Resurgence Planning for Academic Continuity in Universities and Colleges in Andhra Pradesh - COVID 19

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE COUNCIL OF HIGHER EDUCATION
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The purpose of this guidance is to continue to support institutions of higher education to combat and overcome the problems caused by the COVID 19 pandemic and to give a forward thinking to the educational communities. The present crisis has stimulated innovation within the education sector. We have seen innovative approaches in support of education and training continuity: from using WhatsApp groups to online platforms. Distance learning solutions were deployed by many in support of the education continuity. We have also been reminded of the essential role of the HEIs and teachers have an ongoing duty of continuing the teaching learning process. But these changes have also highlighted that the promising future of learning, and the accelerated changes in modes of delivering quality education, cannot be separated from the imperative of leaving no one behind. It is true for the teaching profession there is a need for better training in new methods of education delivery, as well as support. This guidance is only a baby step towards preventing a learning crisis from becoming a generational catastrophe, which requires urgent action from all. Any Higher Educational Institution's (HEI's) resurgence policies shall be flexible and nimble in responding to new information, and administrators must be willing to refine approaches when specific policies are not working. The intention of rolling out this document is to give advice and basic guidance to HEIs on creating a system of prevention and recovery from potential threats to the requirements of higher education. Attempt is made to inform HEIs of the resurgence planning vis-à-vis the COVID 19 pandemic.

This is the first guiding document from the AP State Council of Higher Education and we will be coming out with updates, other guidelines and action plan documents as and when the situation demands for strengthening the Higher Education in our state. With the reinforcing support of Dr. Adimulapu Sureshgaru, Minister for Education and in coordination with Higher Education Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh we will take forward the vision and proactive policies of Hon’ble Chief Minister, Sri. Y. S. Jaganmohan Reddygaru.

I place on record my sincere appreciations to the Vice-Chairpersons, Secretary and the Academic Officers and all officers of APSCHE for their efforts in bringing out this document of “Resurgence Planning for Academic Continuity in Universities and Colleges in Andhra Pradesh - COVID 19”.

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Resurgence Planning for Academic Activity in Universities and Colleges in Andhra Pradesh – COVID 19

A. Introduction

Many governments throughout the world closed educational institutions temporarily in response to COVID–19 pandemic. Educational institutions in 191 countries are temporarily closed and about 1.58 billion students are affected. Following the guidelines of Government of India, the educational institutions in the State of Andhra Pradesh are closed since March 20, 2020. This pandemic is the biggest crisis faced by mankind over the past century. The crisis has impacted examinations, student internships, placements and student mobility. An effective strategy is necessary to minimize the adverse impact of the pandemic.

The Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) has drafted certain guidelines for the resurgence planning for HEIs. These guidelines are prepared referring “COVID – 19 Response Tool Kit for Indian Higher Educational Institutions” of Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and O.P.Jindal Global University and COVID 19 response – remote learning strategy by UNESCO.

1. Challenges faced in continuity planning

1.1. Conduct of Examinations for the terminal semester students

The pandemic broke out during that period when most of the universities have just concluded their teaching schedules and examinations are to start. The schedule of Terminal Semester examinations has got grossly disturbed except for a very few universities, the semester end examinations are to be conducted for terminal semesters.

1.2. Teaching and Learning Process in the academic year 2020 – 2021

The current situation may not be conducive for conventional class room teaching learning process. If the colleges and universities are reopened, there are challenges like;

- high risk of exposure of students and faculty, geographical location of institutions where the pandemic is prevalent.
- day scholars and faculty need to travel to-and-fro often using public transport, thereby making them more vulnerable to the pandemic
- most of the University students are residential students. The risk of exposure will be very high in Hostels since students will be coming from distant locations, via various modes of
public transport including buses and trains where they are more vulnerable to catching the virus.

- residential campus students may come in contact with local support staff, local students and faculty members residing outside the institution and catch the virus.

- given the high concentration of students and faculty on campuses, the potential risk of spread of the virus is very high.

- there is increased potential for rapid spread of infection in HEIs with high student population density and poor ventilation systems.

Hence, strategies are to be evolved to effectively meet the aforesaid mentioned challenges.
B. Academic Continuity – Online Mode

Given the high risk exposure associated with physical classrooms, online teaching is considered worldwide as the only possible way forward for continuing academic activity. Therefore, Universities and colleges have to gear up for starting academic year using online teaching, learning and evaluation processes.

a. Remote Teaching & Learning - Challenges

Educational systems face significant challenges in setting up remote learning systems.

