

*Manish Jain, IAS*  
Principal Secretary



Department of Higher Education  
Government of West Bengal

No.16-Pr.Secy-HED/2020

Dated 9<sup>th</sup> July, 2020

To  
Shri Amit Khare, IAS  
Secretary, Department of Higher Education  
Ministry of Human Resources Development  
Government of India  
122-C, Shastri Bhawan  
New Delhi 110001

**Sub: Instructions for conduct of examinations given by MHRD (Department of Higher Education)/ Revised guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar issued by UGC.**

**Re: 1. Office memorandum no. F.No.16-16/2020-U1A of MHRD (Department of Higher Education) on Instructions for conduct of examinations**

**2. UGC Guidelines dated 29 April 2020 and UGC Revised Guidelines dated 6<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

Dear Sir,

Kindly refer to the above letters issued by UGC and MHRD on the subject. In view of Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development reiterating that the revised guidelines issued by UGC to all Universities/Colleges for conducting final semester(s)/year examinations by September, 2020 in line with the Guidelines issued by UGC dated 29.04.2020, I would like to draw your kind attention to the para 8(i) and para 8(iii) page 10 of the said guidelines dated 29.04.2020, which are reproduced again as below:

***Para 8(i)***

*The universities may adopt and implement these guidelines in a transparent manner by making alterations/additions/modifications/amendments to deal with particular situation(s) in the best interest of students, educational institution and the entire education system.*

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**Para 8(iii)**

*In case of educational institutions located at places where the Government (Centre/State) have imposed restrictions on gathering of public, the institutions may plan accordingly. **In any case, the above recommendations shall not cause any restrictions on the guidelines/directions issued by the appropriate government/competent authority.***

It would be clear from above that while UGC vide its guidelines issued on 29.04.2020 provide required flexibility to the Universities/Colleges and does not cause any restrictions on the guidelines/directions issued by the appropriate Government/competent authority, the revised guidelines issued on 6th July tends to mandate the Educational Institutions across the country for conducting the Examinations by September, 2020, which is surely at variance with the guidelines issued earlier.

2. With the current trend of rise in the COVID cases since April, 2020 and the study done by the world leading Institution, we are not sure whether the situation will be conducive for the conduct of off line examinations by September in a vast country like India. Besides, by going through the Statistics of the Government of India on digital access across the country, it will not be appropriate to hold on line exams, which would be discriminatory against a large section of the students, especially poor and rural students, who do not have access to the internet, computers etc.

3. In such unforeseen, uncertain and challenging situation, when most of the Educational institutions are being used as Quarantine centres and for other COVID purpose along with restrictions on the movement of trains, air planes, **the Cyclone Amphan** etc, our State Government, after extensive consultation with the Vice Chancellors of all Universities, other stakeholders in the education sectors, considering the prevailing situation caused by COVID-19 Pandemic and in the interest of the Students' health, safety & future, issued an advisory to all the State Aided Universities/Colleges of the State of West Bengal read with para 8(iii), page 10 and para 1, page 10 of the guidelines issued by the UGC dated 29.04.2020. Our

advisory provides due weightage to the internal assessment and the performance of the candidate in the previous semesters in order to ensure transparency. Besides, our advisory has a provision for holding special exams after the situation gets normalised, for such students, who wish to appear in a formal examination instead of alternate evaluation method.

It would be clear from above that the above advisory is in consonant with the guidelines issued by the UGC dated 29.04.2020. Besides, the provision of weightage for the performance in the previous semesters (which are based on earlier written examinations only) and a due weightage to the internal assessment are in line with the practices adopted by the select countries of Asia and Europe (Kindly refer last line of para 3 of the title Background in the guidelines for the conduct of examinations issued enclosed with the latter dated 8th July of UGC. It may be mentioned here that the Universities/Colleges aided by the State of West Bengal have already acted upon the advisory issued by the State Government and it will be very difficult to undo such actions. The students, their parents and other stakeholders have overwhelmingly appreciated the advisory of the State Government. In fact, we are receiving hundreds of mails from the students, teaching community raising their concern of holding online/offline/blended form of exams as proposed by the UGC in such prevailing situation. They have requested the State Government to take up the matter with the Government of India, on priority, for its reconsideration.

4. In view of what is stated above, conducting the examinations for the terminal semester(s)/year by 30 September 2020 will not only delay the results of such examinations but also be detrimental to the career and cause financial distress to many students who are dependent upon securing a job in order to sustain themselves and their families. It will also prevent students from applying for further higher studies or entrance examinations, nationally and internationally, thereby demoralising them and their families. Several countries such as Japan, England and Canada have completely restricted their academic activities during this pandemic. Besides, States like Punjab, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Puducherry have already decided not to conduct the terminal exams. Institutes like IIT Mumbai, Kanpur, Kharagpur and Roorkee have also cancelled their final year

exams. This decision to conduct examinations by September 2020, will thus not only affect public health but also have an economic impact on students who would be put at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* students of other autonomous universities or students of other countries.

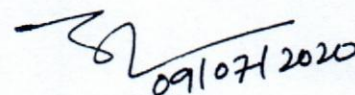
5. Mentioning statement like Final Term examinations should be compulsorily conducted as per the revised guidelines of UGC, by the Ministry of HRD (Department of Higher Education) vide its OM dated 6th July, is only against the spirit of the federal structure enshrined in the Constitution of India as 'Education' is placed in the concurrent list and the State was never consulted by UGC despite sending a request for consultation with respect to framing of such guidelines vide this office D.O. no 08-Pr.Secy-HED/2020 dated 18 April 2020 to the Secretary, UGC.

Therefore in view of what is stated above, I would sincerely request you to kindly re-examine the entire matter in the interest of physical/mental wellbeing of the students and future prospects. In order to ensure the interest of the students at National/International level, the State Government be allowed to implement its own decision by not making the MHRD/UGC revised guidelines dated 06.07.2020 mandatory on the State Government.

We sincerely look forward to a positive response.

Regards

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Manish Jain', with the date '09/07/2020' written below it.

(Manish Jain)