

AICTE (Open and Distance Learning Education) Guidelines for Institutions - Deemed to be Universities, 2019

UNION OF INDIA
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AICTE (Open and Distance Learning Education) Guidelines for Institutions - Deemed to be Universities, 2019

Rule AICTE-OPEN-AND-DISTANCE-LEARNING-EDUCATION-GUIDELINES-FOR-INSTITUTIONS-DEEMED-TO-BE-UNIVERSITIES-2019 of 2019

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Preamble. - Whereas Hon'ble Supreme Court through its judgment dated 03.11.2017 in C.A. No. 17869-70/2017 titled as Orissa Lift Irrigation Corporation Ltd. Vs. Ravi Sankar Patro restrained all institutions-deemed to be universities to carry any courses in distance education mode from the academic session 2018-19 onwards unless and until it is permissible to conduct such courses in distance education mode and specific permissions are granted by the statutory/ regulatory authorities concerned in respect of each of these courses and also reiterated that 1994 AICTE Regulations, do apply to deemed to be universities.

Subsequently, Hon'ble Hon'ble High Court of Delhi on 13th August, 2019 while disposing off the writ petition(C) 261/2019 titled as Dayalbagh Educational Institute V/s UGC and others directed the AICTE to frame requisite regulations for Deemed to be Universities wanting to offer courses through Open and Distance Learning mode as expeditiously as possible and latest by 30.09.2019.

In pursuance to the decision of Hon'ble Supreme Court & compliance of the directions of the Hon'ble Delhi High Court and in discharge of its functions and duties under sub-section (1) of section 23 read with section 10(b) (g)(i)(j) (m)(n)and(o) of AICTE Act, 1987, the AICTE notifies the following Guidelines for Institutions- Deemed to be Universities for conducting courses in the field of Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism through Open and Distance Learning (ODL) education, by laying down norms and standards for courses, curricula, physical and instructional facilities, faculty and staff pattern, their qualifications, quality instructions, assessment and examinations namely:-

PART - I Preliminary

1. Short title, application and commencement.

- These Guidelines are meant for Open and Distance Learning Education for Institutions for offering courses in Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism titled as "AICTE (Open and Distance Learning Education) Guidelines for Institutions - Deemed to be Universities, 2019".

1.1 These Guidelines lay down the minimum standards of instructions for grant of Diploma, Post Diploma Certificate, Post Graduate Certificate, Post Graduate Diploma and Post Graduate Degree Level Programmes (as defined in Approval Process Handbook) through Open and Distance Learning mode, and shall be in addition to and not in derogation of any other Guidelines, Notifications or Instructions issued by the AICTE from time to time.

1.2 These Guidelines shall apply to Institutions referred to under clause 10(i) of AICTE Act, 1987, for all programmes of learning at the Diploma, Post Diploma Certificate, Post Graduate Certificate, Post Graduate Diploma and Post Graduate Degree levels in Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism, but not for programmes in Engineering, Pharmacy, Architecture, Hotel Management, Applied Arts, Crafts and Design as the AICTE does not allow Open and Distance learning in Engineering, Pharmacy, Architecture, Hotel Management, Applied Arts, Crafts and Design;

1.3 These Guidelines shall come into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions.

- In these Guidelines, unless the context otherwise requires:

- 2.1 "Academic Session" means duration of twelve months beginning either in January or in the month of July of every year;
- 2.2 "Act", means the AICTE Act, 1987;
- 2.3 "Institutions" mean Higher Educational Institutions declared to be Institutions-Deemed to be University under UGC Act 1956.
- 2.4 "Centre for Internal Quality Assurance" (CIQA) means a Centre as specified in Annexure I established by an Institution offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning mode for ensuring the quality of programmes offered by it through internal quality monitoring mechanism in accordance with the Guidelines as specified in Annexure II;
- 2.5 "Credit" means the Unit award gained by a learner by study efforts of a minimum of thirty hours required to acquire the prescribed level of learning in respect of that Unit;
- 2.6 "Diploma/Post Diploma Certificate/Post Graduate Certificate/Post Graduate Diploma/Post Graduate Degree" means an award of a Certificate/Diploma/Degree specified under sub-section 10(i) of the AICTE Act (as defined in the Approval Process Handbook).
- 2.7 "Examination Centre" means a place where examinations are conducted for the Open and Distance Learning mode learners and is having the requisite infrastructure and adequate manpower for smooth conduct of examinations, and adhering to such minimum standards as specified in Annexure III.
- 2.8 "Franchising" for the purpose of these guidelines, means and includes the practice of allowing, formally or informally, any person or institution or organisation, other than the Institutions recognised under these guidelines for offering Open and Distance Learning programmes, to offer such programmes of study on behalf of or in the name of the recognised Institutions, and the terms 'franchise' and 'franchisee' shall be construed accordingly.
- 2.9 "Technical Education" means such education defined as per the AICTE Act, imparted by means of conducting regular classes or through Open and Distance Learning education systems (only wherever permitted by the AICTE), beyond ten years of schooling leading to a three year Diploma; or beyond twelve years of schooling leading to the award of a Diploma; or beyond Diploma leading to a Post Diploma Certificate; or beyond Graduation leading to a Post Graduate Certificate; or Post Graduate Diploma (as defined in the Approval Process Handbook).
- 2.10 "Learner Support Centre" means a centre established, maintained or recognised by the Institution for advising, counselling, providing interface between the teachers and the learners, and rendering any academic and any other related service and assistance required by the learners;
- 2.11 "Learner Support Services" mean and include such services as are provided by an Institution in order to facilitate the teaching-learning experience by the learner to the level prescribed by the AICTE in respect of a programme of study;
- 2.12 "Open and Distance Learning (ODL)" mode means a mode of providing flexible learning opportunities by overcoming separation of teacher and learner using a variety of media, including print, electronic, MOOCs, online and occasional interactive face-to-face meetings arranged by Institution through Learner Support Services to deliver teaching-learning experience, including practical or work experience.
- 2.13 "Programme" means a course or a programme of study leading to the award of a Diploma, Post Diploma Certificate, Post Graduate Certificate, Post-Graduate Diploma in an Institution;
- 2.14 "Prospectus" includes any publication, whether in print or electronic form, issued for providing fair and transparent information, relating to an Institution and Programmes, to the general public (including to those seeking admission in such Institutions) by the management of such Institutions or any authority or person authorized by such Institutions to do so;
- 2.15 "Self Learning Material" means and includes contents in the form of course material, whether print or electronic, which is inter-alia self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed at the learner, amenable to selfevaluation, and enables the learner to acquire the prescribed level of learning in a course of study, but does not include text-books or guide-books;
- 2.16 "UGC" means University Grants Commission;

2.17 "Universities/Deemed to be Universities" mean Higher Educational Institutions declared to be University under UGC Act 1956.

2.18 "PPR" means Programme Project Report.

PART - II Recognition of Institutions For Open and Distance Learning (Odl) Programmes

3. Recognition of Institutions offering programmes in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode in Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism.

- 3.1. Every Institution offering a programme in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode in Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism in pursuance of an approval granted to it till the year 2017-18 for the purpose by the University Grants Commission (UGC) or having NBA accreditation with at least 700 points on a scale of 1,000 or equivalent and intending to offer a programme in ODL mode from the academic session immediately after the notification of these Guidelines shall, for grant of recognition, make an application to the AICTE in such form and manner as notified by the AICTE on fulfilment of the following conditions, namely:-

- 3.1.1 . The Institution has necessary infrastructure, faculty and support system for offering the programme in ODL mode in Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism;
- 3.1.2 . The Institution is already offering similar programme with the approval of the AICTE in the conventional mode of classroom teaching and has completed five years of existence or from where at least two batches have passed out. However, NBA accreditation for the regular programmes in which programmes through ODL mode are to be offered is necessary;
- 3.1.3 . A copy of such application is displayed on the website of the Institutions by way of self-disclosure;
- 3.1.4 . The application is accompanied by evidence of having prepared the self learning materials required for the programmes of study, duly approved by the statutory bodies of the Institutions empowered to decide on academic matters;
- 3.1.5 . The application is accompanied by evidence of availability of ODL resources adequate for effective delivery of all the proposed programme(s) of study and the expected enrolment of students;
- 3.1.6 . The application is accompanied by evidence of the preparedness for establishing Learner Support Centres, providing Learning Support Services, establishing Centre for Internal Quality Assurance, availability of the academic and other staff in the Unit and Learner Support Centres of the Institution, availability of qualified Counsellors in the Learner Support Centres meeting such standards of competence as specified in Annexure IV, Examination Centres and the administrative arrangements for supportive services for effective delivery of Open and Distance Learning;
- 3.1.7 . As and when accreditation for Open and Distance Education is started by the NBA, such Institutions who have been approved by the AICTE to run ODL programme shall obtain within two years, accreditation (with a score of more than 700 on a scale of 1000 or equivalent) from such accrediting agency as mandated by the AICTE.

3.2 An Institution intending to offer a programme in ODL mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these Guidelines and for subsequent years shall, make an on-line application in the format specified by the AICTE, and upload the same on the specified portal along with scanned copy of the documents specified therein, as per Approval Process Handbook and application processing schedule notified by the AICTE for the programmes intended to be offered by such Institutions.