- Challenges faced by students include, access to prerequisites like devices and internet, and is lack of enough digital skills.
- Many teachers are not familiar or properly trained on remote solutions for learning.
- Converting certain courses or learning activities that are reliant on physical interaction into remote learning formats.
- Technology solutions are often costly and not available in all instruction languages.
- Most of the technology solutions now available are temporarily free or with limitations on the usage.
- There is also limited focus on digital content so far, which exacerbates the challenge of providing teaching/learning materials.
- Most education institutions are under-financed and there is limited budget, digital maturity, and operational capacity to enable a wide choice of solutions to be implemented and scaled.
- The existence of digital divide, e-infrastructural limitations, pedagogical restrictions, student engagement, are the other challenges.

The following are the step by step measures for the effective implementation of Remote teaching and learning process

1. Course customization and adjustments: It is desirable to plan a course strategy with an assumption that the entire semester needs to be implemented online. Accordingly, an analysis should be made for every programme and courses being offered by the institution. This should include:

   - The feasibility of a course implementation in online mode in entirety;
   - Identifying the course modules that may not be feasible for online implementation due to pedagogical or any other constraints;
   - Trimming the course modules to keep up with the timelines and the lost working days.
2. **Developing Plan for implementation:** A plan for the implementation of online teaching need to be evolved considering the following:
   a. Identify those courses which can be handled online effectively.
   b. Procure the relevant technology
   c. Defer the practical/ Lab component to the following semester (cannot be implemented for courses offered in the terminal semesters). Or Explore the possibility of conducting only Labs and other practicals on the campus batch wise by designing a strategic plan and schedule
   d. Collaborate with other institutions which have been able to deliver the course online and seek their resources on paid/unpaid basis
   e. Identify pre-existing MOOCs which can be utilized with a defined evolution system.

3. **Identifying the Delivery Methodology**
   There are three main methodologies that can be used to deliver the online classes.

   **A: Synchronous** – Teaching live and having student-faculty interactions then and there. The virtual platforms like Zoom, GoToMeeting, Cisco Webex, Skype, Microsoft Teams, Goodle Duo, Jio Meet, Jitsi, etc, can be utilized for this purpose.

   **B: Asynchronous** – Sharing content in various formats including audio/video recordings, videos, documentaries, reading material, presentations, e-books etc., with students consuming the content at their own pace and time of choice.

   **C: Hybrid** – During live virtual classes, most sessions are happening at present with videos remaining off for students or even course instructors due to internet bandwidth constraints. Even audio remains patchy in most cases, making interactions among course participants a difficult task. This makes synchronous discussions challenging. Thus faculty may explore hybrid means to conduct classes and can use the following means to create/ add an element of interaction to the asynchronous means:

   - **Social Media** - The faculty can utilize Social Media platforms including Whatsapp / Telegram or Facebook to create course specific groups and use these for engaging students in asynchronous discussions related to the course.

   - **Discussion Forums** - The students can also actively share their learnings, resources they find insightful, and ask questions that can be answered by their peers or teachers. Free platforms like Piazza (www.piazza.com) that have been created for academic discussions can also prove very useful for asynchronous discussions, asking and responding to questions (including options for doing so anonymously), and sharing resources. Such spaces can be made accessible to next batches also and can prove useful beyond the COVID-19 crisis. Platforms that allow threaded posts (replies nested under one post) and the possibility to categorize, pin, or tag posts (e.g. Piazza, Slack, or even Facebook) will be more useful than chat apps like Whatsapp or Telegram.
4. Developing appropriate Instruction Methodology

The following are the key issues in developing the suitable instructional methodology:

a. **Curriculum Preparation:** Faculties posting content online often have to supply a complete syllabus at the start of the course. This is especially true when students can control their own schedule and work at their own pace. Faculty teaching online must often have all class material prepared and ready for students before the course ever begins.

b. **Assignment Completion:** Some online classes require students to turn in their assignments periodically throughout the period, just as traditional classes do. Faculty should be ready to receive the assignments online via, WhatsApp, Telegram or through email and can also find and use a suitable software interface that allows them to assign grading and assigning marks.

c. **Teacher Availability:** Unlike faculty in a real classroom situation, online faculty may not be required to be in class at any particular time, but they must make themselves available to student questions on a consistent basis throughout each day to ensure that students have a consistent resource for learning. This interaction may occur via e-mail, WhatsApp, Telegram or any other instant messenger or some other asynchronous form of communication through the Discussion Boards or Forums available in platforms like Google Classroom or other Learning Management Systems.

d. **Facilitating Class Discussions:** In a classroom environment, faculty may dedicate class time to seminar-style discussions of course topics. In online courses, faculty may require students to share their views on forums and message boards. They may spark discussions by asking open-ended questions about course material. From there, faculty needs to monitor student interactions in order to ensure that students are participating in the class and understand the material that is being presented. The faculty teaching online can also use online web meetings to facilitate real-time class discussions. This forum may also be used for virtual student presentations. Both faculty and their students need web cameras and microphones or headsets for such events.

