ज्ञान-विज्ञान विमुक्तये

आचार्य मनिष र. जोशी
सचिव

Prof. Manish R. Joshi
Secretary

सत्यमेव जयते

आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
University Grants Commission
(शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

D.O.No.15-23/2025(CPP-II)(C.163104) **2 ज्येष्ठ, 1947/ 23rd May, 2025**

Subject: Submission of data on initiatives for Students' Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-Being at Higher Education Institutions for the consideration of National Task Force constituted by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India.

आदरणीय महोदया/महोदय,

Kind reference is invited to this Office letter dated 12th April 2023 enclosing therewith a copy of the Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Students' Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-Being at Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) of India, brought out by the UGC. Higher Education Institutions were requested to take all necessary steps to implement the guidelines, in letter and spirit. I am attaching a copy of the letter and guidelines for ready reference.

In this context, all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) are requested to submit information regarding existing mechanisms for addressing students' mental health, including counselling systems, number of counsellors, student-to-counsellor ratios, qualifications of counsellors, and outcomes of any third-party evaluations. Additionally, HEIs are also requested to submit data regarding the establishment of Equal Opportunity Centres, the number of complaints received under UGC (Promotion of Equity in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2012, and actions taken on these complaints. This information should be provided through the Google Form available on the University Activity Monitoring Portal (UAMP), accessible at https://uamp.ugc.ac.in. Universities are further requested to disseminate this communication to all affiliated colleges under their jurisdiction and ensure that they also complete the Google Form and upload their respective data on the UAMP portal within the stipulated timeline.

It is pertinent to note that this data is being sought by the National Task Force constituted under the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India, which is examining critical issues related to student mental health and the prevention of suicides in HEIs. **Given the gravity and urgency of the matter, you are earnestly requested to treat this as a matter of top priority and ensure submission of the required information on or before 28th May 2025.**

Your cooperation in this matter is highly appreciated.

सादर,

भवदीय,

(मनिष जोशी)

संलग्नक: उपरोक्तानुसार

सेवा में

सभी विश्वविद्यालयों के कुलपति।
सभी महाविद्यालयों के प्राचार्य।

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सत्यमेव जयते

प्रा. मनिष र. जोशी
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Prof. Manish R. Joshi
Secretary

G20 भारत 2023 INDIA

विश्वविद्यालय अनुदान आयोग
University Grants Commission
(शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार)
(Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)

D.O. No. F.1-19/2021 (CPP-II) **12th April, 2023 / 22 चैत्र 1945**

Dear Sir/Madam,

It pleases me to inform you that the UGC has brought out the Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Students' Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-Being at Higher Educational Institutions of India. A copy of the same is attached herewith.

The Higher Education Institutions are requested to take all necessary steps to implement the Guidelines, in letter and spirit.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

(Manish Joshi)

Encl.: As stated above.

To

1. **The Vice-Chancellors of Universities**
2. **The Principals of Colleges**

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ज्ञान-विज्ञानं विमुक्तये

University Grants Commission

Guidelines for Promotion of Physical Fitness, Sports, Students' Health, Welfare, Psychological and Emotional Well-Being at Higher Educational Institutions of India

Background

Higher education is a key pathway for social transformation and mobility along with the upliftment of individuals, households, and communities. Considering its importance, NEP-2020 addresses this issue. It provides that to ensure the students' physical, psychological, and emotional well-being, support centers and career counselors are to be made available for all students in higher educational institutions (HEIs).

The key challenge lies in creating institutionalized provisions and practices and standard operating procedures that can ensure comprehensive protection to students from any threat and assault, physical, social, discriminatory, cultural, and linguistic causing psychological distress among students. The responsibility of HEIs is to provide complete protection to ensure the well-being of students to work and study in a friendly environment.

The UGC has already issued guidelines for physical safety, like fortifying the campuses, hostels, playgrounds, cafeteria, library, and other student activity spaces. Security personnel or technological devices must handle the entry points to provide access to only authorized and bonafide students (details can be seen on www.ugc.ac.in).

To comprehensively examine all issues relating to students' mental health and physical, psychological, and emotional well-being on the campuses of higher education institutions and frame the appropriate guidelines, the Commission constituted an Expert Committee. The Committee has suggested the following Guidelines, which are to be implemented by all HEIs under the purview of UGC.