3.3 The AICTE shall process the application received under these guidelines 3.3.2 in the following manner, namely: -

- 3.3.1 . Any deficiency or defect in the application shall be communicated by the AICTE to the Institution as per application processing schedule notified by the AICTE and the Institution shall be required to remove or rectify such deficiencies or defects with the necessary documents or information, if any, within the time period specified by the AICTE;
- 3.3.2 . Where the Institution has made an application for offering programme(s) in ODL mode, notwithstanding that in respect of such programme(s) the Distance Education Council (DEC) or University Grants Commission had caused the inspection of the Institute in the past or prior to coming into force of these guidelines, the AICTE may cause an inspection, in respect of such programme(s), of the Institutions at its discretion through an Expert Committee; and

- 3.3.3 . The AICTE shall examine the application with the help of a duly constituted Expert Committee and the recommendations of the Committee shall be placed before the Executive Committee/ Council for its consideration.
- 3.4 After processing the application in the manner laid down under Guideline 3.3, the AICTE shall-
- 3.4.1 . If it is satisfied that such Institution fulfils the conditions laid down and the quality parameters specified under these Guidelines, pass an order granting recognition to such Institutions in respect of such programmes as it may specify in the order and subject to such conditions as it may specify:
- 3.4.2 . Provided that while passing an order, where the AICTE does not grant recognition in respect of one or more programmes, the AICTE shall specify the grounds of such refusal in the order:
- 3.4.3 . Provided further that before passing an order, the AICTE shall provide a reasonable opportunity to the concerned Institution of being heard including an appeal as specified in the Approval Process Handbook.
- 3.4.4 . If it is of the opinion that such Institution does not fulfil the requirements in respect of any of the programme intended to be offered by the Institution, pass an order refusing recognition to such Institution for reasons to be recorded in writing.
- 3.5 Every order granting or refusing recognition to the Institution for programme(s) in ODL mode shall be communicated in writing for appropriate action to such Institution.
- 3.6 Every Institution, in respect of which recognition for programme(s) has not been granted by the AICTE, shall discontinue the programme(s) in ODL mode with immediate effect provided that such ODL programmes of an Institution which were approved by the UGC till 2017-18 will be considered to be a valid ODL programme for the academic session 2018-19 and 2019-20 as well. Accordingly, institutions who were earlier allowed by UGC till 2017-18 to offer programmes through ODL will be allowed to complete their such UGC approved and currently running ODL programmes so that students admitted in such UGC approved (during 2017-18) ODL programme and also students admitted to such programmes during the session 2018-19 and 2019-20 are able to complete their academic studies.
- 3.7 No Institution shall offer a new programme in ODL mode for academic session immediately after the notification of these Regulations and for subsequent academic sessions and admit students thereto unless it has been granted recognition for the same.

4. Withdrawal of recognition.

- 4.1. Where the AICTE, on its own motion or on any representation received from any person, or any information received from any authority or a statutory body, or on the basis of any enquiry or inspection conducted by it, is satisfied that a Institution has contravened any of the provisions of these Guidelines and orders made or issued there under, or has submitted or produced any information and documentary evidence which is found to be false at any stage or any condition subject to which recognition has been granted, it may withdraw recognition of such Institution in respect of such programme(s) as it may specify, for reasons to be recorded in writing:

- 4.1.1 . Provided that no such order against the Institution shall be passed unless a reasonable opportunity of making a representation against the proposed order has been given to such Institution as per the Approval Process Handbook:
- 4.1.2 . Provided further that the order, of withdrawing or refusing recognition passed by the AICTE, shall come into force with immediate effect.

4.2 If an Institution offers any programme in ODL mode after the coming into force of the order withdrawing recognition under guideline 4.1 or where an Institution offering a programme in ODL mode before the commencement of these guidelines, fails to obtain recognition under these guidelines for offering programmes in ODL mode for academic session immediately after the notification of Guidelines and subsequent academic sessions, the Diploma/ Post Diploma Certificate/ Post Graduate Certificate/ Post Graduate Diploma and Post Graduate Degree obtained pursuant to such program shall not be treated as a valid qualification.

4.3 In the event of any Institution found offering programmes or courses in Open and Distance Learning mode without the approval of the AICTE or in violation of any of the provisions of these Guidelines or orders made there under, the AICTE may-

- 4.3.1 . Issue Show Cause Notice or withdraw the recognition for an academic session or withdraw the recognition, maximum up to next five academic sessions or withdraw the recognition permanently;



- 4.3.2 . Lodge a First Information Report (FIR) against the officials or management of the errant Institution to take action as per law, if in spite of the above, the Institution is found continuing the violations;
- 4.3.3 . Withhold or debar from receiving funding from the AICTE;
- 4.3.4 . Refer the matter to the UGC, State Government concerned or Central Government as the case may be, in case of Universities and Deemed to be Universities; and
- 4.3.5 . Take action as per the provisions of the Act or Guidelines/Instructions/Regulations as applicable for the Institutions.

5. Appeals.

- 5.1. Any Institution aggrieved by an order of withdrawal of recognition under Guideline 4.1 may prefer an appeal to the AICTE within a period of fifteen days.

5.2 No appeal after the expiry of the period prescribed, shall be accepted.

- 5.3 Every appeal made under these Guidelines shall be accompanied by a copy of the order appealed against and payment of such fees as may be prescribed by the AICTE from time to time.
- 5.4 The procedure for disposing of an appeal shall be as laid down by the AICTE from time to time in the Approval Process Handbook.
- 5.5 The AICTE may confirm or reverse the order appealed against.

PART-III Maintenance of Infrastructural, Academic and Other Quality Standards by Institutions

6. Systems Management.

- Structure and Processes: -

- 6.1 The Institution shall have a designated Centre of Distance Education for operationalising the programmes in ODL mode, which shall be headed by a regular functionary, not below the rank of a Professor and shall have appropriate and adequate academic, technical, administrative staff and infrastructural resources as specified in Annexure V.
- 6.2 The Institution shall plan, implement, coordinate and monitor operationalisation and ensure quality assurance of the programmes in ODL mode, including monitoring the conduct and programme delivery by the Learner Support Centres and shall ensure adherence to the Regulations.

7. Self-regulation through disclosures, declarations and reports.

- 7.1. An Institution offering programmes in ODL mode shall display on its website, a declaration by an authorised personnel authenticating that the following documents have been uploaded on the Institute website, namely:-

- 7.1.1 . The Statutes of the Institution or the Memorandum of Association, as the case may be empowering it to offer programmes in ODL mode;
- 7.1.2 . Copies of the letters of approval for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) programmes from the AICTE;
- 7.1.3 . Programme details, including brochures or programme guides inter alia information such as name of the programme, duration, eligibility for enrolment, programme fee, programme structure etc.;
- 7.1.4 . Programme-wise information about the syllabus, suggested readings, contact points for counselling, programme structure with credit points, programme-wise faculty details, list of supporting staff, list of Learner Support Centres with addresses and contact details, their working hours and counselling schedule and examination centres with their addresses etc.;
- 7.1.5 . Important schedules or date-sheets for admissions, registration, re-registration, counselling, assignments and feedback thereon, examinations, result declarations etc.;
- 7.1.6 . Detailed strategy plan related to online course delivery, if any, including learning materials offered through contact centres or online and learner assessment system and quality assurance practices of elearning programmes;
- 7.1.7 . The feedback mechanism of design, development, delivery and continuous evaluation of learner performance, which shall form an integral part of the transactional design of the ODL mode

programmes and shall be an input for maintaining the quality of the programmes and bridging the gaps, if any;

- 7.1.8 . Information regarding any new programmes launched and those proposed for the next two years;
- 7.1.9 . Data of year-wise or programme-wise student enrolment and diplomas or post diploma certificates or post graduate certificates or post graduate diplomas awarded; the same shall also be uploaded on the National Academic Depository;
- 7.1.10 . Complete information about Self Learning Material including the name of the faculty who prepared it, when was it prepared and last updated, source of the Self Learning Material, references of Self Learning Material, etc.;
- 7.1.11 . A compilation of questions and answers under the head Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) with the facility of online interaction with learners providing hyperlink support;
- 7.1.12 . List of Learner Support Centres along with the number of students who will use these facilities;
- 7.1.13 . A list of Examination Centres along with the number of students who shall appear for examination in each centre and details of the Information and Communication Technology facilities available for the conduct of examination in a fair and transparent manner; and
- 7.1.14 . Period of the admission process along with the academic session and dates of the term end examinations.

8. Quality Assurance.

- 8.1. An Institution offering programme(s) in ODL mode shall, take the following steps, namely: -

- 8.1.1 . Establish a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance exclusively for programmes in the ODL mode within one year from the coming into force of these Regulations;
- 8.1.2 . Follow the Quality Assurance Guidelines on learning materials in multiple media, human resources, curriculum and pedagogy, as specified by the AICTE in Annexure VI, and shall post its quality assurance mechanism on the website;
- 8.1.3 . Take adequate measures for training and capacity building of its teaching and administrative staff and counsellors at regular intervals;
- 8.1.4 . Shall ensure that the quality of programmes of study offered through ODL mode are maintained at par with standards in the conventional mode of class-room teaching as prescribed by the AICTE;
- 8.1.5 . Shall ensure that the academic and instructional facilities at its Learner Support Centres, and information resources for online delivery of programmes meet the Guidelines laid down by the AICTE from time to time, and are commensurate with the number of programmes and enrolments thereto.