e. **Learning Outcomes:** Faculty who conduct classes online have to be more aware of certain teaching techniques and learning outcomes. The major challenge lies with meeting the learning outcomes for gaining practical knowledge.

f. **Repeat recorded lectures to make students better understand concepts:** The best part about online learning is that the students can watch recorded lectures as many a time as they want to understand a concept better.
g. **Online learning follows social distancing:** The Online mode of learning is the best choice during the present pandemic as it adheres to the norms of social distancing as laid down by the Government as a precautionary measure against the spread of the virus.

h. **Instruction methodology for Theory Based Courses:** Faculty can use certain free applications like Google classroom effectively for theory based courses. The theory-heavy courses are relatively easy to manage. An upgraded course outline that clearly lays down the objectives for each module and session, maps the readings to each session, and provides guiding questions can act as a self-study unit. A good selection of study material available freely on the internet (open source) or via library website (e-resources) will ease transition to remote learning. Moving beyond textbooks or text heavy readings to visually engaging content (short videos, illustrative guides, podcasts etc.) can improve student engagement. Faculty can also record short videos explaining the concepts, and the classroom timing can be used to discuss the interconnections among concepts and their complex applications, i.e. a flipped classroom model.

i. **Instruction methodology for Laboratory Work:** Lab work focused courses are a norm in Science and Engineering. Hence it is suggested that the Laboratory Courses could be shifted to the next semesters, wherever feasible. Another alternative could be re-frame the syllabus of the Laboratory Courses and include those practical’s which are more important and conduct the practical’s in batches following the norms of social distancing and other norms of COVID-19 protocols. Hostel accommodation could be provided to students who come in batches for the practical sessions.

j. **Identify which of the lab activities can be delivered online:** In some cases, a portion of the lab activities that are usually delivered through orientation/pre-lectures and demonstrations of techniques can be recorded via videos and PowerPoints. Students can be asked to familiarize themselves with procedures. Faculty can also host WebEx or Google Meet or GoToMeeting live sessions to do demonstrations if possible.

k. **Lab Recordings:** The laboratory/workshop staff and faculty members can perform experiments and video record the same. These recordings can be shared with the students.

l. **Past Data:** While performance of experiments provides hands-on experience to students, utilize the data generated from experiments performed by different groups in the class to generate insights about the phenomenon. Therefore, the faculty can draw upon data from experiments performed by previous batches and
assign one set of data to each group. This can then become the basis of online discussions on experimental parts of the course.

m. **Promote Interaction:** Conducting lab activities together is a way for students to interact with instructors and their peers. Consider using other communication tools to promote direct student interaction.

**Instruction methodology for Field Work:** Much of the field work remains suspended due to COVID-19-related restrictions. Even though the lock-downs are lifted, the risk of travelling to sites for field work remains high, for researchers, as well as participants. In such cases, possibilities of accomplishing field work via virtual interactions and site visits can be experimented with. The following options may be considered:

*Digital Ethnography:* Digital Ethnography outlines an approach to doing ethnography in a contemporary world. It invites researchers to consider how we live and research in a digital, material and sensory environment. Digital Ethnography also explores the consequences of the presence of digital media in shaping the techniques and processes through which we practice ethnography, and accounts for how the digital, methodological, practical and theoretical dimensions of ethnographic research are increasingly intertwined. This is a well-established field now and increased usage of the internet over the past few months by different sections of society provide new opportunities to explore novel themes for field work.

*Collaborations and Past Data:* Institutions can engage social sector organizations with extensive field presence to provide students and faculty members’ access to past data of the communities.

*Recreate a Virtual Experience:* Engaging in discussions through audio/video calls with academics who have done a similar field visit could be useful. These researchers can provide the students details of the experiences they had on the field using a storytelling narrative to create a virtual field work experience.
C. Learning Management System

As all interactions move into the online format, the number of e-interactions and emails can get challenging to manage and monitor, and thereby make the entire online learning process overwhelming for the students and faculty. Therefore, to streamline interactions and exchange of information, Universities and Colleges should consider use of Learning Management Systems (LMS) for all academic activities including

• Uploading relevant documents (course outlines, course readings for each individual session and module)
• Managing student interactions during and after the class
• Conducting assessments and evaluations
• Integration of the online class platform with the LMS tool/placing the links

A consistent, institution-wide usage of such tools can minimize transaction efforts and streamline dissemination of information, as well as, delivery of academic content. The recordings of online or physical sessions should be uploaded on websites like YouTube, Vimeo etc. and links to each video should be updated in the relevant sessions in the course outlines placed on LMS to allow students seamless access to this content.

Several paid options are available for LMS such as rNIT Solutions, TalentLMS or Adobe Captivate Prime, but some free ones are also available such as Google Classrooms and Piazza. Moodle is one of the popular LMS tools utilized.

