

GOVT. DEGREE COLLEGE UDHAMPUR

BEST PRACTICES-2020-21

Online Examinations and Admissions

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Educational Institutions have had to make significant changes to the manner in which student interaction is undertaken. Teaching and learning has now shifted almost entirely to either a completely Online Mode, or Blended Learning with elements combined from Online and Traditional Teaching Learning paradigms. Other student related tasks such as Admissions, Examination and Evaluation have also been shifted to Online mode in order to reduce the person to person contact as well as in accordance with COVID-19 SOPs. The institution has attempted to provide students with the best possible education and administrative services in this regard, and in the process has created resources some of which are among the first of their kind in institutions of Higher Education in UT of J&K.

For conducting Internal Assessment Examinations as notified by the University of Jammu, the Website Committee designed and developed an Examination and Evaluation Portal for the Session 2020-21. To attempt the internal assignment examination, students logged into the portal on the designated time and date as per the notified date sheet, and uploaded photos or PDF of their answer sheet. A corresponding portal was also designed where teachers could remotely access student answer sheets and assign marks.

As the pandemic showed no signs of slowing down in the latter part of 2020, the admission to the next semesters was also conducted online. This was necessitated by the fact that the college had been designated as a COVID-19 Care Center and patients were kept for observation in the institution premises. For Admissions, a dedicated in-house portal was developed by the Department of Computer Applications. The entire process of admission was shifted to online mode, and helpline numbers were provided on the Institution Portal for addressing student queries. Provision was also made for students who were unable to fill the admission form online. Care was taken so that no student was excluded because of the digital divide.

Best Practices during COVID-19

COVID-19 by definition is a deadly pandemic, and therefore necessitates great care and concern on the part of Educational Institutions regarding student interaction. During the latter part of 2020 and early 2021, when the pandemic was at its peak, the institution had been designated as a COVID-19 Care Center, and therefore students were asked not to come to the college except under very urgent and unavoidable circumstances. Regular Classwork, Examinations, Evaluation and Admissions to subsequent Semesters were shifted to completely online mode. For faculty members and students who came to the college, strict SOPs were followed and COVID-19 protocols were enforced across the college campus. No faculty member or student was allowed to enter the institution premises without wearing a mask. Masks were also distributed at the college gate. Sanitizer kiosks

were placed at the entrance and other locations across the college campus. A Sanitization Booth was also installed by the district administration which was used for walk-in sanitization. Faculty members and students were strictly asked to follow social distancing, and two metre distance was strictly enforced at all times. Informative Posters were displayed at prominent locations across the college campus for awareness of the students. Online classes were conducted and study material was disseminated to the students. For this purpose, the college Learning Management System (<https://devikacloud.in>) was used, which is the first and only endeavour of its kind among institutions of Higher Education in UT of J&K.

Describe two best practices successfully implemented by the Institution as per NAAC format provided in the Manual.

Best Practice 1

Title:

Conduct of Online Examinations, Evaluation and Admission during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Objectives:

- **To conduct Online Examinations in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, for which purpose to design and implement an easy to use portal for uploading of answer sheets by students, and to resolve their queries therein**
- **To conduct online evaluation of examinations by designing portal for downloading of answer sheets by faculty members and assigning marks**
- **To facilitate online admissions of students to subsequent semesters, and to make provisions for students facing difficulty in the same**

Context:

- **Inability of students to visit the college campus on account of COVID-19 pandemic**
- **Urgency of conducting time bound examination and evaluation of examination as per schedule notified by the University of Jammu**
- **Conduct of online admission as per notified schedule**
- **Following COVID-19 SOPs and associated precautions, minimizing contact and facilitating shift to online mode**

Practice:

- **In view of the COVID-19, it was not possible to conduct examinations in the college premises as per traditional practice. Conduct of examinations online presented many issues, such as the technology to be used, the access of students to internet, the ability of students to use online portals for examination, and the feasibility of such practice considering the number of students enrolled in the college belonging to**

remote areas of Udhampur district. To facilitate the process, and to ensure maximum ease of access to students, it was decided to design and develop the examination portal in house, and the Website Committee in collaboration with the Department of Computer Applications took on the task at war footing. An Examination and Evaluation Portal was created for the Session 2020-21, wherein to attempt the internal assignment examination, students logged into the portal on the designated time and date as per the notified date sheet, and uploaded photos or PDF of their answer sheet. A corresponding portal was also designed where teachers could remotely access student answer sheets and assign marks. The task of conducting Private Examinations for Semesters 1, 3 and 5 for all colleges in Udhampur district was also allocated to the institution, which was also undertaken in a transparent and efficient manner. For evaluation of Private examinations, access to the portal was also provided to faculty from other colleges in the district. Phone numbers of faculty were provided to the students for resolving queries and difficulties of students, and efforts were made to prevent any exclusions because of the digital divide. Re-examination was conducted to accommodate students who were unable to upload their answer sheets to ensure no student was left behind.

