



Kaloji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences, Telangana.

Advisory Regarding Reopening of the
Affiliated Colleges
after the closure due to COVID-19

Introduction:

All the colleges in the State have been closed since lockdown was announced by the Government from 21-03-2020. Since then all the Health Sciences Colleges are imparting education through online classes. All the theory classes have been completed as per the academic schedule. Presently there is an urgent need to reopen the colleges for conducting practical/clinical classes and conduct final year examinations for award of degrees and final exams where ever detention is followed i.e., first year examinations. The Guidelines of University are recommendatory and the Institutions should follow the updated guidelines issued by the Government of Telangana, NMC, GOI from time to time. These recommendations are derived/ based on guidelines issued by National Medical Commission and other agencies.

In some of the states, depending on the local COVID situation medical colleges have started their physical academic activities. The medical colleges/institutions have been advised earlier by the National Medical Commission to re-open on or before 1st December, 2020 and the colleges are advised to use NMC guidelines as well as the guidelines issued by MoH &FW, and UGC (SOP on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 in skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies in technical & professional programs requiring laboratory /experimental work

https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/FinalSOPonSkillinstitutions&PGinstitutes_08092020.pdf

and evinsed SOP on preventive measures to be followed while conducting examinations to contain spread of COVID-19

https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/RevisedSOPonpreventivemeasurestobefollowedwhileconducting_examinationstocontainspreadofCOVID19.pdf).

General Measures

1. Physical distancing of at least 6 feet to be followed as far as feasible.
2. Use of face covers/masks to be made mandatory.
3. Frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (for at least 20 seconds) can be done wherever feasible.
4. Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing of used tissues properly.
5. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest.
6. Spitting shall be strictly prohibited.
7. Installation & use of Aarogya Setu App shall be advised wherever feasible.

1. Measures Required before Re-Opening of Campuses

Pre-requisites

1. The colleges are advised to re-open in phase-wise manner.
2. The institutions should be ready with a plan for handling the inflow of students, faculty and staff in the campus, monitoring disinfecting measures, safety and health conditions, screening and detecting the infected persons, containment measures to prevent the spread of the virus in the campus, and also alternative plan(s), in case the campus needs to be closed again due to spread of the virus in campus or in the surrounding area(s) in near future.
3. Every college shall constitute a Task Force or Emergency Management Team (EMT) which shall be well versed with COVID situation and the steps needed when a positive case is identified for treatment, to prevent the spread and panic among students. A nodal officer shall be appointed who shall be available at all times for emergencies.

Modalities for Physical Opening of Colleges

The following modalities regarding the physical opening of Colleges in a graded manner, may be adopted:

- i. Colleges shall plan to start classes for final year and first year exam going batches initially. Colleges may plan opening the campuses for conduct of classes in two shifts/by rotation of batches, with such activities where they can easily adhere to social distancing, use of face masks and other protective measures. This may include administrative offices, research laboratories and libraries etc.
- ii. Thereafter, for theory lectures, the present system of on-line classes by using Google Classroom, Cisco Webex Meeting, You Tube streaming, OERs, SWAYAM platform (www.swayam.gov.in) etc., to be continued till the COVID situation improves significantly. In colleges, where it is feasible to hold classes, the batch shall be divided into small group teaching classes, a minimum distance of 6 feet between every 2 students must strictly be adhered to. If required students may be called in batches as per the availability of class room size and all other modalities.
- iii. For all teaching hospitals, at least 30% beds be allotted to teaching units and all necessary precautions must be adhered to students should be divided into batches and the postings shall be in two shifts i.e., 9.00am to 12 noon and 12noon to 3.00pm.
- iv. As and when required, students may be instructed to visit their respective departments in small groups for consultation with the faculty members, after seeking prior

appointments to avoid crowding, while maintaining physical distancing norms and other safety protocols.