Technology – Software
To facilitate smooth online classroom sessions, it is critical to identify software which is collaborative in nature, and enables effective online teaching and learning. Some of the commonly used platforms include:

• MS Teams
• TCS ion
• Blackboard
• Canvass
• Zoom
• Blue Jeans
• Big Blue Button
• Google Classroom
• WebEx

Universities and colleges could consider the following as the criteria for selecting the LMS:
- **Collaboration** – It should not only work as conferencing software, but it should have features to enable collaboration among the students, and between the students and faculty.
- **Cost** – A cost-benefit analysis should be done. Accordingly, licensed or open source software can be leveraged based on suitability and cost. Some of these platforms are also providing free of cost access to higher educational institutions in India.

The following parameters may be used to perform a comparative analysis to make their choice of software

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D. Design appropriate Assessment Strategy

The following should be considered while planning the overall assessment strategy of the institution.

**Technical Limitations:** Even when students can access online content (including classes), it cannot be assumed that they can submit online assignments. While attending classes using a Smartphone is feasible, using the same device to type out assignments may not be practical. This requires access to a desktop or laptop.

**Emotional Distress:** It may be challenging for some students to deal with the pressure of an examinationsince during these extraordinary times. The students may not have an environment at home conducive to studying. They may lack a desirable study space and experience bouts of possible fatigue from involvement in household chores, occurrence of COVID-19 at home, or may even suffer from the anxiety caused by combined stress of pandemic and examinations.

**Pedagogical Limitations:** Mathematical assessments may be difficult to replicate in an online format. This may require additional investment on technology.

**Various formats to conduct assessments online**
- Oral assessments/ Audio responses
- Submissions of images of handwritten answers using mobile camera
- Digital submissions (word/excel/email/power point)
- Technology driven, AI-enabled assessment
- Utilize Learning Management Systems to plan assessments.

**Continuous Assessment**
Continuous assessment with a greater focus on learning rather than grading is likely to be more effective. Following areas should be considered while planning the continuous assessments:

1. **Type of assessments allowed or restricted:** What can be included and what components need to be excluded for different categories of courses and course components
2. **Mode of conducting assessments** (classroom participation/ online submission)
3. **Protocols regarding submission**
a. Mode of submission (via email, Learning Management System, etc.)
b. Flexibility allowed in submission deadlines
c. Formats of submission (images of handwritten answers, word documents; audio or video responses, etc.)

4. Protocols regarding evaluation
   a. Mechanisms for evaluation and feedback
   b. Timeframes allowed for evaluation, rechecking, and submission of grades
   c. Declaration of results
   d. Any change in policy regarding revaluation or re-sits.

Some of the continuous assessment modes could be;

1. **Independent projects**
   Project-based assessments translate seamlessly to remote learning because they revolve around independent inquiry. They also produce a single, substantial piece of work that assesses across multiple criteria as opposed to just one or two.

   It may be based on a project around a research topic, problem-solving activity, a creative activity, or a mix of different learning opportunities.

   - Scaffold each section of the task (e.g. brainstorming, researching, creating) with a clear model.
   - Set aside plenty of time. Project-based learning is rich, but it cannot be rushed.
   - Use this as an opportunity to teach students web research skills: searching, finding credible sources and referencing.
   - Schedule regular check-ins where students provide a progress update, but step out of the way to allow for independent learning.
   - Set clear submission requirements: deadline, file type, and destination.

2. **Jigsaw projects:**
   Individual projects can be transformed into collaborative ones using the jigsaw approach. Group students with a shared project but assign them different roles which they must put together to generate a final product. These roles might see students take responsibility for different areas of research, or different components of the final product.

3. **Self-assessment**
   A students’ reflection on their own learning reveals their understanding and precisely locates the gaps and difficulties that need intervention. Self-assessment is invaluable in online environments where you do not get to see student learning *in action*.

   Ease students into the process of self-assessment with a simple Google Forms survey or questionnaire. This can then develop into more extended written reflections or the use of a self-
assessment rubric. Students could also record verbal statements or include reflective captions as part of a portfolio.

- Productive self-assessment takes time to master. Make it a regular activity.
- Model the language and self-questioning used to generate productive reflection.
- Reward integrity and honesty.
- Use self-assessments to inform one-on-one discussion with a student or parental conversations.
- Keep a record of student self-assessments. These can be used to help students chart their own progress.
- Scaffold the process carefully. Provide a structured resource with prompts if students are writing an extended reflection.

4. **Learning journals:**
Journals where students write regularly about their own learning will provide you with a constant source of formative assessment. It also builds students’ metacognitive abilities – their ability to ‘think about thinking’. Online learning journals can be as simple as a Word document. Free blogging platforms (e.g. Live Journal or Blogger), video diaries or voice recordings for greater interactivity and engagement can also be used.

