

CHAPTER-V

Approval for Open and Distance Learning (ODL)/Online Learning (OL)

5.1 Introduction

- a. All India Council for Technical Education (Open and Distance Learning Education and Online Education) Guidelines, 2021, shall apply to Standalone Institutions, Institutions Deemed to be Universities and Universities (Central, State Public and State Private) for all the Courses of learning at the Post Graduate Certificate/ Post Graduate Diploma/ Post Graduate Degree Level programmes in Management, Computer Applications, Artificial Intelligence, Data Science, Cyber Security, Block Chain, Logistics and Travel & Tourism.
- b. The Council shall NOT allow Open and Distance Learning at Diploma/Degree/ Post Graduate Degree in Engineering and Technology, Planning, Hotel Management and Catering Technology, Applied Arts and Crafts, and Design Programmes.
- c. As per the UGC (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations 2020, approval/recommendation of respective regulatory body is necessary for running the programmes of that domain and accordingly Institutions Deemed to be Universities and State Public & Private Universities shall apply and secure the same.
- d. The NAAC score as per the guidelines notified by UGC from time to time shall be applicable for the Institution(s) Deemed to be University and Universities (Central, State Public or State Private) and NBA score as per the guidelines notified by AICTE from time to time shall be applicable for the Standalone institutions for grant of approval to run programmes /courses under ODL and Online.
- e. No Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University/ State Public & Private university shall offer a Course(s) falling under AICTE Purview in Open and Distance Learning mode/ Online and admit students without the approval by the Council.
- f. The Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University / State Public & Private university shall create a separate Department/ School/ Centre as Headquarters for offering Courses in Open and Distance Learning mode.

5.2 Existing Institutions/Universities shall be eligible for getting 3 years' Extension of Approval (EoA) from the AY-2024-25 by remitting 3 years' TER Charges (Table 5.5) by meeting ANY ONE of the following criteria:

- a. Figured in 8th Edition of NIRF ranked Institutions (announcement made in 5th June 2023).
- b. Figuring in QS World Ranking Asia-2024 (announcement made on 8th Nov 2023).
- c. Institutions/Universities having minimum of 30% eligible courses in regular mode with NBA accreditation having validity till 30th April 2025. (The institutions should continue to get accreditation of their programs)
- d. Institutions/Universities with valid NAAC score of 3.01 on scale of 4.0 and above.
- e. Institutions/Universities having conferred 'Autonomous Status' by UGC.
- f. Institutions/Universities having more than 80% admissions in all the courses/programmes offered consecutively for last 5 Academic Years.

NOTE 1: Although, the institutions can get extended EoA for 3 years, annually they need to submit information/data during the AICTE Approval Process time of respective years.

2: Universities/Institutions granted NOC by the Council in the preceding years shall apply again for obtaining formal approval during this AY 2024-25. **Otherwise NOC granted/issued earlier shall be withdrawn.**

5.3 Norms and Standards

- 5.3.1. a. Any Institutions / Universities keen on seeking approval for ODL/OL shall first apply for approval to offer the said courses in regular mode to AICTE. The Standalone Institutions/ Institutions Deemed to be Universities and University (Central, State Public or State Private) intending to run Courses in Open and Distance Learning mode and / or online mode shall submit an application to the Council for Approval / Extension of Approval for the Courses approved/ Increase/ reduction in Approved Intake / Introduction of new Course(s) and Closure of Course(s).
- b. State Public & Private Universities and Central Universities are required to maintain Norms & Standards as specified in APH from time to time and shall take AICTE approval for regular courses (falling under the purview of council) in case the same courses are to be offered in ODL/OL mode(Ref. UGC Regulation).
- c. Application for partial approval of any Programme(s)/Course(s)/Intake at any level shall NOT be permitted.