- v. Institutions should have a plan ready for students who cannot join the programme due to travel restrictions, co-morbid conditions . Online teaching-learning arrangements should also be made for them.
- vi. Display IEC materials prominently in Colleges, Hospital and Hostel premises to promote awareness of COVID appropriate behavior and COVID disease.

Safety concerns

1. All the students permitted into the campus/hospital shall have a negative RTPCR test report performed within the last three days from ICMR certified lab. All the staff and students should have complete awareness of COVID situation, safety measures etc. If necessary COVID awareness programmes may be planned in the first two days.
2. All the students shall submit a consent letter signed by the parent permitting them to attend college being aware of the present situation of COVID disease and the risks involved. The letter should also have details of any previous chronic diseases of the student.
3. All the institutions shall form a Task Force/ Emergency Management Team (EMT) consisting of staff and students to deal with any emergency situation developing after reopening of the institution particularly with regard to isolation/quarantine, treatment of positive students , preventive measures for spread, for psychological support etc. The names and the contact numbers shall be displayed at multiple places for easy approach of students/staff when necessary.
4. The institutions should train their staff and students to assist and undertake the work related to safety and health to prevent an outbreak of the pandemic in their campuses. All students should be allowed in campuses only after thermal scanning, sanitization of their hands, wearing of face masks and gloves. Symptomatic persons should not be permitted to enter the campus and should be advised to contact the identified hospital for clinical assessment
5. Health profile of all the faculty and students shall be maintained with all co-morbid conditions and previous history of chronic diseases.
6. Regular visits of a counsellor may be arranged so that students can talk with the counsellor about their anxiety, stress or fear.

7. To avoid the risk of transmission, the students, faculty and staff should be screened and symptomatic ones be advised to get clinically assessed before allowing them entry into the campus.
8. Isolation facilities for symptomatic persons and quarantine facilities for those who were in contact with the positively tested persons should be there on campus or attached teaching hospital. For colleges other than medical colleges a tie-up may be made in advance with nearby hospital or approved premises or as advised by the local authorities so that, in case of necessity, prompt action may be taken. Proper arrangement of safety, health, food, water etc. should be ensured for those in quarantine and isolation facilities.
9. For those who have tested positive, isolation facilities should be in place either on campus/teaching hospital itself or as a prior arrangement with some nearby hospital(s) or as advised by the local authorities.
10. Colleges should prepare a policy for not permitting or restricting the outside experts on campuses, study tours, field works etc., keeping in mind the COVID-19 situation.
11. All such programmes and extracurricular activities should be avoided where physical distancing is not possible. i.e, CME's, Conferences, Sports & Cultural events etc.
12. Clean and hygienic conditions, as per safety and health advisories of the concerned government departments, are to be maintained at all places, with special emphasis on hostel kitchens, mess, washrooms, libraries, class rooms etc.
13. Proper signages, symbols, posters etc. should be prominently displayed at appropriate places to remind the students, faculty and staff for COVID appropriate behaviour like maintaining physical distancing, wearing of masks etc. The details of COVID-19 Task Force established by the institution be prominently displayed containing the emergency number, helpline number, email id and contact details of persons to be contacted in case of any emergency in the institution.
14. Ensure the norms of physical distancing, sanitization and hygienic conditions for use of common facilities, viz., Auditorium, Conference/ Seminar halls, Sports, Gymnasium, Canteen, Parking Area etc. It is advisable to delay the use of these common facilities like gym, canteen, library for some time.

2. Institutional Planning

Institutional planning is the key for the successful reopening of the campuses and smooth conduct of the teaching-learning process during these difficult times. The colleges will

therefore, be required to develop their plans very cautiously for reopening of their campuses.

