to have processes, systems and structures in place to carry these responsibilities. Curriculum design is a process of developing appropriate need-based curriculum in consultation with expert groups, based on the feedback from stakeholders, resulting in the development of relevant programmes with flexibility, to suit the professional and personal needs of the learner and realisation of core values. The key aspect is also to consider the good practices of the Institution in initiating a range of programme options and courses that are relevant to the local needs and in tune with the emerging national and global trends.
- (ii) **Curriculum Planning and Implementation** : It is required that the Higher Educational Institution shall have specific implementation plans for identifying the time to be spent on specific components of the implementation phase. It is the basis for the effectiveness of the programme(s) and their usefulness as a whole.
- (iii) **Academic Flexibility** : Academic flexibility is the key feature of the Open and Distance Learning mode of education and refers to freedom in the use of the time-frame of courses, vertical mobility, and inter-disciplinary options facilitated by curricular transactions. Therefore, the Higher Educational Institution shall adopt proper strategies for imparting academic flexibility.
- (iv) **Learning Resource** : Learning Resource is a key component of the Open and Distance Learning mode of education. Learning resource can be of print and digital mode. Considering the need of blended learning, the Higher Educational Institution should also develop e-resources for the learner to refer and study. There is no or very little interaction of teachers with the learners, the content and structure of learning resources play a vital role in the Open and Distance Learning mode of education. Therefore, it is required that each Higher Educational Institution shall ensure the quality of learner resources and their periodical review. While deciding on the appropriateness of the media and the technologies, the Higher Educational Institution should take into consideration various factors – the media and technology utilised matches the course content in order to enhance and expand learning, and to match to the learners' needs; that these are accessible, practical and equitable, and cost effective to the learners.
- (v) **Feedback System**: The process of revision and redesign of curricula shall be based on recent market dynamics, industrial developments, research and feedback from the stakeholders including learners. The feedback from all stakeholders in terms of its relevance and appropriateness in catering to the needs of the society, economy and environment are also considered in this key aspect.

**(d) Programme Monitoring and Review**

The Higher Educational Institution shall plan and execute programme monitoring review system which should include a programme management structure, annual programme reviews, external benchmarking, channels for collecting learner feedback, and development of improvement plans and actions to close the feedback. To maintain the quality of academic programme, it is required to conduct periodical internal reviews. For such reviews the Institution shall also consider the achievements of learning outcomes that are assessed through the examination system.

**(e) Infrastructure Resources**

This criterion seeks to elicit data on the adequacy and optimal use of the facilities available in a University or Institution to maintain the quality of academic and other programmes – physical facilities, library (or e-library), Information Technology infrastructure, etc. It also requires information on how every constituent of the Institution; the learners, teachers or Counselors and staff - benefits from these facilities.

**(f) Learning Environment and Learner Support**

The learner support unit is responsible for the delivery of services to all learners. The learner support services

including library services shall be accessed electronically by the learner. “Physical library” and classroom environment is the core requirement for programme delivery through offline and blended mode. Additionally, Higher Educational Institution shall establish virtual facilities as component of the learning environment which are focused around the pedagogical use of modern educational practices to support blended learning. Learner Support Services shall be provided through the campus-wide portal and e-Learning platform. The Institution shall take a more sophisticated approach to the use of Information and Communication Technology and expertise in e-learning. The approach shall provide a seamless learner-centred environment.

**(g) Assessment & Evaluation**

Learning outcomes are the specifications of what a Learner shall learn and demonstrate on successful completion of the course or the programme. It can also be seen as the desired outcome of the learning process in terms of acquisition of the skills and knowledge. They are embedded in the curriculum. Achieving Learning Outcomes needs specific experiences to be provided to the Learner and evaluation of their attainment. The Institution needs to ensure that the purposes of assessment are clearly described in the course materials, and the learners are able to access some of the assignments. A programme that states Learning Outcomes that are not evaluated or assessed gets neglected in implementation. Hence all the stated Learning Outcomes must be part of the evaluation protocol of the programme. Learner assessment provides an indication of the areas where learning has happened and where it has to be improved upon. The Higher Educational Institutions shall execute the assessment and evaluation through varied assessment tools including multiple choice questions, projects, reports, case-studies, presentations, and term-end examinations, to suit the different learning outcomes expected of the course elements. The Higher Educational Institutions shall have proper assessment and moderation system for assessing the learning outcomes of learners.

**(h) Teaching Quality and Staff Development**

The Higher Educational Institutions shall have a well established structure for promoting quality counseling and provide staff development programmes and activities to encourage academic staff to improve teaching and learning. The Higher Educational Institution should provide the support for the academic staff in understanding and implementing the institutional learning outcomes and subject learning outcomes. The Institution also needs to ensure that the academic staff is conversant with formative and summative assessment procedures and their importance in the learning process.

**Process of Quality Audit**

**(A) Academic Planning :** The main purpose of academic planning is to ensure that the overall portfolio of delivered programmes offered by the Higher Educational Institutions is relevant to market needs, reflects the Institution’s strategic direction and offers a high quality ‘value-added’ learner experience. Academic planning promotes robust and appropriate procedures to help ensure that every new programme starts with the best chance possible to admit and retain viable learner cohorts. The Institution has a streamline modification process to support staff in ensuring that the curriculum remains up to date. The guiding principle behind this process is that all relevant stakeholders are communicated and consulted with and learners’ needs are assessed while launching new programmes.

**(B) Validation :** The main purpose of validation is to assure the Higher Educational Institution that a new programme is academically viable, that academic standards have been appropriately defined and that it will offer learners the best opportunity to learn.

**(C) Monitoring, evaluation and enhancement plans :** Across the Higher Educational Institution, there would be various levels from where the reports are being generated to ensure quality deliverance of the Open and Distance Learning programmes and their final outcomes. The same are described as follows :

- (i) **Reports from Learner Support Centre :** The Higher Educational Institution shall collect the report of academic activities and other related activities periodically from Learner Support Centres. There should be details of all the activities related to academic planning, counseling, learner support, etc. The Higher Educational Institution shall adopt the technological solutions for easy receipt of these reports. These reports will be the base for the quality audit.
- (ii) **External examiner or other external agencies report:** Programme development teams and Centre for Internal Quality Assurance team shall consider the comments made by experts and third party of quality audit. The Higher Educational Institution shall also encourage to consider the adoption of identified good practices that will benefit and develop the programme.
- (iii) **Systematic consideration of performance data at programme, faculty and Higher Educational Institution levels :** In order to make a meaningful evaluation and audit, the Higher Educational Institution needs easy access

to performance monitoring information such as course pass rates, learner entry profiles and progression and achievement reports. These shall be produced and available through web-based application. The data collected through the application will be useful for report making at the Higher Educational institution.