Provided that in case of violation of these Guidelines, the provisions specified under Guideline 4.3 shall apply;

8.2 The Institution offering programme in Open and Distance Learning mode shall, in order to facilitate the pace of learning and multiple choice for learners, prepare a Self Learning Material taking into consideration the following, namely: -

- 8.2.1** . Self Learning Material has clearly stated objectives, intended learning outcomes, study guidance and advice for the learners to optimally use the material and suggestive related reference material to enhance the learning experience. In case of digital Self Learning Material linkage within the text with other media is maintained for easy referencing and progress;
- 8.2.2 . Self Learning Material developed and offered by it, is self-explanatory, self-contained, illustrative, easily comprehensible, and in manageable modules such as units and blocks;
- 8.2.3 . Self Learning Material provides adequate mechanism for the learners to provide feedback on their understanding of the subject;
- 8.2.4 . Self Learning Material is revised periodically from the perspective of improving quality and learner support; and
- 8.2.5 . Guidelines on preparation of Self Learning Material as given in Annexure VII.

Provided that the Institution shall prepare the Self Learning Material only after approval of the Programme Project Report (as mentioned in Guideline 11.2.9 and explained in Annexure VIII):

Provided further that no programme in ODL mode shall be launched by the Institution unless it has prepared the Self Learning Material taking into consideration the above factors.

9. Teachers and Academic staff working in Institutions.

- 9.1. Teachers (and equivalent academic positions) in the Learner Support Centres shall be appointed as per the minimum qualifications laid down by the AICTE and as modified from time to time; and there shall be positions of Assistant Professor, Associate Professor and Professor in the Institution as well as Learner Support Centres for performing academic functions.

9.2 Every teacher, besides his or her academic responsibilities, shall participate in teaching, curriculum and course material development, undertake examination/test evaluation, invigilation work, general assistance to learners in removing their academic difficulties, and participate in extracurricular and institutional support activities as required.

9.3 The workload of a teacher shall take into account teaching, research and extension activities, preparation of lessons, evaluation of assignments, term papers etc. and shall be in accordance with the Guidelines issued by the AICTE from time to time:

Provided that the time spent on extension work where it forms an integral part of the course specified shall count towards the teaching load.

9.4 The number of full time teachers, academics and other administrative and technical staff shall be provided, keeping in view the type of programme offered as per Guidelines/Regulations issued by AICTE from time to time.

9.5 The details of the faculty in the Institution and in the Learner Support Centres shall be declared on the website of the institution and linked to Aadhar details or other Government identifiers.

10. Use of technology.

- 10.1. The Institution offering programme(s) in ODL mode shall take such measures as are necessary to blend Information Communication Technologies (ICT) including those developed by National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology for enhancing effectiveness of teaching - learning process, and administrative functioning and for maintenance of updated information at all times in respect of status of admissions, registration, for managing teaching-learning activities through online support for interactive learning with learner feedback, to facilitate the use of Open Educational Resources (OER), Learning Management System (LMS), Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs/ SWAYAM) and for continuous as well as comprehensive evaluation, certification, and other aspects of student support.

10.2 The Institution may deliver courses using the online mode as per the UGC Online Regulations 2018 or amendments thereof.

11. Programme Launching Process and Approval.

- 11.1. Every Institution offering programme in ODL mode shall publish on its website complete details of each programme on offer, including fee structure, minimum eligibility condition for admission as prescribed by AICTE from time to time, schedules of activities and academic calendar viz. dates for registration, reregistration, counselling sessions, assignment submissions, receipt of feedback on assignments, examination, list of Learner Support Centres for different programmes.

11.2 Before offering any programme, the Institution shall prepare a Programme Project Report (PPR) for each programme which shall include the following, namely:

11.2.1 . Information on relevance of the programme to the Institution's mission and goals, objectives of the programme, nature of a prospective target group of learners, and appropriateness of ODL mode for acquiring specific competencies or skills;

11.2.2 . Instructional design which shall include duration of programme(s), faculty and support staff requirements, instructional delivery mechanisms, identification of media- print, audio or video, online, computer aided, and student support service systems;

11.2.3 . Procedure for admissions, curriculum transaction and evaluation;

11.2.4 . Details of laboratory support required for the programme(s), if any;

11.2.5 . Library resources;



- 11.2.6 . A cost estimate of the programme and the provisions thereof, indicating the amount assigned to programme development, delivery and maintenance;
 - 11.2.7 . Quality assurance mechanism and expected programme outcomes;
 - 11.2.8 . Curriculum and detailed syllabi of the programme(s); and
 - 11.2.9 . Guidelines on launching programme(s) design, development and any such matters as specified by the AICTE in Annexure VIII and which shall be followed by the Institutions.
- 11.3 The Programme Project Report of the Institution shall be approved by the AICTE, which shall put in place a monitoring mechanism to ensure its proper implementation.

Part-IV Admissions, Examinations and Learner Support

12. Admission and fees.

- 12.1. In order to provide opportunities for Higher Education to a larger segment of the population and to promote the educational well-being of the community in general, the fee structure shall be devised by the Institutions in such a manner that it is affordable to all the stakeholders and the Institution shall comply with the following:

12.1.1 . The Institution shall, for admission in respect of any programme in ODL mode, accept payment towards admission fee and other fees and charges-

- 12.1.1.1 . as may be fixed by it and declared by it in the prospectus for admission, and on the website of the Institution;
- 12.1.1.2 . with a proper receipt in writing issued for such payment to the concerned student admitted in such Institutions;
- 12.1.1.3 . only by way of online transfer, bank draft or pay order directly in favour of the Institution and not in cash.

12.1.2 . It shall be mandatory for the Institutions to upload the details of all kinds of payment or fee paid by the students on the website of the institution.

12.1.3 . The fee waiver for Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Divyang category of students shall be in accordance with the instructions or orders issued by Central Government or State Government:

Provided that an Institution shall not engage in commercialisation of education in any manner whatsoever, and shall provide for equity and access to all deserving learners.

12.1.4 . Admission of learners to an Institution for a programme in ODL mode shall be offered in a transparent manner and made directly by the Institution without exceeding the approved intake for the academic session, and shall be solely responsible for final approval relating to admissions or registration of students:

Provided that a Learner Support Centre shall not admit a learner to any programme in ODL mode for or on behalf of the Institution.

12.1.5 . Every Institution shall: -

- 12.1.5.1 . record Aadhaar details or other Government identifiers of learner;
- 12.1.5.2 . maintain the records of the entire process of selection of candidates, and preserve such records for a minimum period of five years;
- 12.1.5.3 . exhibit such records on its website; and
- 12.1.5.4 . be liable to produce such record, whenever called upon to do so by the AICTE or the Government under any law for the time being in force.

12.1.6 . Every Institution shall publish full and complete information, prior to the date of the commencement of admission to any of its programme in ODL mode, a prospectus containing the following for the purposes of informing those persons intending to seek admission to such Institutions and the general public, namely: -

- 12.1.6.1 . each component of the fee, deposits and other charges payable by the learners admitted to such Institutions for pursuing a programme in ODL mode, and the other terms and conditions of such payment;



- 12.1.6.2 . the percentage of tuition fee and other charges refundable to a learner admitted in such Institutions in case such learner withdraws from such Institution before or after completion of a course or programme of study and the time within, and the manner in which such refund shall be made to the learner;
- 12.1.6.3 . the number of seats approved in respect of each course or programme of ODL mode, which shall be in consonance with the resources;
- 12.1.6.4 . the conditions of eligibility, including the minimum age of a learner in a particular course of programme of study, where so specified by the Institution;
- 12.1.6.5 . the minimum educational qualifications required for admission in programme(s) specified by the AICTE or by the Institution, where no such qualifying standards have been specified by the AICTE;
- 12.1.6.6 . the process of admission and selection of eligible candidates applying for such admission, including all relevant information in regard to the details of the test or examination for selecting such candidates for admission to each course or programme of study and the amount of fee to be paid for the admission test;
- 12.1.6.7 . details of the teaching faculty, including therein the educational qualifications and teaching experience of every member of its teaching faculty and also indicating therein, whether such member is employed on regular or part time or visiting or contractual basis;
- 12.1.6.8 . pay and other emoluments payable for each category of teachers and other employees;
- 12.1.6.9 . information in regard to physical and academic infrastructure and other facilities, including that of each of the Learner Support Centres and in particular the facilities accessible by learners on being admitted to the Institution;
- 12.1.6.10 . broad outline of the syllabus for every course or programme of study; and
- 12.1.6.11 . activity planner, including all the academic activities to be carried out by the Institution during the academic session and the details of the July cycle and the January cycle shall be notified separately:

Provided that the Institution shall publish information referred to Guideline 12.1.6.1 to 12.1.6.11 on its website, and the attention of the prospective learners and the general public shall be drawn to such publication on its website and Institution's admission prospectus and the admission process shall necessarily be completed prior to the beginning of the session:

Provided further that the Institution may publish a prospectus at any time before the expiry of sixty days.