5. **Portfolios**
Portfolios are a perfect assessment tool for online education, with many institutions having already adopted digital portfolios in place of the old filing system.

Use your LMS to set up a designated portfolio space for each student. Alternatively, cloud software such as OneNote or Google Classroom can be used. Dedicated portfolio platforms such as Seesaw are also available. Students can use this space to upload select pieces of work for assessment.

6. **Video presentations and podcasts**
Oral assessments function even more effectively online than they do in the classroom. The lack of a visible audience reduces anxiety and you have the opportunity to revisit their speaking as many times as you need in the form of a recording.

Students can be encouraged to make use of multimedia components for more engaging presentations. The ‘record’ function on MS PowerPoint makes it easy for students to combine voice with a slide presentation and tech-savvy students might like to experiment with editing software.

Podcasts are a substitute for standard oral presentations. Consider grouping students together as a ‘panel’ to encourage dynamic discussion, as opposed to scripted monologues.
7. **Online discussion**

Unlike classroom discussion, student comments on online message boards can be read as many times as the teacher needs to make an informed assessment of learning. Students also have time to post detailed and considered responses that the teacher would not ordinarily get in a live setting. (Source: [https://www.3plearning.com/blog/online-assessment-strategies-distance-teachers-learners/](https://www.3plearning.com/blog/online-assessment-strategies-distance-teachers-learners/))

**End-term Examination**

Mid-term and end-term examinations, the most common modes of assessment, will require synchronization of start and end times which is challenging to achieve in the present circumstances. Therefore, based on the feasibility and cost-benefit analysis done by an institution, the following options can be explored for remote-examinations:

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled Proctored Examination Software:** This will allow replicating a sit-down examination with the required restriction on ensuring ethics. However, this will be subject to a cost-benefit analysis based on the regulatory requirements, the mandatory nature of examinations defined by UGC, the guidelines on physical exams, and corresponding costs and risk exposure.

- **Take-home, open book assignments or examination:** This will need to be designed with greater focus on practical application of theory which tests the students on their ability to apply the concepts learned. The take-home examination or assignments cannot be designed in a similar manner as the routine, in-class examinations. The faculty members will need to create questions or tasks that cannot be copied from the internet and may be difficult for students to copy from each other. For example, based on specific, pre-decided parameters, the students may be asked to pick one or more organizations, equipment, cases, etc. for analysis. Given that the choice cases/institutions they choose for the assignment cannot be duplicated, will make mass customization of assignment possible. As an alternate, the faculty can create a list of cases and assign a unique case to each student. This is easily feasible in quantitative courses/assignments but with a little extra effort, can be done for all kinds of courses. The assignments can be processed through anti-plagiarism software (like Turnitin) to ensure that students maintain high ethical standards.

- **Viva based oral on-call tests or recorded audio responses to questions:** Instead of depending on written submissions, short oral examinations can be scheduled since phone is something most students will have access to.

- **Summation of class assignment outcomes:** Instead of grading at the end of the course, continuous assessments may be a better option under present circumstances. Even in continuous assessments, focus should be on learning instead of grading.

The following areas should be considered to design the examination methodology:

1. **Mode of conducting assessments** (from the above mentioned options)
2. **Protocols regarding submission**
   a. Mode of submission (via email, Learning Management System, etc.)
b. Flexibility allowed in submission deadlines given the various constraints
c. Formats of submission (images of handwritten answers, word documents; audio or video responses, etc.)

3. Protocols regarding evaluation
   a. Mechanisms for evaluation and feedback
   b. Timeframes allowed for evaluation, rechecking, and submission of grades
   c. Declaration of results

4. Retake (Resit) examinations from previous semesters
   a. Mode of such examinations
   b. Scheduling of retake examinations
   c. Declaration of results
   d. Any changes in syllabus or formats of examination

5. Examination grading policy
   a. Pass/fail
   b. Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) / Marks
   c. No-grades-all-pass
   d. Hybrid

6. Specific customization
   a. Action to be taken for final year students who will be awarded a degree based on the exam outcome

Thesis / Dissertations
Even traditionally, for thesis proposals/defense, several institutions have allowed virtual presentations. Either the student is presenting virtually or one or more of thesis Advisors or Examiners join remotely (especially when they are based outside India). This practice can be made an acceptable and standardized mode of defending thesis proposal or thesis across all institutions.
E. Co-Curricular and Extra Curricular Activities