5.3.2. Learner's enrolment:

ODL Mode: A Learner residing in any part of the Country can enrol to pursue a programme/course through ODL mode provided that the Institution shall conduct all activities such as admissions, contact programmes, examinations etc. for learner strictly within the territorial jurisdiction of the Institution as specified in these regulations. In case the enrolment is higher than 1000 at a Learner Support Centre, the number of positions and Infrastructure shall be increased on pro-rata basis.

Online Mode: A Learner residing within or outside India may enrol in any programme by an Institution offering programme under Online mode.

5.3.3. Academic and Administrative Requirements

A Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University/University (Central, State Public or State private) shall have a designated Centre of Distance Education at Headquarters for operationalising the Programmes/ Courses in Open and Distance Learning mode / online mode, shall be headed by a regular functionary not below the rank of a Professor and shall have the following positions on Full Time and dedicated basis, excluding the designated positions in the Open Universities as per their respective Act(s), along with infrastructural facilities. In addition to the Headquarters, an Institution may have a Learner Support Centre(s).

Table 5.1 Academic and Administrative Requirements at Headquarters

Academic and Administrative Requirements at Headquarters (upto 5000 students)		
S. No	Staff Requirements	Number
1	Head for each discipline at Professor Level	1
2	Minimum Academic staff strength per discipline or specialization or Course	
	Associate Professor	1
	Assistant Professor	2
3	Administrative staff strength at the Institution	
	Deputy Registrar	1
	Assistant Registrar	1
	Section Officer	1
	Assistants	3
	Computer Operator	2
	Multi-Tasking Staff	2

If the Institution is intending to operate the Headquarters as Learner Support Centre, an intake up to 5000 Learners shall be permitted. In case, the enrolment is higher than 5000 at Headquarters, the number of positions and Infrastructure shall be increased on a pro-rata basis. In case the enrolment is higher than 1000 at a Learner Support Centre, the number of positions and Infrastructure shall be increased on prorata basis.

Table 5.2 Academic and Administrative Requirements at Headquarters Learning Supporting Centre

Academic and Administrative Requirements of each Learning Supporting Centre (upto 1000 students)		
S.No.	Staff Requirements	Number
1	Assistant Professor (Coordinator)	1
2	Counsellor per Theory Course of 4 Credits	2
3	Supervisor per Practical Course of 2 Credits	1
4	Computer Operator	1

5.3.4. Infrastructure Requirements

1. The Institution shall have necessary infrastructure and support system for offering the Courses in Open and Distance Learning Mode and / or Online Mode.
2. The Institution shall be permitted to use additional Laboratory facilities of the parent Institution or any another AICTE approved Institution offering similar Course/ Programme.
3. Each Learner Support Centre shall have a minimum Built-up area of 150 Sq m on the as is that it shall have at least one Class room for the interaction with the Learners.

Table 5.3 Minimum Infrastructure Requirements for ODL/Online

Minimum Infrastructure Requirements for ODL/Online (For both Institution Headquarters and Learner Support Centre)				
S. No.	Type of Built-up Area	Percentage (%)	Headquarters in Sq m	Learner Support Centre in Sq m
1	Academic Area	50	750	66
2	Administrative Area	10	150	33
3	Academic support such as Library, Reading Room, Computer Centre, Informational and Communication Technology Laboratories, Video and Audio Laboratories, etc.	30	450	150
4	Amenities or other support facilities Area	10	150	66
5	Minimum Built-up area for Open and Distance Learning activity	1500	150	150

NOTE: Minimum Internet Speed required at Headquarters/ Learner Support Centre is 300 Mbps.

- i. The Institution should provide appropriate facilities to take care of the differently abled students and elderly persons comprising Teaching/ Non-Teaching/ Others including parents of the students visiting the Institution. Barrier Free Built Environment for differently abled / elderly persons shall be available in the Buildings including hygienic toilets for ladies and gents.
- ii. All teaching-learning facilities for differently abled learners shall be provided in the Ground Floor itself. Toilets with all facilities shall be provided in each floor or at least in the Ground Floor at Headquarters as well as Learner Support Centers as specified by the National Building Code.
- iii. Safety and security measures at all the Learner Support Centres and Headquarters to safeguard Students, Staff and other stakeholders from the threat of violence, and to provide appropriate interventions to support individuals in crisis shall be ensured.