- 12.1.7 . No Institution shall, directly or indirectly, demand or charge or accept, capitation fee or demand any donation, by way of consideration for admission to any seat or seats in a course or programme of study conducted by it.
- 12.1.8 . No person shall, directly or indirectly, offer or pay a capitation fee or give any donation, by way of consideration either in cash or kind or otherwise, for obtaining admission to any seat or seats in a programme in ODL mode offered by the Institution.
- 12.1.9 . No Institution, which has in its possession or custody, of any document in the form of certificates of degree, diploma or any other award or other document deposited with it by a person for the purpose of seeking admission in such Institution, shall refuse to return such degree, certificate award or other document with a view to induce or compel such person to pay any fee or fees in respect of any course or programme of study which such person does not intend to pursue or avail any facility in such Institution.
- 12.1.10 . In case a learner, after having admitted to an Institution, for pursuing any programme in ODL mode subsequently withdraws from such Institution, in that case, Institution shall not refuse to refund such percentage of fee deposited by such learner and within such time, as has been mentioned in the prospectus of the Institution.
- 12.1.11 . No Institution shall, issue or publish: -
 - 12.1.11.1 . any advertisement for inducing learners for taking admission in the Institution, claiming to be recognised by the AICTE where it is not so recognised; or
 - 12.1.11.2 . any information, through advertisement or otherwise in respect of its infrastructure or its academic facilities or of its faculty or standard of instruction or academic or research performance, which the Institution, or person authorized to issue such advertisement on behalf of the Institution knows to be false or not based on facts or to be misleading.

12.1.12 . On being granted approval under guideline 3.4.1, an Institution shall admit students to its approved programmes only from the academic session specified in the approval letter:

Provided that enrolment of learners to the Institution, for any reason whatsoever, in anticipation of grant of recognition for offering a programme in ODL mode, shall render the enrolment invalid and in addition, the Institution shall also be required to pay a penalty as per Approval Process Handbook.

13. Evaluation and Certification.

- 13.1. The Institution shall follow the Guidelines issued by the AICTE from time to time in regard to the conduct of examinations.

13.2 There shall be home assignments, students' response sheets, contact programmes and semester or year-end examination, and the marks or grades obtained in home assignment and response sheets shall be shown separately in the grade card.

13.3 The Institution offering ODL mode Programmes shall have a mechanism well in place for the evaluation of learners enrolled through ODL mode and their certification.

13.4 The Institution offering a Programme in ODL mode shall adopt a rigorous process in development of question papers, question banks, assignments and their moderation, conduct of examination, evaluation of answer scripts by qualified teachers, and result declaration, and shall so frame the question papers as to ensure that no part of the syllabus is left out of the study by a learner.

13.5 The examination of the programmes in ODL mode shall be managed by the Examination or Evaluation Unit of the Institution and shall be conducted in the examination centres approved by the Institution.

13.6 The evaluation shall include two types of assessments, continuous or formative assessment in the form of assignments, and summative assessment in the form of end semester examination or term end examination.

Provided that no semester or year-end examination shall be held in a subject unless the Institution is satisfied that at least 75% of the programme of study stipulated for the semester or year have been actually conducted:

13.7 The Examination Centre shall be established within the territorial jurisdiction of the Institutions, as per condition explained in Section 6 of Annexure IX. The Examination Centre shall be located in its own premises or Government schools such as Navodaya Vidyalaya, Kendriya Vidyalaya, Sainik School etc. including approved affiliated colleges under the University system in the country and no Examination Centre shall be allotted to any private organisations or unapproved institution.

13.8 The LSCs, within the territorial jurisdiction, may also be used as examination centres provided they fulfil the criteria of an examination centre and it shall be mandatory for the Institution to mention the name and place of LSC and of Examination Centre in all the certificates or mark sheets issued to the students.

13.9 The Institution shall make a mention in the mark-sheet and Certificate/ Diploma about the mode of delivery as Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and the photograph and the Unique Identification or Aadhaar number of the learner shall be mandatorily mentioned in all the documents issued by the Institution to the learner.

13.10 It shall be mandatory for the Institution to mention Date of Admission and Date of Completion on each of the certificates (in semester or the end of the semester or the end of the programme or course) issued by it.

13.11 All Certificates/ Diplomas awarded shall be uploaded on the AICTE portal and National Academic Depository (NAD).

14. Learner Support Centre (LSC).

- 14.1. An Institution offering programme in ODL mode shall, within one year from the date of commencement of these Regulations, ensure that a Learner Support Centre (LSC) is established only in a college or institution affiliated to a University or in an AICTE recognised Institution offering programmes in the same broad areas having the necessary infrastructure and human resources for offering the programme:

14.1.1 . Provided that an Institution may establish a special Learner Support Centre for imparting instructions to persons referred to in the Divyang (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 and other persons in difficult circumstances, including jail inmates:

14.1.2 . Provided further that an LSC shall not be set up under a franchisee agreement in any case.

14.2 The LSC shall be the contact point or centre managed by the Institution for providing academic as well as administrative support to its learners, and shall perform such other functions as specified in Annexure IX.

14.3 The Learner Support Centre shall be headed by a Coordinator who shall be a regular teacher not below the rank of a qualified Assistant Professor of the concerned Institution and assisted by the Counsellor as decided by the Institution.

14.4 The Institution shall have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the smooth functioning of the LSC, which shall include functions of the LSCs and its different functionaries, monitoring mechanism of different services provided by the Centre, and it shall be mandatory for the LSC to maintain the learner data related to conduct of counselling sessions, evaluation of assignments and redressal of grievances.

15. Learner Support Services.

- 15.1. The Institution offering programmes in ODL mode shall adhere to the Guidelines for Learner Support Services which are made available to all LSCs and accessible to the learners.

15.2 The learner support services to be provided by the Institution shall include the following, namely: -

15.2.1 . Pre-admission counselling for prospective learners to provide information to facilitate them in taking an informed decision on joining a specific programme;

15.2.2 . Support for admission related matters;

15.2.3 . Details of study material and information shall also be available on the website of the Institution;

15.2.4 . Arrangement to ensure the delivery of study material to learners within a fortnight from the date of admission.

15.2.5 . A full-time dedicated help-desk well versed with the learner information data base providing single window services for all learner related queries.

15.3 The AICTE (Grievance Redressal) Regulations, 2012 or later amendments and the related Regulations shall be adopted and operationalised by the Institution, and the Institution shall institute a system of Grievance Redressal, in accordance with the Guidelines specified in Annexure X.

15.4 The Institution shall provide facilities for online guidance and counselling facilities for the learners.

15.5 The Institution shall create online discussion forum for learners.

15.6 The Self Learning Material in printed form shall be provided compulsorily to the learners and in addition, the Institution may provide additional learning resources through online mode, Compact Disks etc.

PART-V Assessment, Accreditation, Audit, Inspection and Monitoring

16. Assessment, Accreditation, and Audit.

- 16.1. The Institution recognised under these Guidelines for imparting programmes in ODL mode shall get all its programmes assessed through the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance once in a year in the format prescribed by the AICTE and the report on quality assurance shall, before the end of the academic year, be prominently placed on its website and a copy furnished to the AICTE.

17. Powers of inspection and calling for information.

- 17.1. The AICTE shall periodically review the performance of the Institution and for the purpose may direct the Institution to provide such information as it may require from the viewpoint of ensuring adherence of the Guidelines by the Institution, and the Institution shall be under obligation to provide such information in such time period as may be specified.

17.2 Where the AICTE, either suo motu or on the basis of information received by it, considers it necessary, for reasons to be recorded in writing, may cause an inquiry through inspection or otherwise by such body of experts or as it may deem fit, to satisfy itself that all the mandatory requirements under these Guidelines are being complied with by the Institution imparting programmes in ODL mode and take appropriate action to get compliance enforced against the erring Institution.

Part-VI Miscellaneous

18. Authority.

- 18.1. The AICTE may authorise the officials of the AICTE to perform various functions for implementing these Guidelines.

18.2 For the purposes of guideline 4, the AICTE may delegate its power to hear and decide appeals to such person or persons, as per the Approval Process Handbook.

19. Interpretation Clause.

- In the event of conflict of opinion with regard to the interpretation of these Guidelines, decision of the AICTE shall be final.

20. Removal of difficulty.

- The AICTE may, in consultation with MHRD, make changes in these Guidelines to remove the difficulty in implementation of the provisions of these Guidelines.

Annexure I

Centre For Internal Quality Assurance (Ciqa)

1. Objectives and Functions. - The objective of establishment of a Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) is to develop and put in place a comprehensive and dynamic internal quality assurance system to provide high-quality programmes of higher education in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode. Its functions would inter alia include the following: -

- 1.1 to maintain quality in the services provided to the learners.
- 1.2 to ensure continuous improvement in the entire operations of the Institution.
- 1.3 to identify the key areas in which the Institution should maintain quality.
- 1.4 to disseminate information on quality assurance.
- 1.5 to devise mechanisms for interaction and obtaining feedback from all stakeholders viz. learners, teachers, staff, parents, society, employers, alumni and the Government.
- 1.6 to suggest to the authorities of the Institution, measures for qualitative improvement.
- 1.7 to ensure the implementation of its recommendations through regular monitoring.
- 1.8 collection, collation and dissemination of accurate, complete and reliable statistics about the quality of the programme(s).