Objectives

To ensure equitable access to quality mental health services to all the students enrolled in HEIs with special emphasis on (1) promoting physical fitness and sports activities for students (2) creating safeguards against academic pressure, peer pressure, behavioral issues, stress, career concerns, depression and other issues on the mental health of students; (3) to teach positive thinking & emotions in the student community and (4) to promote a positive and supportive network for students.

All HEIs in India may make or amend their Ordinances, regulatory provisions, and other rules accordingly to ensure that the directions given in these guidelines are implemented in the best interest of students.

Guidelines

1. **Vibrant campus life** – A lively campus life for students is also essential to a good teaching-learning environment, sound assessment systems, and fair and equitable treatment to all. Given these goals, students will be given plenty of opportunities to understand their inner calling and realize their aspirations and dreams. It may come through opportunities related to academic and co-curricular activities besides having linkages with society and ecology through field training, job placement activities, educational tours, and summer internships. The various spaces for cultural activities should also be created for community services and building national spirit with a larger humanistic perspective.

2. **Students Services Centre (SSC) –**

(i) Every HEI shall have a Students Services Centre (SSC) responsible for dealing with and managing the problems related to stress and emotional adjustment. It shall have standardized, systematic arrangements within the relevant provision of Ordinances to provide requisite support to students, especially from rural backgrounds, female students, students from divergent cultural backgrounds, and students with special needs.

(ii) The SSC must have necessary resources like competent physical and mental health counselors, physical and mental health experts, and physical / physio-psychological assessment tools to inform the students, assess them, guide them, and provide necessary counseling interventions to make them feel enabled, energized and independent functionaries capable of pursuing their career goals.

(iii) The SSC will be managed by a Director/ Dean level position equivalent to Professor's rank in a discipline like Psychology, Physical Education and Sports, Psychiatry, Social Work, or Sociology. Respective HEIs shall decide the modality of such an assignment. If the college/institution does not have these disciplines, collaboration with other institutes/ university departments may be explored.

(iv) The SSC will conduct counseling, guidance, and physical and mental health services online, in person, through a telephone helpline, or in group counseling sessions depending upon the circumstances. The SSC will access the database of the students' profiles/ demographic details.

(v) The SSC will also maintain separate records of students appearing to be more vulnerable and stress-prone for further support and resilience-building exercises. This way, the dropout rates can also be checked. Subsequent interventions can be designed accordingly.

(vi) The SSC will work as a single-window system to address relevant student issues.

(vii) The SSC will have at least some dedicated, professionally trained counselors working under its Director or In-Charge. The counselors can also be taken from the respective institutions' Psychology and Physical Education Departments in a project-driven mode. It is assumed that students' mental health and well-being-related issues will need greater attention during the transitional phases of their life, such as examinations and different stages of their careers. A reasonable ratio of counselors and students can be worked out to make it a serious business.

(viii) The SSC should have an adequate number of male and female trainers/counselors in the HEI.

(ix) The SSCs will ensure effective coordination with the health center of the HEI. It is generally observed that physical and psychological health issues are interrelated in complex ways.

(x) The SSCs will work in close collaboration with psychiatrists and other mental health professionals of the medical institutions located in the vicinity. The HEIs are encouraged to liaise with such resources, and the related information should be shared.

(xi) Details of the student support system for students' physical and mental health must be properly highlighted on the website of respective HEIs and their admission brochures.

(xii) The coordination of SSC with various centers like EOC, SC/ST cell, Gender Equity Centers, and Student Welfare Committees should be ensured by HEIs.