The plan may, inter-alia include the following points:

- i. Colleges should prepare details of opening the campus in a phased manner with a complete roster for all departments and batches of students in different years of study.
- ii. Colleges shall plan for continuation of online theory classes for all the batches. Plan should be prepared for completion clinical postings and practicals in a short period to facilitate conduct of final year examinations as per the proposed schedule of NMC.
- iii. The colleges must ensure appropriate sanitization and disinfection process and procedures.
- iv. It should be made mandatory for the Teachers, Officers, Staff and Students to wear the ID cards.
- v. The faculty, student, staff should be screened regularly to protect and avoid infecting one another.
- vi. All preventive measures, preparedness and necessary support system to deal with the COVID -19 positive cases should be monitored and reported to local authorities on a day to day basis.
- vii. Teaching hours in a day may be extended to accommodate students in batches , as per requirements of the college.
- viii. Six-day schedule may be followed so that classes can be conducted in phases and the seating arrangement be made keeping in view the requirements of physical distancing.
- ix. Colleges may consider reducing the class size and break them in multiple sections to maintain physical distancing during the classes.
- x. Depending on the availability of space in class rooms or learning sites, up to a maximum of 50% students may be allowed on a rotation basis to attend the classes.
- xi. All the Faculty should be well trained for conduct of online teaching-learning practices.
- xii. The visitors should not be allowed at all or their entry should be drastically restricted. The conditions of the entry for visitors should be strictly laid down and displayed on the entry point(s). Complete contact details of the visitors be maintained along with the names of persons whom he/ she meets.
- xiii. There should be adequate isolation arrangements for those having symptoms and treatment facilities for those who test positive for COVID-19 (however both need to be kept separately), either at the level of the institution or in collaboration with the Government authorities.

Safety Measures at Entry/ Exit Point(s)

- i. Adequate arrangements of thermal scanning, sanitizers, face masks should be made available at all entry and exit points, including the reception area.
- ii. Crowding must be avoided at entry/ exit points. Staggered timings of entry and exit with limited strength for different batches of students should be followed.
- iii. For ensuring queue management, inside and outside the premises, specific markings on the floor with a gap of 6 feet may be made and be adhered to.
- iv. In case the college has more than one gate for entry/ exit, all the gates should be used, with adequate care, to avoid crowding.
- v. Monitoring of the entry and exit of the students should be done. Movement of hostel students to outside the campus shall be restricted to minimum.
- vi. Screening of students, faculty and staff, wearing of face covers/ mask, sanitizing of hands etc. must be ensured at all entry points.
- vii. Those having symptoms of fever, cough or difficulty in breathing should not be allowed to enter the campus and directed to the specified hospital..

Safety Measures during Working Hours

Classrooms and other Learning Sites

- i. Proper sanitization at all learning sites should be ensured. Cleaning and regular disinfection (using 1% sodium hypochlorite) of frequently touched surfaces (door knobs, elevator buttons, hand rails, chairs, benches, washroom fixtures, etc.) to be made mandatory in all class rooms, laboratories, (and also) lockers, parking areas, other common areas etc. before the beginning of classes and at the end of the day. Teaching materials, computers, laptops, printers, shall be regularly disinfected with 70% alcohol swipe.
- ii. Sitting places in classes, laboratories, computer labs, libraries etc. should be clearly marked, keeping in view the norms of physical distancing. At least one seat should be left vacant between two seats.
- iii. Wearing face cover/ mask shall be made mandatory at all times and at all places inside the campus.