- The institution conducted online classes using various platforms. To ensure access of students to study material and e-Content, the college developed its own Learning Management System titled as the Devika Cloud (<https://devikacloud.in>) which hosts e-Content of various subjects and courses being run in the college. The portal allows public access to the study material, so that students from any college in the UT of J&K (and anywhere in the world) can access it, the syllabus being same as designated by the University of Jammu. It is pertinent to mention here that the institution is the first and only college in UT of J&K which has developed and implemented an LMS.
- As the pandemic showed no signs of slowing down in the latter part of 2020, the admission to the next semesters was also conducted online. This was necessitated by the fact that the college had been designated as a COVID-19 Care Center and patients were kept for observation in the institution premises. For Admissions, a dedicated in-house portal was developed by the Website Committee and the Department of Computer Applications. The entire process of admission was shifted to online mode, and helpline numbers were provided on the Institution Portal for addressing student queries. Provision was also made for students who were unable to fill the admission form online. Care was taken so that no student was excluded from the process.

Evidence of Success:

- The Examination, Evaluation and preparation of result was conducted in timely and transparent fashion. Provisions were made that no student was left behind and re-examination was conducted at the end of the examination schedule to accommodate students who were unable to upload answer sheets for valid reasons.
- Student awareness has increased regarding the use of online resources for access to study material and for taking examinations.

- **The examination model and technology designed by the institution can be used in the future. The college encourages technology sharing, and welcomes invitations by other institutions to help them set up similar portals.**

Problems Encountered:

- **A large number of students of the college hail from remote areas of District Udhampur, and have limited access to Internet.**
- **Students who were unfamiliar with technology also found it difficult at first to use the portal to take examinations. To help such students Mock Tests were conducted to help students understand usage of the portal and to resolve their queries.**

Resources Used while implementing the practice

- **Programmers and System Administrators from the Website Committee and the Department of Computer Science**
- **Server and Dedicated Fiber Internet Connection**
- **Server Space purchased from DigitalOcean Service Provider**

Best Practice 2

Title:

COVID-19 precautions and preventive measures for safety of students and faculty members

Objectives:

- **To prevent spread of COVID-19 among faculty and students**
- **To continue administrative and academic functioning of the institution amidst the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **To ease shift from Online to Offline mode of operation after decrease in COVID infections**
- **To maintain COVID-19 SOPs and Protocols after institution reopening for faculty and students**

Context:

After the COVID-19 pandemic, the institution gradually opened for faculty members and students. Operation was resumed in Offline mode first for administrative functions and finally for academic functions. However, the pandemic is not yet over, and in view of newly emerging cases of infection, it became imperative that measures were needed to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the institution, while maintaining the level of functionality needed for day to day routine operation of the institution. For this purpose, it was necessary to take steps and issue guidelines for the safety of all stakeholders thus involved.

Practice:

The institution made safety of students and faculty members a priority and took steps to ensure that operations were not hampered, while preventing safety hazards for all stakeholders. To begin with, the institution made it mandatory for everyone entering the college campus to be vaccinated. No student or faculty member was allowed to enter the college without being vaccinated. Vaccination certificates were checked at the college gate and students without certificates were barred from entering the college. Even after vaccination, strict measures were enforced to make sure that students remain safe inside the institution premises.

To promote hygiene among the faculty and students, sanitizer kiosks were placed inside the campus premises at appropriate places. No student was permitted entry in the college campus without a mask, and masks were distributed among the students and faculty members. Further, social distancing was practiced in the classrooms as well as other social areas such as Girls Common Room, Practical Laboratories, Playgrounds, Canteens etc.

The institution believes that the most effective protection against the pandemic is information, and to that effect the institution raised awareness among the students by putting up posters and notices at various places in the college campus as well as on the college website. Students were regularly directed to practice social distancing and sanitize their hands.

Evidence of Success:

There has been a reduction of cases among the faculty members of the institution in the latter part of the year 2021. No serious case of infection of COVID-19 has yet been reported among the students of the institution. Further students who experience symptoms are directed to remain at home and observe social distancing.

Problems Encountered:

- Students sometimes take off their mask inside the college campus or fail to observe social distancing in social areas. Discipline committee monitors student activity and takes corrective action.**
- In some instances it becomes difficult to observe social distancing for students, for instance in passenger vehicles. In those cases students are advised to wear masks and avoid travelling in overcrowded vehicles.**

Resources required:

- Sanitizer kiosks**
- Masks for distribution among faculty and students**
- Infographics and posters for display in the college campus**