Students' social and cultural life outside classrooms is a key part of institutional life across the world. However, given the physical restrictions during a pandemic of this nature (COVID-19) physical formats of extra-curricular activities will not be feasible. Therefore, it is important to identify online activities which can replicate the experience and learning for the students. Social Media can further facilitate communication within student communities and beyond, making it possible to share new thoughts, perspectives, and ideas. Students can explore the potential of numerous virtual platforms, becoming part of student clubs or councils. Multiple events can be conducted in online format, bringing together students with similar academic and personal interests. The main objective is to remain as proactive as possible, and to maintain a sense of 'normalcy' under extraordinary circumstances. Depending on the objective to be achieved, the following can be considered for implementation:

Respite from academic pursuits

- Develop new skills or knowledge through online courses on Coursera NAPTEL, SWAYAM, or similar platforms. The institutions can facilitate this by partnering with the different organizations providing such options online. For example, a tie up with Coursera, Udacity, EdX, etc. can allow students to take credit courses at no cost or for nominal fees.
- Start learning new foreign languages.

Student body bonding

- Student bodies and clubs can organize online networking events.
- Student bodies can collaborate internally, or across institutions to create online festivals which have events and competitions conducive to the online format. This could include cultural elements such as live musicians/performances as well.
- Student clubs can organize online placement events.
- Connecting students for informal discussions coordinated and monitored by the class representative.

Literary/ Cultural events

- For cultural activities such as dance/music – online classes can be organized. Students can be encouraged to create online dance-music collaborations.
- For literary events – online elocutions, debates, and other such activities can be organized via video conferencing.
- Music Clubs can do online collaboration to create music.
• Dance Club members can record dance moves and collaborate to create videos
• Organize webinars with recognized personalities

Physical activities

• E-exercise - virtual platforms can be used to do physical exercises, such as Yoga, Pilates, etc. Cure.fit or other such platforms can provide physical activity support.
• Online sports gaming - The intrinsic values of sports are the spirit of teamwork and leadership. Virtual gaming such as 'FIFA' or other games related to sports can be utilized to create online sports events.

Given the limited activities possible, the focus can be more on building a student network across institutions and engaging in dialogues to plan extra-curricular activity based events and collaborations for a time post the corona virus disruption.
F. Faculty- Student Interaction

During a course, students often interact with the course instructors outside class hours. Much of this is formalized in the form of designated office hours but exchange of emails and informal chats are also common. The present situation has taken the face-to-face interactions out of the picture. Further, the students now do not have physical access to their friends on campus and may often be struggling in isolation. Some may be restricted by space and family members, as opposed to a hostel room and free access to libraries and reading rooms, while some may be engaged in family responsibilities. Some may be emotionally and financially under duress due to an earning family member rendered jobless by lockdown and economic turmoil, while others may have family members going out to support essential services like hospitals, sanitization, etc. and exposed to higher risk of catching infection.

Course instructors are a very important and active link between the students and institution and hence, it is necessary that they facilitate interactions with students for academic or non-academic support required in the form of discussions (notwithstanding the physical, psychological, and financial challenges they themselves might be facing, for which institutional management needs to step up and create support structures). To facilitate this, the following two systems should be put into place:

The faculty can provide 30-60-minute slots during the day when students can directly call them either individually or in group calls on media such as Whatsapp to discuss their challenges. One can expect the themes to move beyond the subjects being taught and involve mental and emotional challenges being faced by the students. While most teachers are not trained to help in such situations, they can support by actively listening to their students. Even without suggesting any solutions (in fact, they should refrain from suggesting any solutions and guide the students to the institution counselors), such outlets that allow students to engage in open discussions should help and also contribute to better learning for students and healthier classroom interactions. The students should also be able to access the faculty for academic challenges being faced given the constraints of online learning.

Student Mentorship

The institutions can create a formal mentorship program for the students involving faculty members and senior students in case of junior batches under their guidance. Such mentorship should focus on providing students with a social circle, helping them understand institutional academic culture and norms, and supporting them in transition from school to institutional life even when working of campus. This minimal guidance and support will go a long way in ensuring that students can adjust to a new environment with ease.

It is recommended that mentorship assignments are put in place formally, and mentor-mentee discussions are recorded into an action plan and shared with the mentee.
G. Academic Continuity – Physical Mode or In-Person Instruction Mode

Disruptions to instructional time in the classroom can have a severe impact on a student’s ability to learn. Reopening of education institutions must be safe and consistent with state’s overall COVID-19 health response, with all reasonable measures taken to protect students, staff, teachers and their families.

1. Teaching Learning Activities after reopening
Given that the physical mode is the usual mode utilized for classes, the teaching and learning activities can be conducted as per the usual methodologies. Therefore, the curriculum, course outline, pedagogical implementation, experiential learning will not be affected since the faculty and students will be face-to-face in a classroom which is ‘business as usual’. If any adjustments are required, the guidelines for online mode could be utilized.