2. Activities of CIQA. - To fulfil the above objectives, the CIQA shall -

- 2.1 prepare a Programme Project Report (PPR) for each Programme, according to the norms and Guidelines prescribed by the AICTE;
- 2.2 get the Programme Project Report (PPR) approved by an academic board of Institution and the AICTE before the launch of each Programme;
- 2.3 oversee the development of Study Learning Material, integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), setting up of Learning Centres and coordination with the Institution;
- 2.4 put in place monitoring mechanism to ensure the proper implementation of Programme Project Reports;
- 2.5 design annual plans for quality level enhancement at the level of the Institution and ensure their implementation;
- 2.6 arrange feedback responses from students, employers and other stakeholders for quality-related institutional processes;
- 2.7 develop quality benchmarks or parameters for the various academic and administrative activities of the Institution;
- 2.8 obtain information from other Institutions on various quality benchmarks or parameters and best practices;
- 2.9 organise workshops or seminars on quality-related themes;

- 2.10 suggest restructuring of programmes in order to make them relevant to the job market;
- 2.11 develop and implement innovative practices in major areas leading to quality enhancement in services to the learners;
- 2.12 create learner centric environment rather than institution centric environment;
- 2.13 cultivate creativity and innovation in the faculty and staff;
- 2.14 adopt measures to ensure internalisation and institutionalisation of quality enhancement practices through periodic accreditation and audit;
- 2.15 conduct or encourage system based research to bring about a qualitative change in the entire system;
- 2.16 record activities undertaken on quality assurance in the form of an annual report; and
- 2.17 coordinate recognition and accreditation of the Institution.

It will be mandatory for all Institutions to submit Annual Reports on the activities undertaken by the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance during the academic year to the AICTE.

3. Establishment of CIQA. - 3.1. The Centre for Internal Quality Assurance will be established in all Institutions offering programmes in ODL mode and should be headed by a full-time Director, a senior academican of the rank of Professor, who shall be supported by an adequate number of academic and other staff.

- 3.2 A Managing Committee for Centre for Internal Quality Assurance should be constituted which shall be chaired by its Director, and consisting of academic staff and internal quality auditors nominated from various disciplines of the Institution. It shall perform the following functions:-
- 3.2.1 . decide policies for programme development methodology and programme delivery mechanism that are aligned with the vision and mission of the Institution;
 - 3.2.2 . advice on any issue related to programme development, Information and Communication Technology intervention and implementation, learning and teaching, collaboration referred to the Committee;
 - 3.2.3 . supervise academic approval and related modification procedures and to ensure that programmes satisfy stated design requirements and academic standards appropriate to the type and level of award as per the philosophy of ODL mode of education;
 - 3.2.4 . promote automation of academic and administrative activities of the Institution, and Study Centres or Learning Support Centres and Examination Centres;
 - 3.2.5 . oversee and report on the effectiveness of systems for self-evaluation and monitoring;
 - 3.2.6 . appoint external subject experts or agencies or organisations for validation and annual review of its inhouse process, its Learner Support Centres, Open and Distance Learning mode programmes etc.;
 - 3.2.7 . appoint third-party auditing bodies for the quality audit of programme(s);
 - 3.2.8 . approval of the Self-Appraisal Report to be submitted to the Assessment and Accreditation agencies on behalf of Institution;
 - 3.2.9 . promote collaboration and association for quality enhancement of ODL mode of education and research therein; and
 - 3.2.10 . encourage industrial involvement and industry-institution linkage for providing exposure to the learners.

Annexure II

Quality Monitoring Mechanism

1. Quality Monitoring Mechanism. - The Guidelines on quality monitoring mechanism are required to be adopted by the Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) for conducting institutional quality audits, to promote quality assurance and enhance as well as spread best-in-class practices of quality assurance. Quality monitoring needs to be addressed under the following broad areas, namely:

- 1.1 Governance, Leadership and Management. - This relates to the policies and practices of Institution in the matter of planning, human resources, recruitment, training, performance appraisal, financial management and the overall role of leadership, with a focus on the following key aspects:
 - 1.1.1 . Organizational Structure and Governance: The Institution is ultimately responsible for quality of programmes and learning outcomes. Therefore, it is required that the Institution should fill all required positions in the Institution or Department and in the Learner Support Centres as prescribed by the AICTE, and establish a credible governance system.
 - 1.1.2 . Management: Effective leadership by setting values and participative decision-making process is the key to achieve the vision, mission and goals of the Institution. Therefore, it is required to assess and review the organisational culture to support the management and leadership of the institution to achieve such vision, mission and goals.
 - 1.1.3 . Strategic Planning: The leadership of the Institution is expected to provide clear vision and mission. Its functions are to be governed by the principles of participation and transparency. Therefore, the Institution is expected to do strategic planning of its activities and implementing by aligning those with academic and administrative aspects to improve the overall quality.
 - 1.1.4 . Operational Plan, Goals and Policies: The Institution should draw the operational plan for its strategic plan that defines targets and measures of the programmes to be achieved by the Institution. The Operational Plan shall be used as a guideline for the annual planning of programs and activities. The Institution needs to have well-defined goals which are realistic and measurable. Equally important is to have well-defined policies that are in sync with its strategic plan and are realistic and achievable. The Institution needs to have clearly stated Regulations in the implementation of its policies and plans. Further, the institution needs to have a transparent and accountable system for its policies and planning that are well communicated to its stakeholders.
- 1.2 Articulation of objectives of the Institution. - Institutions are expected to provide holistic and quality education with a professional focus, the creation of knowledge and innovation, and the practical application of the knowledge to support the business and professional community. Accordingly, the Institution should articulate a clear vision, mission, ethos and broad strategy consistent with the goals to strengthen its position for offering programmes in ODL mode.
- 1.3 Programme Development and Approval Processes. - This area of concern relates to programme development and approval mechanism for the programme(s) to be launched, covering the following key aspects:
 - 1.3.1 . Curriculum Design: The Institution plays the foremost role in the curriculum design and development of learning content and, therefore, it is expected to have processes, systems and structures in place to carry these responsibilities. Curriculum design is a process of developing appropriate need-based curriculum in consultation with expert groups, based on the feedback from stakeholders, resulting in the development of relevant programmes with flexibility, to suit the professional and personal needs of the learner and realisation of core values. The key aspect is also to consider best practices of the Institution in initiating a range of programme options and courses that are relevant to the local needs and in tune with the emerging national and global trends.
 - 1.3.2 . Curriculum Planning and Implementation: It is required that the Institution shall have specific implementation plans for identifying the time to be spent on specific components of the implementation phase. It is the basis for the effectiveness of the programme(s) and their usefulness as a whole.
 - 1.3.3 . Academic Flexibility: Academic flexibility is the key feature of the ODL mode of education and refers to freedom in the use of the time-frame of courses, vertical mobility, and inter-disciplinary options facilitated by curricular transactions. Therefore, the Institution shall adopt proper strategies for imparting academic flexibility.
 - 1.3.4 . Learning Resource: Learning Resource is a key component of the ODL mode of education. Learning resources can be of print and digital mode. Considering the need of blended learning, the Institution should also develop e-resources for the learner to refer and study. There is very little interaction of teachers with the learners, the content and structure of learning resources play a vital role in the ODL mode of education. Therefore, it is required that each Institution shall ensure the quality of learning resources and their periodical review. While deciding on the appropriateness of the media and the technologies, the Institution should take into consideration various factors- the media and technology utilised matches the course content in order to enhance and expand learning, and to match to the learners' needs; that these are accessible, practical and equitable, and cost effective to the learners.