3. **Physical Fitness** - Besides educating students, HEIs must focus on physical activity for all students to help them stay physically fit and mentally healthy. Fundamentally, the brain is a huge problem-solving organ that is more active and precise when involved in physical and mental activities. It is well known that exercise and physical activities enhance the performance of the human body at the neuro-muscular level and in a wide range of psycho-physiological and socio-emotional aspects. A sedentary lifestyle has been observed to contribute to obesity and diseases like diabetes that put our bodies at risk. A key remedy is an exercise; therefore, physical activity is required. Since body and mind are deeply interconnected, healthy bodies foster healthy minds. It has been demonstrated that physical activity for an

hour a day reduces the risk of obesity and helps to be smart, happy, and less prone to depression and other mood disorders. Indeed, vigor comes from being fit, and the challenge is to make exercise necessary and fun. Knowledge of any area implanted in an unfit student will not benefit society. The physically fit learner will imbibe more knowledge in his cognitive domain and will also be able to effectively apply and implement that knowledge for the benefit of society a lot more than an unfit student. The emphasis on all-time reading, writing, and thinking for expanding the knowledge base of students in higher education students with no importance given to participation in physical activity is adversely affecting the health status of the students. The foremost requirement of an individual is good health, and only then, with his knowledge, he is an asset to society. Otherwise, he becomes a liability to society with poor health resulting from a sedentary lifestyle.

4. **Physical activity programs and provisions** – Physical activity is not mandatory despite higher education institutions having sufficient human resources and infrastructure for physical and sports activity. It is a great irony that sports fees are charged to each student admitted to the institution. Still, participation in sports activity or utilization of sports facilities is done by only 1 or 2 % of the total strength of the students in a higher education institution. Physically inactive campus life for the students leads them towards various psycho-somatic disorders.

(i) HEIs need to nurture an atmosphere where students are asked to be physically active.

(ii) The NSS, NCC, and other avenues to engage students meaningfully should be strengthened.

(iii) HEIs need to create the necessary outdoor and indoor sports facilities and infrastructure on the campus. There should be a state-of-art gymnasium and yoga center. HEIs are to ensure the proper functioning of all such facilities available on the campus.

(iv) HEIs should regularly organize self-defense training programmes, especially for girl students.

(v) The Sports Council and Physical Education and Yoga Departments must create programs and opportunities for physical fitness and ensure its monitoring regularly.

(vi) The student hostels too should be equipped with minimum facilities for the students.

(vii) HEIs should have a dedicated sports officer/physical fitness trainer/coach to manage and run physical activity programmes.

(viii) Considering that sufficient physical activity is indispensable for developing a healthy body, participation in physical or any sports activity needs to be ensured for each student of the institution.

(ix) Having a good quantum of knowledge is a great thing, but the application of that knowledge for the benefit of society is only possible through a good robust, healthy body. Participation and scoring in physical activity should be part of the credit system for evaluation for promotion to the next semester.

(x) An optimal speed, strength, endurance, and coordinative abilities are required for a healthy body. The level of these functional components in an individual determines his health status. The development of these functional components requires regular participation in physical and sports programs. Assessment of these functional components needs to be part of the evaluation process for promotion to the next class so that each student would be bound to participate in the physical activity programme. In turn, students will develop optimal health and fitness levels. The test batteries suggested for implementation can be the 'American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER) youth fitness test, Canadian physical fitness test, 12-minute cooper run or walk test, or any other test suitable to local conditions.

(xi) The institutions should make provisions for the organization of weekly intramural sports tournaments. Participation in these weekly tournaments should be encouraged and made lucrative with rewards and honors. The institutions should regularly organize training camps for students willing to participate in various inter-university, state, or national level sports activities tournaments. The teams should be regularly sent for participation in these tournaments, and winners of these tournaments should be felicitated with honors and scholarships.

(xii) We have a rich heritage of holistic physical activity in the form of yoga. Learning of a set of yogic asanas with forward bending, backward bending, sideward bending, and twisting of the spine should be promoted among all the students of HEIs. Likewise, pranayama with heart-based meditation should also be initiated among the students.

(xiii) Also, HEIs should strive for

- Organizing general to the specific types of indigenous and recreative activities
- Promote local/ nearby adventure and excursion activities
- MOU with premier sports/ physical education/ yoga institutes
- Increase the number of sports trainers/ physical education/ yoga professional

5. **Opportunity to Reform** - The students entering universities embark on a new phase in life. Many are often removed from their comfort zone and

the secure environment of their homes to face the challenges of independent life. At times, these new challenges can be intimidating and create apprehension in the minds of young adults, which may lead to deviant behaviors. Generally, the HEIs, without objective analysis of such deviant behaviors, resort to punitive measures, including disciplinary action such as suspension of the student for a specific or indefinite period. Such punitive actions may create a sense of dejection and frustration in young minds. Deviant behaviors among students have several educational implications. The HEIs need to avoid such punitive measures to the extent possible and take affirmative action through programs, including taking the services of professional psychological counselors and promoting wellness through yoga and meditation.