- (iv) **Reporting and Analytics by the Higher Educational Institution:** Further, the Higher Educational institution shall generate the required reports out of such web-based applications and analyze learner and academic analytics for deciding the improvements to be executed for stronger performance.
- (v) **Periodic Review :** The Higher Educational institution needs to have an effective system for soliciting feedbacks from the stakeholders regularly to improve its programmes. There is a need for an integrated quality assurance system for its programmes and implementation units, including the Learner Support Centres. The Higher Educational institution needs to conduct self-assessments regularly and uses the results to improve its operations and programmes.

### **Annexure III**

#### **Minimum Standards to be Maintained at Examination Centres**

1. The examination centre must be centrally located in the city, with good connectivity from railway station or bus stand, for the convenience of the students.
2. The number of examination centres in a city or State must be proportionate to the student enrollment from the region.
3. Building and grounds of the examination centre must be clean and in good condition.
4. The examination centre must have an examination hall with adequate seating capacity and basic amenities.
5. Fire extinguishers must be in working order, locations well marked and easily accessible. Emergency exits must be clearly identified and clear of obstructions.
6. The examination centre must provide adequate lighting, ventilation and comfortable seating. Safety and security of the examination centre must be ensured.
7. Restrooms must be located in the same building as the examination centre, and restrooms must be clean, supplied with necessary items, and in working order.
8. Provision of drinking water must be made for learners.
9. Adequate parking must be available near the examination centre.
10. Facilities for Persons with Disabilities should be available.

### **Annexure IV**

#### **Courses or Study Centres or Off Campuses and Territorial Jurisdiction of Universities**

- a) A Central or State Government University can conduct courses through its own departments, its constituent colleges or through its affiliated Colleges.
- b) A university established or incorporated by or under a State Act shall operate only within the territorial jurisdiction allotted to it under its Act and in no case beyond the territory of the state of its location.
- c) The private universities and deemed universities cannot affiliated any college or institution for conducting courses leading to award of its diplomas, degrees or other qualifications.
- d) No university, whether central, state, private or deemed, can offer its programmes through franchising arrangement with private coaching institutions even for the purpose of conducting courses through distance mode.
- e) All universities shall award only such degrees as are specified by the University Grants Commission and published in the Official Gazette.
- f) The University shall conduct their first degree and Master's degree programmes in accordance with the regulations notified by the Commission in this regard.

## Regulating provisions

### (A) University Grants Commission Regulations on Private Universities

A Private university established under a State Act shall be a unitary University. A private university may be permitted to open off campus centres, off shore campuses and study centres after five years of its coming into existence subject to the fulfilment of conditions as laid down under University Grants Commission (Establishment of & Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations, 2003. As of now, the University Grants Commission has not granted permission to any Private University to establish off-campus or study centre.

### (B) University Grants Commission Regulations on Deemed Universities

A Deemed University shall operate only within its Headquarters or from those off campuses or off-shore campuses which are approved by the Government of India through notification published in the Official Gazette.

In case of distance education programmes, no institution deemed to be university, so declared by the Government of India after 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2010 [date of publication of University Grants Commission (Institutions Deemed to be Universities) Regulations, 2010] is allowed to conduct courses in the distance mode.

The institutions deemed to be universities declared before 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2010 are not allowed to conduct courses in distance mode from any of its off-campus centres or off-shore campuses approved after 26<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.

Approval for new courses and extension of approval of the courses already run by the Deemed to be Universities under distance mode would be granted by the University Grants Commission subject to the fulfilment of conditions as laid down by the University Grants Commission.

The University Grants Commission has not granted approval to any deemed to be university to establish study centres.

Any information or clarification with regard to recognition of Private Universities or Deemed Universities and the courses offered by them may be obtained from JS (CPP-I) University Grants Commission, Bahadurshah Zafar Marg, New Delhi.

### (C) Distance Education programmes of the Central Universities and

#### State Government Universities

The Central or State Government Universities can conduct courses through distance mode in accordance with the provisions of their respective Act and after the approval of the University Grants Commission.

## Annexure V

### Competencies of Counselor in a Learner Support Centre

1. Should be a post graduate from a recognised University.
2. Familiarity with basic research on the characteristics of Distance learners, their needs and difference from conventional face-to-face education.
3. Application of basic principles of instructional design.
4. Thorough knowledge of subject matter and common misconceptions related to the course(s).
5. Deep understanding of the necessity of learner-centered environment in online and blended learning mode.
6. Ability to design constructivist learning environment.
7. Practical applications of learning theories, self-paced instruction, and computer-mediated communication and learning.
8. Ability to foster a sense of community among learners.
9. Adaptability and flexibility with the capabilities and limitations of the delivery media.
10. Familiarity with the delivery medium to provide basic troubleshooting.
11. Ability to multitask.
12. Time management (e.g. respond to learners in timely manner, extensive and advance preparation and planning).
13. Professional characteristics (e.g. motivated to teach, self-confident, articulate, good writer).

**Annexure VI****ACADEMIC AND INFRASTRUCTURAL REQUIREMENTS****I. Open Universities or Single Mode Higher Educational Institutions**

The following positions are on full time and dedicated basis, excluding the designated positions in the Open Universities as per their respective Act(s): -

**A. Staffing Norms at Headquarters:**

1. Head for each school at the Professor level.
2. Academic staff strength per discipline or specialisation or programme under a school.

Minimum three faculty members are required as per the following:

Associate Professor: 1

Assistant Professor: 2

3. Administrative staff strength at Headquarters or Main Campus (**up to 10,000 students**):

Deputy Registrar: 1

Assistant Registrar: 1

Section Officer: 1

Assistants: 3

Computer Operator: 2

Multi Tasking Staff: 2

In case of the enrolment higher than 10000, Open University may increase the number of positions appropriately.

*Teacher : Non Teaching Staff (NTS) ratio - 1: 2 shall be maintained.*

**B. Physical Infrastructure:**

Minimum requirement will be as per University Grants Commission (Fitness of Open Universities for Grants) Rules, 1988 and as amended from time to time, except for the existing Open Universities for the purpose of these regulations.

**II. Centre for Distance Education (CDE)/Dual Mode Higher Educational Institutions****A. Staffing Norms at Headquarters:**

1. Director: (permanent, full time Professor) preferably having professional experience in distance education)
2. Academic staff strength :

At least two faculty member (full time-dedicated for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) courses) per discipline or specialisation or programme at Associate and Assistant Professor level.