Inside the Campus

- i. Cultural activities, group meeting etc. may be avoided. However, sports activities may be allowed where physical distancing is feasible and is in accordance with the Ministry of Home Affairs guidelines, issued under Disaster Management Act, 2005 from time to time.
- ii. Adequate arrangements for safe drinking water should be made on the campus.
- iii. Hand washing stations with facilities of liquid soap should be created so that every student can wash her/ his hands frequently.
- iv. Regular and sufficient supply of face covers/ masks, heavy duty gloves, disinfecting material, sanitizer, soaps etc. to sanitation workers should be ensured.
- v. Wearing of face cover/ mask by all students and staff should be ensured.
- vi. Proper cleanliness should be maintained inside the entire campus.
- vii. Adequate arrangements should be made for sanitizing the entire campus, including administrative and academic buildings, classrooms, laboratories, libraries, common rooms, toilets, water stations, furniture, learning material, teaching aids, sports equipment, computers etc.
- viii. Physical distancing should be maintained at all places and crowding must not be allowed at any place under any circumstances.
- ix. An adequate supply of water in toilets and for hand- washing should be ensured.
- x. Proper sanitization of college buses, other transport and official vehicles of the institution should be done.
- xi. Spitting in the campus must be made a punishable offence.
- xii. Dustbins must be cleaned and covered properly.
- xiii. Dustbin for collection of used facemasks, personal protective equipment, hand gloves and their disposals should be ensured as per safety norms. Provision for proper disposal of used personal protection items and general waste should be followed in accordance with CPCB guidelines (available at: https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Projects/Bio-Medical-Waste/BMW-GUIDELINES-COVID_1.pdf).
- iv. Ideally all windows of class rooms shall be kept open for cross ventilation. For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which emphasizes that the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30oC, relative humidity should be in the range of 40-70%, intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and cross ventilation should be there.

- v. Gymnasiums shall follow MoHFW guidelines (available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesonyogainstitutesandgymnasiums03082020.pdf>).
- vi. All employees who are at higher risk, i.e., older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions shall be advised to take requisite extra precautions. They should preferably not be exposed to any front-line work requiring direct contact with the students.

Hostels

- i. Hostels may be opened only in such cases where it is necessary while strictly observing the safety and health preventive measures.
- ii. Formal education for the staff working at hostel/mess/kitchen with regard to COVID is mandatory
- iii. Students should be permitted into the hostels with negative RTPCR report done within last three days .All the students should be screened for ILI / SARI/ COVID 19 before entering the hostel. Suspected should undergo clinical evaluation. Students travelled from other states and international destinations need to be enrolled and follow the required guidelines as notified by the Government of Telangana.
- iv. Hostel rooms shall strictly maintain distance standards by placing cots at 6 feet distance, providing 6-square meters/person (maximum two students per room) and must avoid bunker cots and also dormitory arrangements. Ideally one student per room may be followed to start with.
- v. Hostel establishments should provide clean and hot drinking water at various places. Availability of soaps/disinfectant/sanitizer at various places in hostel/mess/kitchen shall be ensured.
- vi. Constitute a student committee to monitor signs and symptoms of students which may help in early diagnosis, effective treatment and prevention of spread of disease.
- vii. Although there is no evidence as of now that COVID-19 is transmitted by air, but from transmission of droplet infection, it is suggested to avoid air conditioning in hostel premises and in dining area.
- viii. There should not be any over crowding in hostel areas where students live in close proximity and share common facilities and utilities. Hence, their numbers need to be limited appropriately to avoid overcrowding. Also, hostel students should be permitted in phases.
- ix. Thermal Screening of all resident students should be ensured.

- x. They will be referred to the nearest COVID treatment facility for clinical assessment and treatment at the earliest when they develop symptoms.
- xi. Density in dining halls, common rooms, playing areas should be limited, keeping in view the requirement of physical distancing.
- xii. Hygiene conditions should be regularly monitored in kitchens, dining halls, bathrooms and toilets etc. Utensils should be properly cleaned.
- xiii. Cleanliness is to be maintained in dining areas. Meals should be served in small batches, avoiding over-crowding. Take away options should be available for students and staff.
- xiv. It must be ensured that the meals are freshly cooked. A senior staff should monitor the same.
- xv. Hostel wardens should make regular checks in hostel areas to ensure all the above measures and submit report on daily basis to the principal. Principals may designate staff members for checking the hostels periodically.
- xvi. Wearing of face covers/ masks and proper sanitization of hands of the staff engaged for the preparation and distribution of meals should be ensured.
- xvii. Resident students and staff should avoid or limit visiting the markets. As far as possible, essential items may be made available within the campus.
- xviii. Ideally the food prepared in the mess may be in the form of packed meals for students to be consumed in their rooms itself. Hostels may define the number of students in dining halls at any point in time. Mess timings may be increased to avoid overcrowding.