- 1.3.5 . Feedback System: The process of revision and redesign of curricula shall be based on recent market dynamics, industrial developments, research and feedback from the stakeholders including learners. The feedback from all stakeholders in terms of its relevance and appropriateness in catering to the needs of the society, economy and environment is also considered in this key aspect.
- 1.4 Programme Monitoring and Review: The Institution shall plan and execute programme monitoring review system which should include a programme management structure, annual programme reviews, external benchmarking, channels for collecting learner feedback, and development of improvement plans and actions to close the feedback. To maintain the quality of academic programme, it is required to conduct periodical internal reviews. For such reviews, the Institution shall also consider the achievements of learning outcomes that are assessed through the examination system.
- 1.5 Infrastructure Resources: This criterion seeks to elicit data on the adequacy and optimal use of the facilities available in the Institution to maintain the quality of academic and other programmes- physical facilities, library (or e-library), Information Technology infrastructure etc. It also requires information on how every constituent of the Institution; the learners, teachers or counsellors and staff- benefits from these facilities.
- 1.6 Learning Environment and Learner Support: The learner support centre is responsible for the delivery of services to all learners. The learner support services including library services shall be accessed electronically by the learner. "Physical library" and classroom environment is the core requirement for programme delivery through offline and blended mode. Additionally, Institution shall establish virtual facilities as component of the learning environment which focus around the pedagogical use of modern educational practices to support blended learning. Learner Support Services shall be provided through the campus-wide portal and e-Learning platform. The Institution shall take a more sophisticated approach to the use of Information and Communication Technology and expertise in e-learning. The approach shall provide a seamless learner-centric environment.
- 1.7 Assessment & Evaluation: Learning outcomes are the specifications of what a learner shall learn and demonstrate on successful completion of the course or the programme. It can also be seen as desired outcome of the learning process in terms of acquisition of the skills and knowledge, embedded in the curriculum. Achieving Learning Outcomes need specific experiences to be provided for the Learners and evaluation of their attainment. The Institution needs to ensure that the purposes of assessment are clearly described in the course materials, and the learners are able to access some of the assignments. A programme that states Learning Outcomes that are not evaluated or assessed gets neglected in implementation. Hence all the stated Learning Outcomes must be part of the evaluation protocol of the programme. Learner assessment provides an indication of the areas where learning has happened and where it has to be improved upon. The Institution shall execute the assessment and evaluation through varied assessment tools including multiple choice questions, projects, reports, case-studies, presentations, and term-end examinations, to suit the different learning outcomes expected of the course elements. The Institution shall have proper assessment and moderation system for assessing the learning outcomes of learners.
- 1.8 Teaching Quality and Staff Development: The Institution shall have a well established structure for promoting quality counselling and provide staff development programmes and activities to encourage academic staff to improve teaching and learning. The Institution should provide the support for the academic staff in understanding and implementing the institutional learning outcomes and subject learning outcomes. The Institution also needs to ensure that the academic staff is conversant with formative and summative assessment procedures and their importance in the learning process.

2. Process of Quality Audit. - 2.1. Academic Planning. - The main purpose of academic planning is to ensure that the overall portfolio of delivering programmes offered by the Institutions is relevant to market needs, reflects the Institution's strategic direction and offers a high quality 'value-added' learning experience. Academic planning promotes robust and appropriate procedures to help ensure that every new programme starts with the best chance possible to admit and retain viable learner cohorts. The Institution should have a streamlined modification process to support staff in ensuring that the curriculum remains up to date. The guiding principle behind this process is that all relevant stakeholders are communicated and consulted with and learners' needs are assessed while launching new programmes.

- 2.2 Validation. - The main purpose of validation is to assure the Institution that a new programme is academically viable, that academic standards have been appropriately defined and that it will offer learners the best opportunity to learn.
- 2.3 Monitoring, evaluation and enhancement plans: Across the Institution, there would be various levels from where the reports are being generated to ensure quality deliverance of the ODL programmes and their final

outcomes. The same are described as follows:

- 2.3.1 . Reports from Learner Support Centre: The Institution shall collect the report of academic activities and other related activities periodically from Learner Support Centres. There should be details of all the activities related to academic planning, counselling, learner support etc. The Institution shall adopt the technological solutions for easy receipt of these reports. These reports will be the base for the quality audit.
- 2.3.2 . External examiner or other external agencies report: Programme development teams and Centre for Internal Quality Assurance team shall consider the comments made by experts and third party quality audit. The Institution shall also encourage to consider the adoption of identifying good practices that will benefit and develop the programme.
- 2.3.3 . Systematic consideration of performance data on programme, faculty and Institution levels: In order to make a meaningful evaluation and audit, the Institution needs easy access to performance monitoring information such as course pass rates, learner entry profiles and progression and achievement reports. These shall be produced and made available through web-based application. The data collected through the application will be useful for report making at the Institution.
- 2.3.4 . Reporting and Analytics by the Institution: Further, the Institution shall generate the required reports out of such web-based applications and analyze learner and academic analytics for deciding the improvements to be executed for better performance.
- 2.3.5 . Periodic Review: The Institution needs to have an effective system for soliciting feedbacks from the stakeholders regularly to improve its programmes. There is a need for an integrated quality assurance system for its programmes and implementation units, including the Learner Support Centres. The Institution needs to conduct self-assessments regularly and use the results to improve its operations and programmes.

Annexure III

Minimum Standards to be maintained at Examination Centres

- 1. The examination centres shall be established in the all States/regions depending on the territorial jurisdiction of the institution.**
- 2. The examination centre must be centrally located in the city, with good connectivity from railway station or bus stand, for the convenience of the students.**
- 3. The number of examination centres in a city or State must be proportionate to the student enrolment from the region.**
- 4. Examination centre and its surroundings must be clean and in good condition.**
- 5. The examination centre must have an examination hall with adequate seating capacity and basic amenities.**
- 6. Fire extinguishers must be in working condition, locations well marked and easily accessible. Emergency exits must be clearly identified and clear of obstructions.**
- 7. The examination centre must provide adequate lighting, ventilation and comfortable seating. Safety and security of the examination centre must be ensured.**
- 8. Restrooms must be located in the same building as the examination centre, and restrooms must be clean, supplied with necessary items, and in working condition.**
- 9. Provision of drinking water must be made for learners.**
- 10. Adequate parking must be available near the examination centre.**
- 11. Facilities for Divyang persons (PwD) should be available.**

Annexure IV

Competencies of Counsellor in a Learner Support Centre

1. Should be a post graduate from a recognised University.
2. Familiarity with basic research on the characteristics of Distance learners, their needs and difference from conventional face-to-face education.
3. Application of basic principles of instructional design.
4. Thorough knowledge of subject matter and common misconceptions related to the course(s).
5. Deep understanding of the necessity of learner-centric environment in online and blended learning mode.
6. Ability to design constructivist learning environment.
7. Practical applications of learning theories, self-paced instruction, and computer-mediated communication and learning.
8. Ability to foster a sense of community among learners.
9. Adaptability and flexibility with the capabilities and limitations of the delivery media.
10. Familiarity with the delivery medium to provide basic troubleshooting.
11. Ability to multitask.
12. Time management (e.g. respond to learners in timely manner, extensive and advance preparation and planning).
13. Professional characteristics (e.g. motivated to teach, self-confident, articulate, good writer).

Annexure V

Academic and Infrastructural Requirements

The following positions for full-time and dedicated basis, shall be necessary excluding the designated positions in the regular full time programmes: -

1. Staffing Norms at Headquarters. - 1.1. Head for each discipline at Professor level.

1.2 Academic staff strength per discipline or specialization or programme.

Minimum three faculty members are required as per the following:

Associate Professor: 1

Assistant Professor: 2

In addition, faculty on contract, part-time etc. should be available for creating learning material, question paper-setting and evaluation.

1.3 Administrative staff strength at the Institution

(up to 10,000 students):		
Deputy Registrar	:	1
Assistant Registrar	:	1
Section Officer	:	1
Assistants	:	3
Computer Operator	:	2

Multi-Tasking Staff	:	2
In case the enrolment is higher than 10,000, the Institution shall increase the number of positions appropriately.		
Teacher: Non-Teaching Staff (NTS) ratio - 1: 2 shall be maintained.		

2. Physical Infrastructure. - Total Built-up area for Open and Distance Learning activity: Minimum 15000 sq. ft. (carpet area):

Sl. No.	Built-up Area Type	Percentage (%)	Built-up Area (Carpet Area, in sq ft)
1.	Academic	50%	7500
2.	Administrative	10%	1500
3.	Academic support such as Library, Reading room, Computer Centre, Information and Communication Technology Labs, Video and Audio Labs etc.	30%	4500
4.	Amenities or other support facilities	10%	1500
Total	15000		

Note: Built-up area for toilets shall be separate.

The minimum requirement shall be as per the AICTE Approval Process Handbook as amended from time to time.

Annexure VI

Quality Assurance Guidelines of Learning Material in Multiple Media, Human Resource, Curriculum and Pedagogy

1. Learning Material (Print Media: Quality Standards): Learning Material through print-media is termed as Self Learning Material, being developed with the approach of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating and self-evaluating. The following is an indicative list of quality standards for print material:

- 1.1 The Self Learning Material shall be designed with the approach of two-way communication between the learner and content.
- 1.2 The Self Learning Material shall involve the learner actively through various experience-based activities and assignments.
- 1.3 The learner should get clear information about the structure of the programme and course.
- 1.4 There shall be a detail learning map in Self Learning Material for the learner so that he or she will be self-directed for completion of his or her studies.
- 1.5 The content of Self Learning Material shall be developed with dialogue and personal system of writing method which will create the nature of interactivity in the Self Learning Material.
- 1.6 The Self Learning Material shall encourage learners to apply new knowledge and skills.
- 1.7 There shall be clear definition of learning objectives and outcomes.
- 1.8 The content shall be divided into small sections (blocks) and sub-sections (units & sub-units) for effective learning.
- 1.9 There shall be an assignment on each learning objective for self-assessment.
- 1.10 The learner shall be directed through problem solving activities as applicable to nature of the course.
- 1.11 The Self Learning Material shall be developed in defined formats with following features:



- 1.11.1 . Consistent layout and format.
- 1.11.2 . Inclusion of overview of the content.
- 1.11.3 . A unit structure at the beginning of the unit.
- 1.11.4 . Plenty of examples.
- 1.11.5 . Reference to prior learning.
- 1.11.6 . Inclusion of national or international case lets and case studies.
- 1.11.7 . Content in segments synchronised with learning objectives and outcome.
- 1.11.8 . Explanation of icons used in the content.
- 1.11.9 . Appropriate sequence of material.
- 1.11.10 . Explanation of technical, new, difficult terms or word in a glossary section.
- 1.11.11 . Inclusion of adequate suggested reading (both print and online).