3. Administrative staff strength at Headquarters or Main Campus (**upto 5,000 students**):

Deputy Registrar: 1

Assistant Registrar: 1

Section Officer: 1

Assistants: 2

Computer operators : 2

Class IV: 2

In case of the enrolment higher than 5000, Centre for Distance Education or University may increase the number of positions appropriately.

**Teacher :** Non-Teaching Staff (NTS) ratio -1: 2 shall be maintained

**B. Physical Infrastructure**

Total Built-up area for Open and Distance Learning activity: Minimum 15000 sq. ft. (carpet area):

| Sl.No. | Built-up Area Type  | Percentage (%) | Built-up Area<br>(Carpet Area, in sq ft) |
|--------|---|----------------|--|
| 1      | Academic  | 50%            | 7500                                     |
| 2      | Administrative  | 10%            | 1500                                     |
| 3      | Academic support such as Library, Reading room, Computer Centre, Informational and Communication technology Labs, Video and Audio Labs etc. | 30%            | 4500                                     |
| 4      | Amenities or other support facilities   | 10%            | 1500                                     |
| Total  |   |                | 15000                                    |

Note: Built up area for toilets shall be separate.

**Annexure VII**

**QUALITY ASSURANCE GUIDELINES OF LEARNING MATERIAL IN MULTIPLE MEDIA, HUMAN RESOURCE, CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY**

**1. Learning Material (Print Media)**

Learning Material through print-media is termed as Self Learning Material, being developed with the approach of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating and self-evaluating. The following is an indicative list of quality standards for print material:

- (a) The Self Learning Material shall be designed with the approach of two-way communication between the learner and content.
- (b) The Self Learning Material shall involve the learner actively through various experience-based activities and assignments.
- (c) The learner should get clear information about the structure of the programme and course.
- (d) There shall be detail learning map in Self Learning Material for the learner so that he or she will be self-directed for completion of his or her studies.
- (e) The content of Self Learning Material shall be developed with dialogue and personal system of writing method which will create the nature of interactivity in Self Learning Material.
- (f) The Self Learning Material shall encourage learner to apply new knowledge and skills.
- (g) There shall be clear definition of learning objectives and outcomes.
- (h) The content shall be divided into small sections (blocks) and sub-sections (units & sub-units) for effective learning.
- (i) There shall be an assignment on each learning objective for self-assessment.
- (j) The learner shall be directed through problem solving activities as applicable to nature of the course.
- (k) The Self Learning Material shall 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 or international caselets and case studies.
- (vii) Content in segments synchronised with learning objectives and outcome.
- (viii) Explanation of icons used in content.
- (ix) Appropriate sequence of material.
- (x) Explanation on technical, new, difficult terms or word in a glossary section.
- (xi) Inclusion of adequate suggested reading (both print and online).

**2. Audio–Video Material: Quality Standards**

- (a) There shall be adequate consideration of learners' prior knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- (b) Level and style of language shall be appropriate.
- (c) There shall be clear information on types of support material and study activities to be used by the learner.
- (d) It shall be clear and unambiguous, also preferably free from pedagogic jargon.
- (e) The aim, objective and target audience for the Audio Video material shall be clearly defined.
- (f) It shall be capable of being evaluated to conform to the learning outcomes.
- (g) There shall be clear guidelines with regard to the use of the Audio or Visual material vis-a-vis other content of the course.
- (h) AV Material shall be developed in forms and formats that will be easily accessible by the learners.
- (i) There shall be separate Audio Video manual for giving the guidelines of using the Audio Video material in study.
- (j) Audio Video Material shall provide continuity and coherence within and between audio-based study sessions.
- (k) There shall be synchronisation of Sound and Image in Audio Video material.
- (l) There shall be appropriate graphics and animations relevant to the course content.
- (m) There shall be appropriate 'visual texture' and rate of change of image to keep the learner involved.

**3. Online Material: Quality Standards**

- (a) The course shall be organised into units and lessons.
- (b) There shall be description of unit overview along with objectives, activities, assignments and resources that frame the unit.
- (c) Availability of a program map and correlation matrix among the courses in the programme.
- (d) There shall be description of credit value of each module or unit in the course.
- (e) There shall be clear guidelines on academic integrity and netiquette (internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions and plagiarism.
- (f) There shall be lesson overview, content and activities, assignments to provide the learning opportunities for learner to master the content.
- (g) The course shall be designed to teach concepts and skills that the learner will retain throughout the study.
- (h) There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning
- (i) The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasing by complex ways.
- (j) There shall be appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.
- (k) The content shall provide for periodical feedback about the learning process.
- (l) The course shall be easy to navigate.
- (m) There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete the course
- (n) The content shall be accessible on various devices.
- (o) The online material shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities



**4. Computer-based material: Quality Standards**

- (a) The Computer-based material shall provide an environment for practise, at the learner's own pace and in his own time.
- (b) The Computer-based material shall provide an environment for self-assessment.
- (c) It shall allow learners to develop analysis and decision-making skills, to discover principles and concepts for themselves.
- (d) The course shall be organised into units and lessons.
- (e) There shall be description of unit overview along with objectives, activities, assignments and resources that frame the unit.
- (f) Availability of a program map and correlation matrix among the courses in the programme.
- (g) There shall be description of credit value of each module or unit in the course.
- (h) There shall be lesson's overview, content and activities, assignments to provide the learning opportunities for learner to master the content.
- (i) The course shall be designed to teach concepts and skills that the learner will retain throughout the study.
- (j) There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning.
- (k) The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasing by complex ways.
- (l) There shall appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.
- (m) The course shall be easy to navigate.
- (n) There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete and master the course.
- (o) The Compute-based material shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities.

**5. Curriculum and Pedagogy: Quality Standards**

- (a) The curriculum objectives shall be consistent with the mission of the HEI.
- (b) There shall be involvement of all the stakeholders in the process of framing the curriculum objective.
- (c) The curriculum shall be designed by adopting University Grants Commission Model Curriculum and incorporating local or regional needs.
- (d) There shall be rationale for the appropriateness of the curriculum to the stage of learning.
- (e) There shall be linkages of the curriculum to previous and subsequent stages of learning.
- (f) There shall be such learning experiences which allow a diversity of methods (like learning from practice, opportunities for distributed and concentrated practice, learning with peers, learning in formal situations inside and outside the department, personal study, specific teacher inputs etc).
- (g) The structure of curriculum shall be defined.
- (h) There shall be a complete strategy on teaching and learning methods.
- (i) There shall be a decision made on types of media content used.
- (j) There shall be a comprehensive decision on assessment & evaluation techniques.
- (k) The content shall be reliable and justify the learning outcome(s).
- (l) There shall be clear definition of intended outcomes of learning, benchmarked to identifiable stages of learning.
- (m) There shall be the use of reference points and expertise from outside the Higher Educational Institution, if required, in programme design and in the processes of programme development and approval.
- (n) There shall be relevance of curriculum to national competency requirement.
- (o) There shall be description of credit value of each module or unit in the course.