5.3.5 Academic Requirements

- i. One faculty member in the respective course domain shall be deployed as Program Coordinator. One Academic support and one administrative support personnel for every program/course shall be provided to the students.
- ii. Learning support material shall be provided to all students and there shall be a provision for live lecture class facility for students for a batch size upto 60.
- iii. Dedicated faculty members shall be assigned to address student academics queries in the form of live chat during official hours.
- iv. The institute needs to ensure a Faculty student ratio of 1:30 for evaluation of project assessment & assignments submitted by students. Also, there shall be a provision for online evaluation of assignments / conduct of weekly tests using online software tools. Faculty members from the institution under the same Management deployed for teaching courses in regular mode can also be deployed for this purpose.
- v. The design of programme shall be on outcome based education. Faculty for Content creators, live sessions, delivery of content shall be put in place.
- vi. A Standard Learning Management System shall be in place for Online as well as for ODL Programs/ Courses.

5.3.6. Duration and Entry Level Qualifications

The duration and entry level qualifications for the Programmes/ Courses offered under ODL/OL is given in **Annexure-8**.

- i. A candidate shall register for only ONE Course in Open and Distance Learning mode in any Learner Support Centre at a time and shall not be permitted to register for another Course until he/ she successfully completes the Course requirement/ discontinue the Course officially.
- ii. A student who is pursuing any Course in the Conventional mode shall be permitted to register for ONE Course at the Lower Level in Open and Distance Learning mode in any Learner Support Centre at a time and shall not be permitted to register for another Course until he/ she successfully completes the Open and Distance Learning Course requirement/ discontinue the Course officially.
- iii. The students shall be admitted twice (July and January) in an Academic Year within the Approved Intake for each Course.
- iv. Students' enrolment data in all the Learner Support Centres shall be uploaded to AICTE Web- Portal within one month from the last date for admission every year failing which the Council shall not grant approval in the next Academic Year.

5.3.7. Admissions and Examinations Admission, Examinations and Learner Support shall be as per the respective Part IV of AICTE (Open and Distance Learning Education and Online Education) Guidelines, 2021 (As amended from time to time).

Assessment, Accreditation, Audit, Inspection and Monitoring shall be as per the respective Part V of AICTE (Open and Distance Learning and Online Education) Guidelines, 2021 (As amended from time to time).

The Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University/State /Central/State Private University shall apply for the Courses as mentioned in the table below at Diploma/ Post Diploma Certificate/ Post Graduate Certificate/ Post Graduate Diploma/ Post Graduate Degree levels with the proposed Intake in Headquarters and/ or each Learner Support Centre. The Council shall grant approval for the Courses along with their Approved Intake in each Learner Support Centre, subject to the fulfilment of AICTE (ODL/Online) Guidelines by the Headquarters and the number of Learner Support Centres.

Table 5.4 Nomenclature of Degree / Diploma / Certificate

S. No.	Programme	Course	Nomenclature of Degree / Diploma / Certificate
1.	Management	1) Business Administration	Under Graduate Course in Business Administration (BBA/ BMS, etc.)/ Master of Business Administration (MBA) / Post Graduate Diploma in Management (PGDM) / Post Graduate Certificate (PGCM)
		2) Logistics	Post Graduate Diploma (PGD)/ Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)
		3) Travel and Tourism	Post Graduate Diploma (PGD)/ Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)
2.	Computer Applications	1) Computer Applications	Under Graduate Course in Computer Applications (BCA) / Master of Computer Application (MCA) / Post Graduate Diploma in Computer Application (PGDCA) / Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)
		2) Artificial Intelligence and Data Science	Post Graduate Diploma (PGD)/ Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)
		3) Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning	Post Graduate Diploma (PGD)/ Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)
		4) Cyber Security	Post Graduate Diploma (PGD)/ Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)
		5) Block Chain	Post Graduate Diploma (PGD)/ Post Graduate Certificate (PGC)