2. Audio - Video Material: Quality Standards. - 2.1. There shall be adequate consideration of learners' prior knowledge, skills and attitudes.

- 2.2 Level and style of language shall be appropriate.
- 2.3 There shall be clear information on types of support material and study activities to be used by the learner.
- 2.4 It shall be clear and unambiguous, also preferably free from pedagogic jargon.
- 2.5 The aim, objective and target audience for the Audio-Video material shall be clearly defined.
- 2.6 It shall be capable of being evaluated to conform to the learning outcomes.
- 2.7 There shall be clear guidelines with regard to the use of the Audio or Visual material vis-à-vis other contents of the course.
- 2.8 Audio-Video Material shall be developed in forms and formats that will be easily accessible by the learners.
- 2.9 There shall be a separate Audio-Video manual for using the Audio Video material in study.
- 2.10 Audio-Video Material shall provide continuity and coherence within and between audio-based study sessions.
- 2.11 There shall be synchronization of Sound and Image in Audio-Video material.
- 2.12 There shall be appropriate graphics and animations relevant to the course content.
- 2.13 There shall be appropriate visual texture and rate of change of image to keep the learner involved.

3. Online Material: Quality Standards. - 3.1. The course shall be organized into units and lessons.

- 3.2 There shall be description of unit overview along with objectives, activities, assignments and resources that frame the unit.
- 3.3 Availability of a program map and correlation matrix among the courses in the programme.
- 3.4 There shall be description of the credit value of each module or unit of the course.
- 3.5 There shall be clear guidelines on academic integrity and netiquette (internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions and plagiarism.
- 3.6 There shall be lesson overview, content, assignments and activities to provide the learning opportunities for learners to master the content.
- 3.7 The course shall be designed to teach concepts and skills that the learner will retain throughout the study.
- 3.8 There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning.
- 3.9 The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in higher order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and increasing complexity.
- 3.10 There shall be appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.

- 3.11 The content shall provide for periodical feedback about the learning process.
- 3.12 The course shall be easy to navigate.
- 3.13 There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete the course.
- 3.14 The content shall be accessible on various devices.
- 3.15 The online material shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities.

4. Computer-based material: Quality Standards. - 4.1. The Computer-based material shall provide an environment for practice, at the learner's own pace and in his or her own time.

- 4.2 The Computer-based material shall provide an environment for self-assessment.
- 4.3 It shall allow learners to develop analysis and decision-making skills, to discover principles and concepts for themselves.
- 4.4 The course shall be organized into units and lessons.
- 4.5 There shall be description of unit overview along with objectives, activities, assignments and resources that frame the unit.
- 4.6 Availability of a program map and correlation matrix among the courses in the programme.
- 4.7 There shall be description of the credit value of each module or unit of the course.
- 4.8 There shall be lesson overview, content, assignments and activities to provide the learning opportunities for learners to master the content.
- 4.9 The course shall be designed to teach concepts and skills that the learner will retain throughout the study.
- 4.10 There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning.
- 4.11 The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and increasing complexity.
- 4.12 There shall be appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.
- 4.13 The course shall be easy to navigate.
- 4.14 There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete and master the course.
- 4.15 The computer-based material shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities.

5. Curriculum and Pedagogy: Quality Standards. - 5.1. The curriculum objectives shall be consistent with the mission of the Institution.

- 5.2 There shall be involvement of all the stakeholders in the process of framing the curriculum objective.
- 5.3 The curriculum shall be designed by adopting the AICTE Model Curriculum and incorporating local or regional needs.
- 5.4 There shall be the rationale for the appropriateness of the curriculum to the stage of learning.
- 5.5 There shall be linkages of the curriculum to previous and subsequent stages of learning.
- 5.6 There shall be such learning experiences which allow a diversity of methods (like learning from practice, opportunities for distributed and concentrated practice, learning with peers, learning in formal situations inside and outside the department, personal study, specific teacher inputs etc.
- 5.7 The structure of the curriculum shall be well defined.
- 5.8 There shall be a complete strategy for teaching and learning methods.
- 5.9 There shall be a decision made on types of media content used.
- 5.10 There shall be a comprehensive decision on assessment and evaluation techniques.
- 5.11 The content shall be reliable and justify the learning outcome(s).

- 5.12 There shall be clear definition of the intended outcomes of learning, benchmarked to identifiable stages of learning.
- 5.13 There shall be the use of reference points and expertise from outside the Institution, if required, in programme design and in the processes of programme development and approval.
- 5.14 There shall be the relevance of curriculum to national competency requirement.
- 5.15 There shall be description of the credit value of each module or unit of the course.

Table I: Norms for offering programmes through ODL mode based on a credit system

Level/ Programme	Credits	Duration of the programme
Diploma after Class X	120	3 years
Master Degree Programme in Computer Applications	120*	3 years*
Post Graduate Degree Programme in Management	80	2 years
Post Graduate Diploma	80	2 years
Post Graduate Certificate	40	More than 1 year but less than 2 years
Post Diploma Certificate	40	More than 1 year but less than 2 years

Note: - 1. One Credit is equivalent to one lecture hour or tutorial hour per week for 14-15 weeks in the conventional mode of education. In case of Open and Distance Learning Mode, one credit is equivalent to 30 hours of learning by a Learner through a combination of synchronous, asynchronous or face to face mode.

2. * : Credits and Duration likely to change.

Annexure VII

Guidelines on Preparation of Self Learning Material

1. Overview: Self Learning Material is developed with the approach of self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed, self-motivating and self-evaluating. The major challenge for the ODL system is a near absence of the teacher. The learning material plays a vital role in this system and it includes Self Learning Material in print and electronic form. A key challenge of Learning Material is ensuring that its writing is to be in a way that is engaging and which actively involves the learners. Another challenge of learning material is rapidly changing technology and deploying traditional teaching-learning methods through these technologies. Therefore, the following points should be considered very carefully: -

- background of learners and their learning needs;
 - learning experiences; and
 - preparation and support in adapting to flexible learning.
- 1.1 Authors and designers should consider following points while developing the learning material in the case of print material and e-learning material: -
 - learning objectives
 - assessment of prior knowledge
 - learning activities
 - feedback on learning activities
 - examples and illustrations
 - self-assessment tests
 - summaries and key points
 - study tips
 - 1.2 The learning material should be developed with the constructivist approach and that should lay emphasis on real-world tasks, learner's choice of tasks or situations, case studies, collaborative learning tasks,

opportunities for observing others and self-evaluation. The Institution may also adopt or procure the Learning Material from expert agencies or consultants if it saves the time and cost without compromising on the quality.

2. Planning for development of Learning Material. - Due to the near absence of the teachers in the Open and Distance Learning mode, the learner has the opportunity to take the decision(s) at any point during the learning path. This may create disagreement between learner's perception and the objective of the learning material. Therefore, it is required to consider the following key points during planning for the development of learning material.

- 2.1 **Learner Profile:** It is required to consider the literacy level (including level of language proficiency), age group, information communication technology skills, aim of study, personal background and home situation, prior knowledge, prior skills, learning situations etc.
- 2.2 **Accessibility:** In Open and Distance Learning system, learner studies at his/her pace and not like face-to-face mode. Most of the learners are working professionals and they get time to study at their homes. If we add certain references which they cannot access at home, then it will create an obstacle in their learning. Therefore, it is necessary to consider the accessibility of course resources and references at the place of learning.
- 2.3 **Learning Objectives and Outcome:** It is required to define the learning objectives and outcomes prior to initiating the process of the learning material development. The learning objectives can be of a terminal, intermediate or enabling nature. These learning objectives can be set for a course, unit, or module.

3. Learning Material: Considering the principles of Open and Distance Learning mode of education, the programmes shall be accompanied with learning material or resources, which shall comprise of self-learning material or e-learning material, e-books, practical book, student's handbook, question bank, assignment book, Audio Video material, programme guide, project manual, etc.

4. Standards of Self Learning Material in Print Form. - 4.1. The Self Learning Material shall be developed as per the defined credit structure of the programme.

- 4.2 The Self Learning Material shall involve the learner actively through various experience-based activities and assignments.
- 4.3 The learner shall get the clear information about the structure of the programme and the course.
- 4.4 There shall be a detailed learning map in the Self Learning Material for the learner so that he or she will be selfdirected for completion of their studies.
- 4.5 The content of the Self Learning Material shall be developed with dialogue and personal system of writing method which will create a nature of interactivity in the Self Learning Material.
- 4.6 The Self Learning Material shall encourage the learner to apply new knowledge and skills.
- 4.7 There shall be clear definition of learning objectives and outcomes.
- 4.8 The content shall be divided into small sections (blocks) and sub-sections (units & sub-units) for effective learning.
- 4.9 Activities shall be included in each unit of the Self Learning Material.
- 4.10 There shall be assignments on each learning objective for self-assessment.
- 4.11 The learner shall be directed through problem solving activities as applicable to the nature of the course.