**Table I: Norms for offering programmes through Distance mode based on credit system**

| Duration of the programme | Credits | Level of the Programme      |
|---------------------------|---------|-----------------------------|
| 3 years                   | 96-100  | Bachelor's Degree (General) |
| 2 years                   | 64-72   | Master's Degree (General)   |

**Table 2: Norms for delivery of courses through distance mode**

| No. of Assignments | Practical Sessions | No. of Counseling Sessions<br>Theory (10% of total study hours) | Size of SLMs Range<br>(in terms of units, to be divided into blocks) | Study input | Credit Value of the course |
|--------------------|--------------------|---|--|-------------|----------------------------|
| 1                  | 60 hours           | 6 hours   | 6-8 units  | 60 hours    | 2 Credits                  |
| 2                  | 120 hours          | 12 hours  | 14-16 units  | 120 hours   | 4 credits                  |
| 3                  | 180 hours          | 18 hours  | 20-24 units  | 180 hours   | 6 credits                  |
| 4                  | 240 hours          | 24 hours  | 30-34 units  | 240 hours   | 8 credits                  |

**Table 3: Norms of Credit Structure for Self Learning Material Development Non-Print Form**

| No. of counseling sessions (theory) |   |                                 | Size of e-content<br>(in terms of units) | Study input | Credit value of the course |
|-------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|--|-------------|----------------------------|
| Syn Chat<br>5%                      | Asyn**<br>Discussion<br>Forum<br>(comp)   | Syn*<br>(f2f)#<br>(optl)<br>10% |  |             |                            |
| 3 hrs                               | 2-10 topics per course as per the subject | 6 hrs                           | 6-8 units                                | 60 hours    | 2 credits                  |
| 6 hrs                               | -do-                                      | 12 hrs                          | 14-16 units                              | 120 hours   | 4 credits                  |
| 9 hrs                               | -do-                                      | 18 hrs                          | 20-24 units                              | 180 hours   | 6 credits                  |
|                                     | -do-                                      | 24 hrs                          | 30-34 units                              | 240 hours   | 8 credits                  |

\* Syn : Synchronous

\*\*Asyn : Asynchronous

# f2f : face-to-face

**Annexure VIII****Guidelines on Preparation of Self-Learning Material****Overview**

Self Learning Material is developed with the approach of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating and self-evaluating. The major challenge for the Open and Distance Learning system is near absence of the teacher. Therefore, it is very essential to pre-plan each of the activities. The learning material plays a vital role in this system and it includes Self-Learning Material in print and electronic form. A key challenge of Learning Material is ensuring that its writing is to be in a way that is engaging and which actively involves the learners. Another challenge of learning material is rapidly changing technology and deploying traditional teaching-learning methods through these technologies. Therefore, it is necessary to have the proper planning prior to development of the learning material. During the planned period, the following points should be considered very carefully:-

- backgrounds of learner and learning needs;
- learning experiences; and
- support and preparation in adapting to flexible learning.

2. Learning materials place much more emphasis on the processes of learning. Following are the major ingredients to be considered while developing the learning material by authors (in case of print material) and instructional designers (in case of e-learning material):-

- (a) learning objectives
- (b) assessment of prior knowledge
- (c) learning activities
- (d) feedback of learning activities
- (e) examples and illustrations
- (f) self-assessment tests
- (g) summaries and key points
- (h) study tips

3. The learning material should be developed with the constructivist approach and that should lay emphasis on real-world tasks, learner's choice of tasks or situations, case studies, collaborative learning tasks, opportunities for observing others, self-evaluation. The Higher Educational Institution may also adopt or procure the Learning Materials from expert agencies or consultant if it saves the time and cost without compromising on the quality.

**Planning for development of learning material**

4. Due to the near absence of the teachers in the Open and Distance Learning mode, the learner has the opportunity to take the decision(s) at any point during the learning path. This may create disagreement between learner's perception and the objective of the learning material. Therefore, it is required to consider the following key points during planning for the development of learning material.

- (a) **Learner Profile :** It is required to consider literacy level (including level of language proficiency), age group, information communication technology skills, aim of study, personal background and home situation, prior knowledge, prior skills, learning situations, etc.
- (b) **Background:** In Open and Distance Learning system, learner studies at his pace and not like face-to-face mode. Most of the learners are working professionals and they get time to study at their homes. If we add certain references which they cannot access at home, then it will create an obstacle in their learning. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the accessibility of course resources and references at the place of learning.
- (c) **Learning Objectives and Outcome :** It is required to define the learning objectives and outcomes prior to initiating the process for the learning material development. The learning objectives can be of terminal, intermediate or enabling nature. These learning objectives can be set at course, unit, or module level.

**Group of Learning Material**

5. Considering the principles of Open and Distance Learning mode of education, the programmes shall be accompanied with learning material or resources which shall comprise of self-learning material or e-learning material, e-books, practical

book, student's handbook, question bank, assignment book, Audio Video material, programme guide, project manual, etc.

#### **Standards of Self Learning Material (SLM) in Print Form**

- (i) The Self Learning Material shall be developed as per the defined credit structure of the programme.
- (ii) The Self Learning Material shall involve the learner actively through various experience-based activities and assignments.
- (iii) The learner shall get the clear information about the structure of the programme and the course.
- (iv) There shall be a detailed learning map in the Self Learning Material for the learner so that she or he will be self-directed for completion of their studies.
- (v) The content of the Self Learning Material shall be developed with dialogue and personal system of writing method which will create a nature of interactivity in the Self Learning Material.
- (vi) The Self Learning Material shall encourage the learner to apply new knowledge and skills.
- (vii) There shall be clear definition of learning objectives and outcomes.
- (viii) The content shall be divided into small sections (blocks) and sub-sections (units & sub-units) for effective learning.
- (ix) Activities shall be included in each unit of the Self Learning Material.
- (x) There shall be assignments on each learning objective for self-assessment.
- (xi) The learner shall be directed through problem solving activities as applicable to the nature of the course.