Regular Monitoring of Health

- i. Every institution should regularly monitor the health of its students, faculty, and staff.
- ii. Faculty, staff and students should also be sensitized on self-monitoring of their health. Emphasis shall be on reporting of any illness/symptoms at the earliest to prevent complications.
- iii. Faculty, Staff and students should submit self-disclosure, if any of their family members have been infected/availed treatment for COVID-19.

Counselling & Guidance for Mental Health

In order to reassure the students' community to avoid any kind of stress or panic in the prevailing situation *vis-a-vis* their studies, health and related issues, colleges should take the following measures for the mental health, psychological aspects and well-being of the students:

- i. All the faculty members, students and staff should be made aware of the Web page named "Manodarpan" – created on the Ministry of Education website to provide psychosocial support for Mental Health & Well-being during the COVID – 19 outbreak and beyond. The web page contains advisory, practical tips, posters, videos, dos' and don'ts for Psychosocial support, FAQ and online query system. Also, a National Toll Free Helpline (8445440632) for country wide outreach to students from schools, colleges and universities has also been set up which will provide tele counselling to address their mental health and psychosocial issues.
- ii. Set up help lines for mental health, psychological concerns and well-being of students in Universities/ Colleges which need to be regularly monitored by Counsellors and other identified faculty.
- iii. Regular mentoring of students through interactions, and appeals/letters by the Universities/ Colleges to remain calm and stress-free. This can be achieved through telephones, e-mails, digital and social media platforms.
- iv. Form COVID-19 help groups of students headed by hostel wardens / senior faculty who can identify friends/ classmates in need of help and provide the immediate necessary help.
- v. Share the following video links of Ministry of Health & Family Welfare <https://www.mohfw.gov.in> on the University/ College website and with students and faculty via e-mail, through social media like Facebook, WhatsApp and twitter etc.

- Practical tips to take care of your Mental Health during the Stay In_ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uHB3WJsLJ8s&feature=youtu.be>
- Minding our minds during the COVID-19_ <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/MindingourmindsduringCoronaeditedat.pdf>
- Various Health Experts on how to manage Mental health & Well Being during COVID-19 outbreak <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iuKhtSehp24&feature=youtu.be>
- Behavioral Health: Psycho-Social toll free helpline - 0804611007

Measures for Containment

- i. As soon as a student, faculty or staff is detected COVID-19 positive, such person should be immediately isolated as per the directive/advisory of the Government. Room-mates and close contacts should be quarantined and symptomatic ones to be immediately tested.
- ii. Universities and colleges should have a ready plan to provide healthcare support to those resident students and staff who test positive and are isolated.
- iii. The guidelines restricting social and physical contacts and mobility in such parts of residential places in the campus, where positive cases have been found, should be strictly enforced. Measures like holding no class, not leaving the rooms for hostellers, if applicable, no take away arrangement of food from mess etc. may be enforced, depending upon the severity of the situation.
- iv. Universities and colleges should also plan in advance, in case shut down are ordered by the Government due to outbreak in campus or the surrounding region.

Sensitization of Students, Teachers and Staff

- i. Awareness programmes regarding COVID-19 as to how the infection spreads, common symptoms, and precautions and measures required to contain its spread may be launched.
- ii. Maintaining hygiene, e.g., how to wash hands, how to cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow, avoid touching of face, eyes, mouth and nose should be regularly explained to the students and the staff. The necessity of physical distancing, wearing face covers/ masks, hygiene etc. should be emphasized.
- iii. Activities to stay fit, physically and mentally, should be encouraged like doing exercises, yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, etc.
- iv. To improve resilience and mental health, students should be encouraged to share their feelings with friends, teachers and parents, remain positive, grateful, helpful, have focused approach, take a break from work, eat healthy and sleep timely etc.
- v. Eating healthy food and fruits, avoiding junk food, frequently drinking warm water, adopting ways to increase immunity etc. should be encouraged.
- vi. Students should be told to regularly sanitize their laptops, audio, video and other media accessories.
- vii. Factual information regarding COVID-19 and consequences of infection, without making them stressed or fearful, should be disseminated.
- viii. Posters and stickers should be pasted at appropriate places in the campus to create awareness about the risk of infection from Coronavirus.
- ix. All support and facilities should be provided to persons with disabilities (*Divyangjan*).
- x. No discrimination based on caste, creed or gender should be allowed to take place.