6. **Structured reform/self-development programs** may be initiated by the universities, which can serve as catalysts for inducing behavioral change, teaching values, and nurturing human strengths. The UGC has already issued 'Deeksharambh – A Guide to Student Induction Programme (SIP), Mulya Pravah – Inculcation of Human Values and Professional Ethics in Higher Educational Institutions, Jeevan Kaushal – Curriculum for Life Skills. A successful reform through self-development and rehabilitation can transform a possible danger into an asset for society. It is, therefore, important for university administration to ensure proper and regular monitoring of students' behavior and adopt necessary preventive and pre-emptive measures to control deviant tendencies among the students. To this end, amendments in the university statutes may be carried out if deemed necessary. HEIs shall develop structured reform programme(s) to address their specific requirements in consultation with stakeholders, including specialists and professionals working in this field.

7. **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with premier Institutions** - HEIs should plan for MOUs with institutions like NIMHANS, HBAS, RINPAS, AIIMS, and other institutions where departments of psychiatry are fully functional in case particular pharmacological intervention or other medical interventions are required.

8. **Mental health professionals**-There is an acute shortage of trained and competent mental health professionals in the country. There is greater demand than supply of mental health professionals recognized by RCI (Rehabilitation Council of India). Given this, the HEIs should start special courses to prepare mental health professionals to be responsible for educating and training professionals as per UGC/AICTE/MCI provisions and guidelines.

General Guidelines

1. The students' welfare provisions, which already exist in the institutions of HEI in India, will have an added responsibility of collaborating with SSC, Equal Opportunity Centre (EOC) and Gender Equity Centre, and SC/ST Cell

of the University to offer holistic and comprehensive services to students, teaching community, and staff.

2. Given the provisions enshrined in the NEP-2020 mental health services form an integral part of education in higher learning; the faculty members of HEIs are encouraged to attend refresher course(s) on Counselling, Mental Health, Well-being, and Mentoring Skills and Competencies. Human Resource Development Centres (HRDC), Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya National Mission on Teachers (PMMMNMTs), and Teaching Learning Centers of the country are to take up the responsibility of offering such courses.

3. HEIs must respect linguistic, religious, cultural, and social diversity and ensure that counselors with efficient linguistic skills can impart services to students and teachers. Special care may be taken for LGBT students.

4. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), National Board of Accreditation (NBA), and National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) may consider assigning certain points/grades for provisions of SSCs in HEIs.

5. The records of various activities of SSC must be maintained properly and be made available to NAAC, NBA, NIRF, etc., as and when required.

6. HEIs and SSCs must ensure the confidentiality of each case of student-teacher counseling on mental health issues.

7. Motivational lectures and other activities promoting positive thinking among the students should be regularly organized by the HEIs.

8. The course(s) on mental health may be included in the curriculum, with some credits to be assigned for successful completion of the course.

9. The faculty members may also be allowed to avail the facilities regarding physical fitness and mental well-being.

10. Manodarpan initiative should be used as psychosocial support to students, teachers, and families for Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing. Under the initiative, Web-page named 'Manodarpan-Psychosocial Support for Mental Health & Well-being has been created on the website of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The Web-page contains advisory, practical tips, posters, videos, do's and don'ts for Psychosocial support, FAQs, and an online query system. Also, a National Toll-free Helpline (8445440632) for a country-wide outreach to students from schools, colleges, and universities has been set up, which provides tele-counselling to address their mental health and psychosocial issues.

11. Activities of SSC should be included in the Annual Report of HEI.

12. The information regarding the SSC and facilities for physical activities should be made available on the website and information brochure of HEI.

13. The HEIs should take appropriate steps to implement the guidelines considering the specific local, cultural, and educational requirements to ensure the effective institutionalization of such mental health services.