#### **Standards of Self Learning Material (SLM) in Non-print Form**

6. The learners' perspective is an important aspect of quality assurance for e-learning. High-quality e-learning content should be designed by skilled content and instructional design professionals. Good instructional design will reflect best practices and research on teaching and learning. The key principles of designing e-learning content are: (1) consistent layout and design; (2) clear organisation and presentation of information; (3) consistent and easy-to-use navigation; and (4) aesthetically pleasing design and graphics. Thus, the standards of Self Learning Material in non-print form as under:-

- (i) The e-learning material shall be designed as per the credit structure of the online programme.
- (ii) The course shall be organised into units and lessons.
- (iii) There shall be description of unit overview along with objectives, activities, assignments and resources that frame the unit.
- (iv) Availability of a programme map and correlation matrix among the courses in the programme.
- (v) There shall be description of credit value of each module or unit in the course.
- (vi) There shall be clear guidelines on academic integrity and netiquette (internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions and plagiarism.
- (vii) There shall be lesson overview, content and activities, assignments to provide the learning opportunities for learner to master the content.
- (viii) The course shall be designed to teach concepts and skills that the learner will retain throughout the study.
- (ix) There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning.
- (x) The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking in increasing by complex ways.
- (xi) There shall be appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.
- (xii) The content shall provide for periodical feedback about the learner process.
- (xiii) The course shall be easy to navigate.
- (xiv) There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete and master the course
- (xv) The content shall be accessible on various devices.
- (xvi) The e-Learning Material shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities.

**Annexure IX****Guidelines on Programme Project Report (PPR)****Overview**

A Programme Project Report (PPR) of a Higher Educational Institution is a document prepared to introduce a new programme, which includes details of - (a) programme objectives and outcomes; (b) nature of target group of learners; (c) appropriateness of the programme with quality assurance for acquiring specific skills; (d) programme content designing and developing; (e) cost estimates for development of the programme; and (f) admission, delivery and evaluation norms. The Programme Project Report is a self-disclosure by the Institution about launching the programme in the Open and Distance Learning mode. The Institution has to define specific aims and objectives for each of the academic programmes which will give the direction to launch a programme and will allow to focus on results. At the end, these aims and objectives will help to demonstrate what has been achieved. The programme shall be planned with clear deliverables and knowledge experiences to be gained.

**Need to Prepare Programme Project Report (PPR)**

2. A Programme Project Report is required to be prepared before introducing any new programme duly approved by its highest academic authority. The main contents of the Programme Project Report are as follow:-

- (a) **Programme's mission & objectives :** The Higher Educational Institution (HEI) shall define the mission statement and objectives for the programme to be launched, which shall reflect the strategic direction and the academic goals of the Higher Educational Institution. Those shall be aligned with industrial or learners' demand, and shall be defined in such a manner that they are appropriate to be achieved.
- (b) **Relevance of the program with HEI's Mission and Goals :** The Higher Educational Institution shall plan for such a programme to be offered through the Open and Distance Learning mode that is relevant to the Higher Educational Institution's mission and goals. Therefore, it is very much important that the programme to be offered through Open and Distance Learning should be aligned with Higher Educational Institution's mission and goal and will prove as major contributing factor in its achievement.
- (c) **Nature of prospective target group of learners:** The Higher Educational Institution shall identify the target group of learners. It is required to understand their learning needs and on its basis the curriculum should be aimed. The Higher Educational Institution should also consider diverse class of learners including a class having of low level of disposable income, rural dwellers, women, unskilled men, minorities etc.
- (d) **Appropriateness of programme to be conducted in Open and Distance Learning mode to acquire specific skills and competence :** The Higher Educational Institution shall clearly identify the learning outcomes for the programme which shall cover the specific skills and competence to be acquired by the learner. The programme should be aimed appropriately to those learning outcomes. The learning outcomes shall include the development of knowledge and understanding appropriate to the area of study and these should also reflect academic, professional and occupational standards of that field. The learning outcomes should incorporate generic transferable skills and competencies.
- (e) **Instructional Design :** Instructional Design includes Curriculum design, detailed syllabi, duration of the programme, faculty and support staff requirement, instructional delivery mechanisms, identification of media – print, audio or video, online, computer aided, and student support service systems. The Higher Educational Institution shall define the instructional design for each of the academic programmes to be offered through the Open and Distance Learning mode and shall map the credit hours for each course or module of the programme.
- (f) **Procedure for admissions, curriculum transaction and evaluation :** The Higher Educational Institution shall define the admission policy for the programme with minimum eligibility and fee structure. The information related to financial assistance, if any, should be included in the policy. The Higher Educational Institution shall notify the policy of programme delivery alongwith the details of methods and web-based tools to be adopted. The Higher Educational Institution shall notify the activity planner including all the academic activities to be carried out by the Higher Educational Institution during the academic session. Further, the Higher Educational Institution shall also notify policy for evaluation of learner progress along with methods and tools.
- (g) **Requirement of the laboratory support and Library Resources:** There may be programmes having practical component in syllabus. The Higher Educational Institution shall give clear guidelines about the laboratory support to the learners to perform the practicals prescribed in the programme. There shall be provision of a practicals book for the learners. In case of online learning, the practical should be conducted and performed by applying virtual reality methods.

- (h) **Cost estimate of the programme and the provisions:** The cost estimate should indicate the amount assigned for programme development, delivery and maintenance.
- (i) **Quality assurance mechanism and expected programme outcomes :** The Higher Educational Institution shall define the review mechanism for programme and continuously enhance the standards of curriculum, instructional design relevant to professional requirements of the area of study. There should be course benchmark statements. The Higher Educational Institution shall also devise the mechanism for monitoring effectiveness of the programme.

## Annexure X

### Learner Support Centre

**1. General:** Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of Education consists of three levels of functioning which are located at the Head-Quarters (HQ) of the Higher Educational Institutions, Regional Centres and Study Centres (SCs) or Learner Support Centres (LSCs) established within the territorial jurisdiction of the Higher Educational Institution as defined in the following Part. Planning, Designing and Preparation of Self Learning Material (SLM) for a learner who does not have any regular access to teachers is quite different than a Text Book meant for classroom teaching, overall management of the processes of Admissions, Evaluation, and Declaration of Results etc. are the main responsibilities of the Head-Quarters of the Higher Educational Institution and are discharged from the main campus. Under the direct management and control of the Higher Educational Institution, Regional Centres which are the second level of functioning, perform a dynamic operational link between the Head-Quarter and the Study Centres (SCs) or Learner Support Centres (LSCs) which are the third level of Open and Distance Learning system and are important main contact points for access by the learners, responsive and facilitating information centres, arranging contact sessions and other operations like processing of assignments etc. The Study Centres (SCs) or Learner Support Centres (LSCs) will also be established and managed directly by the Higher Educational Institution and not through any franchise or outsourced arrangement.