- xi. Sharing of books, other learning material and eatables is to be discouraged.

Head of the Institution

- i. Principals may get Standard Operating Procedures(SOPs) worked out in view of COVID- 19 outbreak, in accordance with the Government orders and guidelines.
- ii. A detailed institutional plan which may, inter alia, include sanitization, safety and health measures should be prepared and kept ready, before reopening of campus. Proper implementation of the institutional plan should be ensured and regular monitoring should be done with the help of faculty and the staff.
- iii. If the Institution does not have an attached hospital tie-ups may be established with nearby hospitals, health centres, NGOs, health experts for help and support in fighting COVID-19.
- iv. A plan for all academic activities, i.e., the academic calendar, teaching-learning modes, examinations, evaluation etc. should be kept ready well in advance.
- v. A Task Force/ Emergency Management Team (EMT) should be created to handle varied situations and issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Such Task Force may consist of senior persons from faculty and staff, students, volunteers from communities, NGOs, health organisations and Government officials etc. as the case may be.
- vi. Teachers, students and staff should be made aware of all relevant plans and activities on the campus. If necessary orientation programmes may be conducted.
- vii. Faculty may be entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining all measures mentioned above with specific distribution of areas like hostel, mess, hospital, various departments and library etc.

Teachers

- i. Teachers should make themselves fully aware of institutional plans and Standard Operating Procedures.
- ii. Every teacher should prepare a detailed teaching plan for the subjects taught by him/her, including time table, class size, modes of delivery, assignments, theory, practical, continuous evaluation, end- semester evaluation etc.
- iii. Teachers should keep themselves updated with the latest teaching- learning methods and availability of e-resources.
- iv. Teachers should make the students aware of the COVID-19 related situation, precautions and steps to be taken to stay safe and healthy.

- v. Teachers should monitor and keep track of the physical and mental health of their students.

Parents / Guardians

- i. The parents/ guardians should ensure that their children observe safety norms at home and whenever they go out.
- ii. Parents should not allow their children to go out, if they are not feeling well.
- iii. Parents may be advised that the 'Aarogya Setu App' has been downloaded by their children.
- iv. Parents should sensitize them of healthy food habits and measures to increase immunity.
- v. Parents should ask them to do exercise, yoga, meditation and breathing exercises to keep them mentally and physically fit.

Students

- i. Self-discipline is most important to contain the spread of COVID-19 pandemic through social distancing and maintaining hygienic condition.
- ii. All students should wear face covers/ masks and take all preventive measures.
- iii. May consider installing 'Aarogya Setu App' in the mobile.
- iv. It is important for the students to be physically and mentally fit to handle any exigencies. By remaining fit, they can take care of others also.
- v. The students must inculcate activities that will increase immunity-boosting mechanism which may include exercise, yoga, eating fresh fruits and healthy food (avoid fast food), sleep timely.
- vi. Discrimination of fellow students in respect of whom there is a history of COVID-19 disease in the family be avoided.
- vii. Give support to your friends under stress due to COVID-19 pandemic.
- viii. Students should follow the guidelines, advisories and instructions issued by the Government authorities as well as by the universities and colleges regarding health and safety measures in view of COVID-19 pandemic.

Notwithstanding the above Guidelines, every institution has to ensure that it is well prepared in all respects to carry out the academic activities following necessary advisories/guidelines/directions issued by the University, NMC, Central/State Government, Ministry of Education (earlier referred to as MHRD) or UGC from time to time to prevent the spread of COVID-19.