However, there will have to be norms of social distancing and other health-and-safety precautions which will need to be practiced. This may require:

- Re-structuring the class size – This needs to be done to ensure social distancing.
- Re-planning the time – Since the class size will be smaller, the faculty may have to take extra classes. Therefore, academic planning in terms of class allocations to faculty and time academic calendar will need to be re-evaluated.
- Additional infrastructural requirement – This can be put in place as stated further in the document.

Further, the possibility of disruption of classes due to COVID-19 cases that may emerge on campus cannot be ruled out. Even when classes may continue, some students may show symptoms of COVID-19(similar to common flu during winter) or be tested positive, thus making it impossible for them to attend classes. Hence, the institutions need to ensure that all physical classes are video recorded and the videos are uploaded on LMS. As a result, all suggestions made for online mode will still remain relevant in physical mode of operations.

2. Revisiting the Hostel Accommodation
The students staying in the hostel, accommodation will need to be planned based on the minimum social distancing to be maintained

Usage of Common Areas
Common areas such as washrooms will need to follow the washroom sanitization guidelines stated above. Other common areas within the student housing used for communal gathering will need to be suspended, and used on a need-only basis based on authorization of hostel warden.
Sanitization Procedure
Room provisions such as bed linen and overall sanitization will need to have additional cleaning procedures in place. The rooms will have to be sanitized more periodically.

Emergency Protocol
An emergency protocol will need to be defined in case a student is found symptomatic or has tested positive for COVID-19 to ensure calm is maintained, and necessary actions are taken to quarantine and test peers living in the same accommodation.

3. Campus Entry Protocol
The following should be considered for the students, faculty and administration
• Confirmation of travel history, any history of occurrence of COVID-19 (positive test results), or symptoms especially in the last 2 weeks in the form of a self declaration form which is attested and approved for entry prior to the visit. The security team should be provided the authorized list of entrants.
• Check for symptoms.
• COVID-19 testing.
• Sanitization of luggage.
• Non-contact security test mechanisms which do not involve contact such as frisking.
• Social distancing while entering – To ensure this, there should be time slots provided to entrants.
• Staggered entry to ensure social distancing.
• Frequent entry/exits should be restricted. For emergencies a protocol of authorization should be defined.
• Use of gloves, masks and safe disposal.
H. Standard Operating Procedure for conduct of Examinations (following COVID – 19 protocol)

(Lr. No. 1185900/UE/A1/2020 Dt. 04.09.2020 from the Spl. Chief Secretary to Government, Higher Education Department, A.P. Secretariat)

Conducting Exams in a hassle-free manner is a serious responsibility. System and processes to successfully conduct large scale exams with utmost diligence needs to be developed. There are several norms that need to be adhered to assure the Centre and institutions conducting the exam processes is resilient to various possible disruptions. Hence there is the need for standard operating procedures (SOP). The SOP acts as a document to set the standard and the operating norms while conducting the exam. With the latest pandemic threat, every process needs to be redefined to ensure strict compliance to all the required norms are put in place. This is to additionally assure the safety of both the candidates and all functionaries involved in the conduct of the examination. The AP State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE), evolved the following Standard Operating Procedure for conduct of Examinations for the academic year 2019 – 2020, in light of the COVID – 19 pandemic.

1. Final Term Examinations should be compulsorily conducted as per UGC Guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar for the Universities dated 29.04.2020 and Revised UGC Guidelines issued on 06.07.2020.

2. All examinations for the outgoing batch of students shall be completed by the end of September 2020.

3. The Universities shall have to conduct student survey to select Examinations Centres (apart from the existing centers), in convenient and preferred location of the students.

4. The Universities shall also have to identify examination centres beyond the local jurisdiction of the University, if necessary, and make arrangements for the conduct of examinations in such centres.

5. Question paper distribution shall be made online for the conduct of examinations. For the purpose, the services of JNTU K and A for software and consultation may be utilized.

6. For the purpose of receiving the question paper and taking the print outs for distribution following the protocol of confidentiality at the location of the examination centre, the services of the local engineering colleges affiliated to JNTU-A/JNTU-K/ the respective University may be utilized, if necessary.

7. Only one set of question papers shall be used.
8. Seminar presentation / project work submission shall be done online and viva voce examination also be conducted online. The universities should start the examination process immediately.

9. If any student is unable to take the examination due to valid reasons related to COVID-19, separate exams shall be conducted to such students at a later date.

10. Answer scripts shall be distributed physically to various centres identified for the conduct of examination. While distributing, all precautionary measures mentioned below in the SOP need to be practiced strictly.

11. The confidential work and valuation of the answer scripts should be taken up immediately so as to ensure declaration of results within two weeks from the date of last examination conducted.