### **2. Definition and Establishment of Learner Support Centre or Study Centre**

‘Study Centre (SC) or Learner Support Centre (LSC)’ means a Centre established, maintained or recognised by the Higher Education Institution for advising, counseling, vocational guidance, hands on experience, library services and providing interface between the teachers and the learners, rendering academic and any other related services and assistance, like field experience, laboratory for experimental work, Information Communication Technology facilities for operations and interaction with the learners etc. for the benefit of the learners:

Provided that a Higher Educational Institution offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode shall, within six months from the date of notification of these Regulations, ensure that all Study Centre or Learner Support Centre are established only in a College or Institute affiliated to a recognised university (other than a Private University) or a Government recognized Higher Educational Institution offering conventional mode programmes of equivalent level in the same broad areas under the relevant faculty such as faculty of sciences or social science or humanities or commerce or management etc. and having all the necessary infrastructure and availability of appropriate number of qualified faculty not below the rank of qualified Assistant Professors of recognised Colleges or Institutes offering a similar programme for engaging theory contact sessions and supervising practical sessions in laboratory or field:

Provided that a Higher Educational Institution may establish a Special Learner Support Centre for imparting instruction to persons referred to in the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 including the employees of Defence or Security Forces and jail inmates interested to study through the Open and Distance Learning mode. However, in case of programmes like those being developed by the Government for Skill Development or Lifelong Learning, the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre could be opened in Government institutions having capabilities for learner support services in the respective areas.

Any Study Centre or Learner Support Centre shall be established by the Higher Educational Institution after processing through the appropriate statutory bodies of the Higher Educational Institution. While processing such approvals it is mandatory to provide evidence of the preparedness for establishing Study Centres/Learner Support Centres, providing learner support services, availability of the academic, other staff and qualified academic counsellors.

The Higher Educational Institution shall have a Standard Operating Procedure for the smooth functioning of the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre which will include all aspects of functions of the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre,

monitoring mechanism of different services provided by the Centre, and it shall be mandatory for the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre to maintain the learner data related to conduct of counselling sessions, evaluation of assignments and effective and online grievance redressal system, which should be monitored at the level of regional centre and Head-Quarters.

List of the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre as approved by the respective Higher Educational Institution shall be submitted to the University Grants Commission at least 60 days in advance before operationalising the Study Centres or Learner Support Centres. The list of Study Centres or Learner Support Centres with details such as: Name with address of the institution where the centre is located, name of the coordinator with contact details, working hours and schedules for counselling sessions, infrastructure and other facilities available in the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre shall be displayed on the web portal of the Open and Distance Learning institution and the same information shall be made available in the printed prospectus for the information of the learners and other stakeholders.

In addition, a Higher Educational Institution should submit an undertaking to the Commission effect that the academic and instructional facilities at its Study Centres or Learner Support Centres meet all the conditions of these regulations and guidelines issued from time to time, and are commensurate with the number of academic programmes and learners' strength thereto:-

**Provided that the Higher Educational Institution shall not carry out any of its activities related to the Open and Distance Learning mode at places other than Study Centres or Learner Support Centres under a different name such as Information Centre, Facilitation Centre, Nodal Centre, Knowledge Partner, Partner Institution, Multimedia Centres and similar such names:-**

**Provided further that, no Study Centre or Learner Support Centre shall be established beyond the jurisdiction of the Higher Educational Institution or under any franchisee or outsourcing agreement, as described in these regulations.**

### **3. Territorial Jurisdiction for Establishment of Study Centres or Learner Support Centres**

Territorial jurisdiction of the Higher Educational Institution for Open and Distance Learning mode programmes shall be as prescribed in the respective Acts of the Higher Educational Institution, subject to the following conditions:

**3.1 Higher Educational Institution other than Private and Deemed to be University:** Not beyond the respective State in case of Universities set up under any State Act. For Universities set up under a Central Act the jurisdiction shall be as per the provisions of the Act.

**3.2. Deemed to be a University:** The jurisdiction shall be as per extant provisions of the Deemed to be a University regulations and also notified by the University Grants Commission from time to time.

**3.3. Private University:** A Private University established under a State Act shall be unitary in nature and will be eligible to run Open and Distance Learning Programmes, which have been conducted by the university in conventional mode for a minimum period of five years. The Learner Support Centres or Study Centres shall be set up, within the State, with the prior approval of the University Grants Commission and as per University Grants Commission (Establishment and Maintenance of Standards in Private Universities) Regulations, 2003. In the absence of University Grants Commission approved Learner Support Centre or Study Centre, the University shall offer distance education programmes at its main campus only.

### **4. Admission and Programme Fees**

Admission of learners to a Higher Educational Institution for a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode shall be offered in a transparent manner with Self Learning Material designed and developed directly by the Higher Educational Institution which shall be solely responsible for all activities relating to admissions or registration or evaluation processes, duly approved by the respective statutory bodies of the Higher Educational Institutions. ***In no case these activities shall be outsourced.*** However, quality Self Learning Material developed by any other Higher Educational Institutions recognized by the University Grants Commission to run Open and Distance Learning programmes could be used under a mutual agreement after seeking approval of the University Grants Commission:

**Provided that a Study Centre or Learner Support Centre shall not admit a learner to any programme in Open and Distance Learning mode for or on behalf of any other Higher Educational Institution.**

*Every Higher Educational Institution shall publicise a prospectus on the web portal of the Higher Educational Institutions, before the expiry of sixty days prior to the date of commencement of admission to any of its programmes in the Open and*

*Distance learning mode. Such a prospectus shall contain the following information for learners seeking admission to any programme of the institution and for the general public:-*

- (i) each component of the fee and any other charges or deposits payable by the learners admitted to such Higher Educational Institutions for pursuing a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode, and clear terms and conditions of such payments to be charged by the Institute;
- (ii) the percentage of tuition fee and other charges refundable to a learner admitted in such Higher Educational Institutions in case such a learner withdraws from the institution before joining or after full completion of course or programme of study and the time within, and the manner in, which such refund shall be made to the learner;
- (iii) the number of seats approved in respect of each course or programme of Open and Distance Learning mode;
- (iv) Eligibility conditions for admission including educational qualifications specified by the relevant statutory authority or body, or by the institution, where no such qualifying standards have been specified by any statutory authority;
- (v) the process of admission and selection of eligible learners applying for such admission, including all relevant information in regard to the details of test or examination, if any, for selecting such candidates for admission to each course or programme of study and the amount of fee to be paid for the admission test;
- (vi) details of the academic faculty at the Headquarters or Regional Centres or Study Centre or Learner Support Centre, including therein the educational qualifications and experience in teaching or conduction of Open and Distance Learning programmes and also indicating therein whether such a faculty member is on regular basis or visiting or contract basis;
- (vii) the minimum pay and other emoluments payable for each category of faculty and Officers of the Institute;
- (viii) physical and academic infrastructure and other facilities, including that of each of the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre and in particular the laboratory, library and Information and Communication Technology facilities to be provided to learners on being admitted to the institution; and
- (ix) broad outline of the syllabus specified by the appropriate statutory body or by institution, as the case may be, for every course or programme of study.