- i. The Headquarters and each Learner Support Centre of Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University shall establish Online Grievance Redressal Mechanism, Anti Ragging Committee, Grievance Redressal Committee and Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) as specified in the Approval Process Handbook.
- ii. All Standalone Institutions/ Institutions Deemed to be Universities/ Universities (Central, State Public or State Private) shall upload the Transcripts and Certificates of all students enrolled, Year wise and Course wise for all Learner Support Centres (if applicable) including Headquarters on Academic Bank of Credit (ABC).
- iii. In the event of a student withdrawing before the start of the Course, the entire Fee collected from the student, after a deduction of the processing Fee of not more than Rs.1000/- (Rupees One Thousand only) shall be refunded by the Institution. It would not be permissible for Institutions to retain the School/ Institution Leaving Certificates in original. In case, if a student leaves after joining the Course and if the vacated seat is consequently filled by another student by the last date of admission, the Institution must refund the Fee collected after a deduction of the processing Fee of not more than Rs.1000/- (Rupees One Thousand only) and proportionate deductions of Fee.
- iv. The Standalone Institutions/ Institutions Deemed to be Universities/ Universities (Central, State Public or State Private) shall display in their Website as well as upload on AICTE portal the mandatory disclosure as specified in the Guidelines including the nomenclature of the Courses and Approved Intake, students admitted, their Fee structure, Time schedule for payment of Fee for the entire Course, Refund Policy, etc. in each Learner Support Centre including headquarter.

5.3.8. Grant of Approval

The Universities (Central, State Public or Private, Institutions Deemed to be Universities) or Standalone Institutions, may apply for offering programmes through the Open and Distance Learning mode and/ or Online mode, courses in the field of Management and allied areas, Computer Applications, Artificial Intelligence and Data Science, Logistics and Travel & Tourism who fulfil the following conditions, namely:

Universities (Central, State Public or Private)/ Institutions Deemed to be University having a rank in Top-200 in the University category of National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), at least twice in three preceding cycles (at the time of application).

OR

The Universities (Central, State Public or Private, Institutions Deemed to be Universities), which are in existence for minimum five years with at least two batches passed out and having NAAC score of 3.01 on a scale of 4.0; subject to the condition that they shall achieve a NAAC score of 3.26 or above in the forthcoming applicable cycle.

Standalone Institutions having a NBA Score of 700 on a scale of 1000;

OR

Shall be in the top-200 in the institution category in the National Institutional Ranking Framework at least once in last 2 preceding cycles as per UGC/AICTE Gazette notification (at the time of application)

5.3.9. TER Charges

Technical Education Regulatory (TER) Charges Rs. in Lakh for Standalone Institutions/ institutions Deemed to be Universities offering a Courses at Diploma/ Post Diploma Certificate/ Post Graduate Diploma/ Post Graduate Degree Level in Open and Distance Education Learning are given below:

Table 5.5 TER Charges for ODL/OL Courses

Sl.No.	Standalone Institutions/ Institution Deemed to be University/University	TER Charges for ODL Rs. in Lakh	TER Charges for OL Rs. in Lakh
i	New application for the conduct of Open and Distance Learning Courses from Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University (Headquarters and upto 2 Learner Support Centres for the total Intake upto 5000)	10.00	10.00
ii	New application by the existing AICTE approved Institution running either ODL or OL Courses	1.25	1.25
iii	Each additional Learner Support Centre (Intake upto 1000)	3.50	Not Applicable
iv	Extension of Approval (Intake upto 1000)	2.00	2.00
v	Introduction of New Course /Increase in approve Intake in the courses (for every 1000 Seats in learner support centre) or headquarters.	2.50	2.50
	All Applications under (i) whose applications for Rejected unissued final LoR in the preceding Year	2.50	2.50
v	Closure of Course(s)/ Reduction in Intake/ Change in the Name of the Course(s)	0.25 for each Learner Support Centre/Headquarters	0.25