12. Spot valuation shall be decentralised. More number of spot valuation centres shall be used to avoid transportation problems and other inconveniences to the examiners.

13. In case there is a restriction on movements in certain areas to reach examination centre, admit/identify cards issued to the students should be treated as a pass for the movement of students. Necessary permissionsshall be obtained from the respective State/local authorities. Permissions shall also be obtained from State Governmentauthorities for the issue of movement passes to invigilators and all personnel engaged in the conduct of examination.

14. Entire examination centre floors and walls, doors, gates, should be sprayed with disinfectant.

15. Fresh mask and gloves to be used by exam functionaries after staff verification is done.

16. Sanitizer bottles should be arranged at the entry gate, examination rooms, staff/observer room etc, and should be replenishes regularly.

17. All liquid hand wash bottles should be replenished in restrooms and entry gate whenever required.

18. Candidate Seating Area should be thoroughly sanitized (desk and the chair) after every session.

19. All the washrooms should be cleaned and disinfected.

20. All door handles, staircase railing, lift buttons, etc. should be disinfected.

21. Wheelchairs, if present, at the examination centres, should be disinfected.

22. All the trash bins should be cleaned regularly.

23. Staff verification and self-declaration as suggested below must be done as soon as they report at the Centre
a. Exam functionary must submit self-declaration about health status.
b. Thermo gun temperature check must be done at staff entrance point.
c. If any, Examination functionary falls to meet the self-declaration criteria, or thermo
gun check, he/she will be asked to leave the examination centre immediately
d. Exam functionary needs to wear the mask and gloved at all time.

24. Cleanliness and hygienic conditions as per safety and health advisories of the concerned
government departments are to be maintained at all places.

25. Proper signage, symbols, posters etc., should be displayed at appropriate place to maintain social distancing.

26. Downloading of ‘ArogyaSetu’ App may be advised for every staff and student of the university and college.

27. Adequate arrangements of thermal scanners, sanitizers, facemasks, and hand gloves at all entry and exit points including the reception area. Wherever possible, students should be given fresh masks by the Invigilators in the examination room itself.

28. Avoid crowding at entry and exit points.

29. Opening all the gates of entry and exit.

30. Senior staff should monitor the entry and exit. There should be proper marking with at least 2 meter distance where students stand while waiting for opening of the college gate. Exit of students should permitted one by one only.

31. Thermal Screening of Students, wearing of face mask, sanitizing of hands etc, to be ensured.

32. The Invigilators, while on duty, should be continuously wearing mask, and proper hand gloves.

33. The students should be asked to sanitize their hands before and after signing the Attendance Sheet.

34. Students having symptoms of fever, cough and cold should be either made to sit in a separate room or giving a chance to appear later.

35. Hand washing stations with facilities of liquid soap should be made available so that every student can wash her/his hand frequently.

36. Keeping in view the physical distancing, institutions should have adequate room capacity to meet the proper seating arrangements for examination. Minimum distance between two students should be 2 meters. Sample seating plan is annexed.

37. Adequate arrangements for safe drinking water be made on the campus.
38. Adequate supply of water in toilets and for hand washing be ensures.

39. Dustbins must be cleaned and covered properly.

40. Proper sanitization of buses, other transport vehicles of the institution.

41. At the end of the day –
   a. Used gloves and masks should be disposed only in a pedal push covered bin at the Examination Centre and outside the examination hall.
   b. Safely dispose off all used masks and gloves discarded at the examinations centres or outside the examination centres in trash bin bags at suitable place and as per standard guidelines issued by health authorities.

42. Maintain record of all exam functionaries for future reference and traceability.

43. Inventory management
   a. Each Examination Centre needs to have the following additional Inventory
   b. Gloves & Masks for all staff on examination duty
   c. Gloves& Masks for candidates in case they do not come with their own, as a requirement for admission into Examination Centres
   d. Hand Sanitizer at entry and inside the Examination Centres as needed.
   e. Spray bottles, Sponges/cloth for disinfecting items such as desk/table, door handles, etc.
   f. Disinfectant liquid with 1% sodium hypochlorite for spraying in the Examination Centres and Disinfectant backpack spray machines for spraying floors, walls, etc.
   g. Additional cleaning material for washrooms to ensure increased hygiene
   h. Liquid handwash/soap in washrooms for washing hands
   i. Thermo guns for Temperature check of candidates and all staff on duty
   j. Additional notice boards o Individual water bottles for staff on duty and for candidates, in case any candidate misses to bring (arrangement for approx. 20% of number of candidates allocated)
   k. Rope to make Rope lines and material to make Floor Marks (circle with paint to manage queues outside the entrance gate)
   l. Sanitizing the examination centres and equipping examination functionaries
## Sample Seating Plan

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<th>COLUMN 1</th>
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<th>COLUMN 3</th>
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