## **5. Norms for Empanelment of Academic Counsellors and Counselling Sessions**

**5.1. Eligibility conditions for appointment of academic counselors:** No academic staff in the Study Centre or Learner Support Centre shall be appointed who does not fulfill the minimum qualifications as laid down in the University Grants Commission (Minimum Qualifications for Appointment of Teachers and other Academic Staff in the Universities and Colleges and Measures for the Maintenance of Standards in Higher Education) Regulation, 2010 as modified from time to time. In addition, such academic staff should have familiarity with the characteristics of Open and Distance Learning mode learners and their needs, difference between Open and Distance Learning and conventional face – to - face education, awareness about instructional design, familiarity with the learner centered approach in blended mode of learning, ability to use different delivery media including online and computer mediated communication and Information and Communication Technology enabled learning.

**5.2. Norms for Contact Programmes:** Credit Based System has been followed by Open and Distance Learning single mode Higher Educational Institutions during the last more than two decades and it has got standardised for programme delivery especially by the Open Universities. Such credits depend on the total number of hours that a learner is required to cover for all activities like participation in Contact Programmes, Working on Assignments, Library Consultation etc., in completing a course. In this direction, University Grants Commission has recently issued guidelines for introduction of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) which has been made mandatory for all Higher Educational Institutions delivering education through conventional mode. Accordingly, for Post Graduate programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode, 16 credits per semester are assigned for a total of four semesters. In Open and Distance Learning mode Programme delivery, the component of contact with teachers is comparatively much lower than the conventional or face to face mode which is complemented by self-learning on the part of the learner. Therefore, one credit in regular or face to face mode accounts for 15 teaching hours, whereas, in Open and Distance Learning mode it is 30 study hours of study including face to face contact component. Comparative credits assigned per semester in Choice Based Credit System for conventional mode and Open and Distance Learning mode for undergraduate programmes is given below in Table 1.



**Table 1. Comparative Credits in Conventional and Open and Distance Learning Modes**

| Total | VI | V  | IV | III | II | I  | Semester                              |
|-------|----|----|----|-----|----|----|---------------------------------------|
| 144   | 25 | 26 | 26 | 25  | 22 | 20 | Credits Conventional mode             |
| 96    | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16  | 16 | 16 | Credits in Open and Distance Learning |

It will be desirable to ensure uniformity in distribution of units between the two systems as far as possible.

Thus, taking into account the number of hours indicated in Choice Based Credit System for conventional mode and the percentage of hours required for face-to-face Contact Programmes for learners in Open and Distance Learning mode, the following table is provided for norms for counseling sessions in theory and practical courses with Open and Distance Learning credit value for Open and Distance Learning mode programme delivery.

**Table 2: Contact Theory and Practical Sessions**

| Four Courses with a total of 16 Credits per semester |  |                                     |                                |
|--|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Number of Assignments                                | 10-12 credits for theory and 6-4 Credits for practical courses                   | counseling for theory only Courses: |                                |
|  | contact sessions-practical**   | Contact sessions-theory*            | Four courses of 4 credits each |
| Four per semester                                    | 60 hours of guided experiments with support of internal supervisor per 2 credits | 40-48 hours                         | 16 hours per course            |

Note:

\*Contact session up to the extent of twenty percent could be arranged by providing Massive Open Online Courses and other online programme delivery systems.

\*\* Practical sessions to the extent of twenty percent could be provided through virtual lab mode

Comparative value of credits mentioned in the University Grants Commission Guidelines for Choice Based Credit System in conventional mode and that in practice in Open and Distance Learning mode Institutions, it is observed that for a total of six semester undergraduate programme each of nearly 5-6 months duration, 16 credits per semester are uniformly assigned in the Open and Distance Learning mode, whereas, in the University Grants Commission guidelines for conventional mode on an average 24 credits per semester have been assigned. Thus, the ratio of a credit in Open and Distance Learning mode to that of the conventional mode is 2:3. In line with the pattern of credits for Under Graduate programmes, for Post Graduate programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode, 16 credits per semester are assigned for a total of four semesters. The foregoing comparative value could be used to facilitate both vertical and horizontal mobility of learners from Open and Distance Learning mode to Conventional mode and vice versa through mutual transfer of credits.

## 6. Deployment of manpower and other support at study or Learner Support Centres

The Study Centres or Learner Support Centres shall be headed by a Coordinator, not below the rank of an Assistant Professor and shall be augmented with academic and non-academic staff depending on the number of learners assigned for adequate support to the learners. *Capacity of intake per programme should be commensurate with the available qualified faculty in relevant area, well equipped laboratory, library, online connectivity and Information and Communication Technology facilities, and appropriate infrastructure. Normally it would be expected to restrict total intake capacity for Open and*

*Distance Learning programme to the capacity specified for a similar programme being conducted in the conventional mode by the Higher Educational Institution where the Study Centres or Learner Support Centres is located but in no case it should exceed two times of that.*

- (i) Number of qualified counsellors per theory course of 4 credits: 2 to 4.
- (ii) Number of qualified supervisors per practical course of 2 credits: 1 or more.
- (iii) Availability of laboratory: The laboratory should be in a recognised Higher Educational Institution running a similar course in conventional mode for a period of not less than 3 years.
- (iv) Ideally, total number of learners admitted at any Study Centres or Learner Support Centres should not exceed 500 at any time, but for those located in Higher Educational Institutions providing education to more than 1500 students, the total strength of Open and Distance Learning mode learners at any time should not exceed 1000, subject to fulfilment of other conditions as described under paragraph 2.