NOTE: 10% increase in TER Charges annually. TER Charges mentioned in above table or applicable for all Universities (including State/UT Public Universities)

- In an extraordinary circumstance, if an additional Scrutiny Committee has to be conducted (inclusive of the Court directions to any type of Institutions), then the Applicant has to remit Rs. 1.0 Lakh through online as an additional TER Charges. In similar cases for the conduct of additional Expert Visit Committee), the Applicant has to remit Rs. 2.0 Lakh and for Standing Hearing/ Appellate committee the applicant has to remit Rs 1.0 Lakh

- ii. The TER Charges shall be paid through AICTE payment gateway on AICTE Web-Portal within the deadline failing which, the application shall not be considered. Only those applications submitted within the cut-off date, including payment shall be considered for processing.
- iii. In case of eligible refund/ excess payment, if any, after processing, the amount shall be refunded to the Applicant.
- iv. Applications rejected at the Level of Scrutiny/ Re-Scrutiny without availing the appeal provision, the TER Charges after a deduction of Rs. 60000/- (Rupees Sixty Thousand only) shall be refunded to the Applicant/ Institution.

5.3.10. Approval Procedure

- i. For the detailed procedure with respect to the Scrutiny/Expert Visit Committee and Standing Hearing/appellate Committee, the applicant shall refer to **Clause 1.8 & 1.9** of this Approval Process Handbook.
- ii. The Standalone Institution/ Institution Deemed to be University/State /Central/State Private University shall submit an application to the Council every year for the Extension of Approval of the Courses.
- iii. The Institutions may apply for non-zero reduction in Intake by themselves in AICTE Web- Portal and maintain the norms accordingly (No TER Charges shall be levied).
- iv. The Institutions shall apply for increase in Approved Intake in the Courses Introduction of new Course(s) upto the maximum number of Learners permitted at any Learner Support Centre by themselves in AICTE Web-Portal and maintain the norms accordingly (No TER Charges shall be levied).
- v. The application for establishment of Headquarters/ Learner Support Centres shall be processed as per **Clause 1.8** (Scrutiny/ Re-Scrutiny Committee) followed by an Expert Visit Committee as per **Clause 1.9** of the Approval Process Handbook. The date of visit shall be communicated through e-mail. The Council shall not grant approval to Learner Support Centre(s) without the approval for Headquarters. The Institutions already approved by Distance Education Council (DEC) and UGC till 2023-24 shall have to comply AICTE requirements and an Affidavit for the same shall have to be submitted to AICTE.

5.3.11. Others

- i. Any Institution/University propose to start a new Course whose nomenclature is not available as mentioned in **Annexure-11** of this Approval Process Handbook, prior concurrence, as the case may be, by the Council for the same shall be necessary. For such concurrence, the Institution with due endorsement by the Registrar/ Director of affiliating University/ Technical Institution shall submit detailed Syllabus and Curriculum and its nomenclature to the Policy and Academic Planning Bureau, AICTE before 30th November of the Calendar Year, to process the same in the respective Board.
- ii. All the Institutions/Universities shall strictly adhere to the Norms and Requirement mentioned in **Chapter-VI**.
- iii. All the Institutions/Universities shall strictly adhere to the Norms for duration, entry level qualifications and statutory reservations of Technical Programmes/Courses as applicable for admission and other Academic purpose.
- iv. Penal action against violation/ non-adherence of norms /standards as specified by the council shall be referred vide **Clause 8.3** of this Approval Process Handbook.

कारणाभावात् कार्याभावः ।

न तु कार्याभावात् कारणाभावः ।

There is no effect possible without a cause. But the absence of effect does not mean the absence of cause.