#### **7. Conduct of End Semester or Term End Examination**

- (i) All Examinations for Open and Distance Learning mode programmes shall be conducted within the Institution where the Study Centres or Learner Support Centres is located under the direct control and responsibility of the Open and Distance Learning mode Institution. Also, all Government Institutions like Kendriya Vidyalaya(s), Navodaya Vidyalaya(s), Sainik School(s) etc. can also be identified as examination centre(s) under direct overall supervision of Open University or Higher Educational Institution offering education under the Open and Distance Learning mode.
- (ii) All processes of assessment of learners in different components of Testing and Examination shall be directly handled by the Open and Distance Learning mode Institution and no part of the assessment shall be outsourced.
- (iii) For ensuring transparency and credibility, full time faculty of the Open and Distance Learning mode Higher Educational Institutions or qualified faculty from University Grants Commission recognised Higher Educational Institutions only should be associated to function as invigilators, examination superintendents, as observers etc.
- (iv) The Examination Centre should have adequate seating capacity and amenities including adequate lighting, ventilation, washrooms and clean drinking water facilities.

#### **8. Monitoring of functioning of the Learner Support Centres or Study Centres**

Generally, the Open and Distance Learning mode Higher Educational Institutions have to manage a fairly large and well spread system with a variety of learner centric operations for a number of heterogeneous groups of learners to meet their expectations and self-learning requirements using multimode programme delivery. To effectively manage these challenges and complex operations for a learner at a distance, a very dynamic interactive communication system between Headquarters, regional centres and study centres has to be established on priority. Thus, it is desirable that an Information and Communication Technology network connecting the Head-Quarters, Regional Centres and Study Centre or Learner Support Centres should be established at the earliest and used for faster and reliable operations such as:-

- i. username and login ID should be generated for every learner so that learners can see all relevant information as their studies progress in an Open and Distance Learning programme and also provide constructive feedback for improvement in Open and Distance Learning programme delivery;
- ii. headquarters, Regional Centres and Study Centre or Learner Support Centres should maintain a web portal giving all relevant information about the Open and Distance Learning programmes being a delivered and the content of these should be updated at least on a weekly basis;
- iii. regional centres should collect a holistic report about all functions assigned to Study Centres or Learner Support Centres and all aspects of quality of programme delivery periodically especially during the Admissions, Examinations, and Counselling Sessions etc., and at least weekly share a consolidated report with the Head quarters;
- iv. these reports along with responses by learners should be periodically analysed for the quality audit of a programme and its delivery besides the quality of performance of the Study Centres or Learner Support Centres;
- v. any remedial action should be jointly ensured by the headquarters, Regional Centres and Study Centres or Learner Support Centres promptly;
- vi. regular visits, at least twice a year by the academic staff of the Higher Educational Institution for on the spot monitoring and interaction with functionaries of the Regional Centres and Study Centres or Learner Support Centres, the learners and the counselors; and
- vii. ensuring access of “Swayam” and other repositories of Massive Open Online Courses by the learners at Study Centres or Learner Support Centres.

**Closure of Non-performing Study Centre or Learner Support Centre:**

In case a Study Centre or Learner Support Centre fails to adhere to the prescribed norms or guidelines, the Higher Educational Institution shall initiate action for closure of the centre by following due procedures, so that interest of learners are taken care by some alternative arrangement.

**Annexure XI****GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL MECHANISM****Scope of Grievance Redressal System for Learner**

The Higher Educational Institutions, offering programmes through the Open and Distance Learning mode, shall have a Grievance Redressal System and Procedure which shall be published on the portal of Higher Educational Institution and it shall be the responsibility of the concerned Higher Educational Institution to update the same as and when required. Each of the Higher Educational Institutions shall provide an online facility for submitting grievances and track their status. The Higher Educational Institution shall also be responsible for monitoring, assessing and reviewing the effectiveness of its Grievance Redressal Procedures.

**Guidelines and Standards for the Grievance Redressal System**

The Higher Educational Institution shall have the policy on Grievance Redressal System based on following guidelines and standards, namely:—

- (a) the policy should be unbiased and understandable;
- (b) there should be time line for each stage of the process;
- (c) the policy should be published on Higher Educational Institutions portal so that the learners may read and refer to;
- (d) the policy should be made available to learners with disability in appropriate format and the provision should be made accordingly in the policy document;
- (e) the authority or authorities involved in the grievance redressal process should treat and investigate facts impartially;
- (f) the Higher Educational Institutions should address the grievances in a timely manner so as to lessen interruption in learning process of the learner. The Higher Educational Institution should have the proper communication and escalation mechanism which can be operated and maintained through the online software application;
- (g) the Higher Educational Institution should maintain the confidentiality of the complainant as far as possible;
- (h) the Higher Educational Institution should ensure that officer(s) deputed for the learner support at the Higher Educational Institution, the Regional Centres and Learner Support Centre(s) are able to provide guidance on submitting grievances in the portal;
- (i) There should be a provision to withdraw a complaint without prejudice at any time during the procedure; and
- (j) The learner should be kept informed of the status in relation to his queries or grievance on priority.

**Rights and responsibilities of a learner**

- (a) The learner has right to complain regarding any aspect related to his or her learning path including programme quality, learning resources, learner support and guidance, teaching, learning and assessment.
- (b) The learner is entitled to approach the respective Learner Support Centres (in case of offline or blended learning) for submitting his or her complaint. The learners of online mode may submit their complaint directly to the Higher Educational Institution. The complaint can be submitted individually or collectively by a group of learners.
- (c) The learner should submit a formal complaint in a manner prescribed by the Higher Educational Institution regarding expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided or the lack of a service or the quality of a service. Such expression should be correlated with what the learners were entitled to receive.

**Responsibility of the Higher Educational Institution**

- (i) The Higher Educational Institution shall work with the principles of openness and collaboration.
- (ii) The Higher Educational Institution shall continuously improve the services it offers. As and when a grievance is received, the Higher Educational Institution shall investigate it thoroughly and make the necessary improvement(s) in its services.
- (iii) The Higher Educational Institution shall encourage Learner Support Centres to make initial attempts to address and resolve complaints as close as possible to the point of origin, and with the minimum of formality.

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- (iv) The Higher Educational Institution shall also monitor the Grievance Redressal process through its Learner Support Centres.
  - (v) The Higher Educational Institution is responsible for privacy and confidentiality unless disclosure is necessary to proceed in the matter.
  - (vi) The grievance should be accompanied with the reasons for dissatisfaction and expected remedy. The learner should also give the reference of Online Grievance Registration Number generated at the time of submitting the complaint at the Learner Support Centre.
  - (vii) The Head of concerned school of the Higher Educational Institution shall investigate the complaint(s) or refer the matter(s) to a more appropriate person, body or committee or departments, as appropriate.
  - (viii) It shall be the responsibility of the Head of school of the Higher Educational Institution to monitor the progress and to timely resolve the matter.
  - (ix) The Head of concerned school of the Higher Educational Institution will respond in writing (letters or email etc.) through offline or online mode giving reasons for a decision and action taken thereto.