5. Standards of Self Learning Material in Non-print Form. - The learners' perspective is an important aspect of quality assurance for e-learning. High-quality e-learning content should be designed by skilled content and instructional design professionals. Good instructional design will reflect best practices and research on teaching and learning. The key principles of designing e-learning content are:

- consistent layout and design;
- clear organisation and presentation of information;
- consistent and easy-to-use navigation; and

- aesthetically pleasing design and graphics.

Thus, the standards of Self Learning Material in non-print form shall be as follows: -

- 5.1 The e-learning material shall be designed as per the credit structure of the online programme.
- 5.2 The course shall be organised into units and lessons.
- 5.3 There shall be description of unit overview along with objectives, activities, assignments and resources that frame the unit.
- 5.4 Availability of a programme map and correlation matrix among the courses in the programme.
- 5.5 There shall be description of the credit value of each module or unit of the course.
- 5.6 There shall be clear Regulations on academic integrity and netiquette (internet etiquette) expectations regarding lesson activities, discussions and plagiarism.
- 5.7 There shall be lesson overview, content, assignments and activities to provide the learning opportunities for learners to master the content.
- 5.8 The course shall be designed to teach concepts and skills that the learner will retain throughout the study.
- 5.9 There shall be multiple learning paths for engaging the learner in active learning.
- 5.10 The content shall provide opportunities for learners to engage in high-order thinking, critical-reasoning activities and thinking complex issues towards problem solving.
- 5.11 There shall be appropriate readability levels, written language assignments and mathematical requirements.
- 5.12 The content shall provide for periodical feedback about the learning process.
- 5.13 The course shall be easy to navigate.
- 5.14 There shall be declaration of textbooks, courseware, and online resources necessary to refer additionally to complete and master the course.
- 5.15 The content shall be accessible on various devices.
- 5.16 The e-Learning Material shall satisfy the needs of learners with disabilities.

Annexure VIII

Guidelines for Programme Project Report (PPR)

1. Overview. - A Programme Project Report (PPR) of the Institution is a document prepared to introduce a new programme, which includes details of- (a) programme objectives and outcomes; (b) nature of a target group of learners; (c) appropriateness of the programme with quality assurance for acquiring specific skills; (d) programme content designing and developing; (e) cost estimates for development of the programme; and (f) admission, delivery and evaluation norms. The Programme Project Report is a self-disclosure by the Institution about launching the programme in the Open and Distance Learning mode. The Institution has to define specific aims and objectives for each of the academic programmes which will give the direction to launch a programme and will allow to focus on results. At the end, these aims and objectives will help to demonstrate what has been achieved. The programme shall be planned with clear deliverables and knowledge, experiences to be gained.

2. Need to Prepare Programme Project Report (PPR). - A Programme Project Report is required to be prepared before introducing any new programme duly approved by its highest academic authority. The main contents of the PPR are as follows: -

- 2.1 The Programme's mission & objectives: The Institution shall define the mission statement and objectives for the programme to be launched, which shall reflect the strategic direction and the academic goals of the Institution. Those shall be aligned with industrial or learners' demand, and shall be defined in such a manner that they are appropriate to be achieved.
- 2.2 Relevance of the Programme, Mission and Goals: The Institution shall plan for such a programme to be offered through the ODL mode that is relevant to the Institution's mission and goals. Therefore, it is very much important that the programme to be offered through ODL should be aligned with Institution's mission and goal and will prove as a major contributing factor in its achievement.

- 2.3 Nature of prospective target group of learners: The Institution shall identify the target group of learners. It is required to understand their learning needs and on its basis the curriculum should be designed. The Institution should also consider a diverse class of learners, including a class having of low level of disposable income, rural dwellers, women, unskilled men, minorities and Divyang (PwD) etc.
- 2.4 Appropriateness of programme to be conducted in ODL mode to acquire specific skills and competence: The Institution shall clearly identify the learning outcomes for the programme which shall cover the specific skills and competence to be acquired by the learner. The programme should be aimed appropriately to those learning outcomes. The learning outcomes shall include the development of knowledge and understanding appropriate to the area of study and these should also reflect academic, professional and occupational standards for that field. The learning outcomes should incorporate generic transferable skills and competencies.
- 2.5 Instructional Design: Instructional Design includes Curriculum design, detailed syllabi, duration of the programme, faculty and support staff requirement, instructional delivery mechanisms, identification of media- print, audio or video, online, computer-aided, and student support service systems. The Institution shall define the instructional design for each of the academic programmes to be offered through the ODL mode and shall map the credit hours for each course or module of the programme.
- 2.6 Procedure for admissions, curriculum transaction and evaluation: The Institution shall define the admission policy for the programme with minimum eligibility and fee structure. The information related to financial assistance, if any, should be included in the policy. The Institution shall notify the policy of programme delivery along with the details of methods and web-based tools to be adopted. The Institution shall notify the activity planner including all the academic activities to be carried out by the Institution during the academic session. Further, the Institution shall also notify policy for the evaluation of learner progress along with methods and tools.
- 2.7 Requirement of the laboratory support and Library Resources: There may be programmes having practical component in the syllabus. The Institution shall give clear Regulations about the laboratory support to the learners to perform the practical prescribed in the programme. There shall be provision of a practical book for the learners. In case of online learning, the practice should be conducted and performed by applying virtual reality methods.
- 2.8 Cost estimate of the programme and the provisions: The cost estimate should indicate the amount assigned to programme development, delivery and maintenance.
- 2.9 Quality assurance mechanism and expected programme outcomes: The Institution shall define the review mechanism for programme and continuously enhance the standards of curriculum, instructional design relevant to professional requirements of the area of study. There should be course benchmark statements. The Institution shall also devise the mechanism for monitoring effectiveness of the programme.

Annexure IX

Learner Support Centre (LSC)

1. General. - Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of Education consists of two levels of functioning located at the Institution that is Headquarters (HQ) of the Institution, and Learner Support Centres (LSCs) established within the territorial jurisdiction of the Institution as defined in the following Section. Planning, Designing and Preparation of Self Learning Material for a learner who does not have any regular access to teachers is quite different than a textbook meant for classroom teaching, overall management of the processes of Admissions, Evaluation, and Declaration of Results etc. are the main responsibilities of the Headquarters of the Institution and are discharged from the main campus. Under the direct management and control of the Institution, Regional Centres which are the second level of functioning, perform a dynamic operational link between the Head-Quarter and the Learner Support Centres (LSCs) which are the third level of ODL system. LSCs are important main contact points for access by the learners, responsive and facilitating information centres, arranging contact sessions and other operations like processing of assignments etc. Learner Support Centres (LSCs) will be established and managed directly by the Institution and not through any franchise or outsourced arrangement.

2. Definition and Establishment of Learner Support Centre (LSCs). - 2.1. Learner Support Centre (LSC) means a Centre established, maintained or recognised by the Institution for advising, counselling, vocational guidance, hands on experience, library services and providing an interface between the teachers and the learners, rendering academic and any other related services and assistance, Information Communication Technology facilities for operations and interaction with the learners etc. for the benefit of the learners:

- 2.1.1 . Provided that the Institution offering programmes in ODL mode shall, from the date of notification of these Regulations, ensure that all LSCs are established having all the necessary infrastructure and the availability of appropriate number of qualified faculty as specified in the APH.
- 2.1.2 . Provided that the Institution may establish a Special LSC for imparting instruction to persons referred to in the Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995; the National Trust for Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disability Act, 1999 besides the employees of Defence or Security Forces and jail inmates interested to study through the ODL mode. However, in the case of programmes like those being developed by the Government for Skill Development or Lifelong Learning, a Learner Support Centre could be opened in Government institutions having capabilities for learner support services in the respective areas.
- 2.2 The LSC shall be established by the Institution after approval by the academic board of the institution and the AICTE. While processing such approvals, it is mandatory to provide evidence of the preparedness for establishing the LSC, providing learner support services, availability of the academic, other staff and qualified academic counsellors.
- 2.3 The Institution shall have a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the smooth functioning of the LSC, which will include all aspects of functions of the LSC, monitoring mechanism of different services provided by the Centre, and it shall be mandatory for the LSC to maintain the learner data related to conduct of counselling sessions, evaluation of assignments and effective and online grievance redressal system, which should be monitored at the level of Regional Centre and Headquarters.
- 2.4 List of the LSC as approved by the respective Institution shall be submitted to the AICTE at least 30 days in advance before operationalising them. The list of LSCs with details such as: Name with address of the institution where the centre is located, name of the coordinator with contact details, working hours and schedules for counselling sessions, infrastructure and other facilities available in the LSC shall be displayed on the web portal of the ODL institution and the same information shall be made available in the printed prospectus for the information of the learners and other stakeholders.
- 2.5 In addition, an Institution should submit an undertaking to the AICTE to the effect that the academic and instructional facilities at its LSCs meet all the conditions of the Regulations issued from time to time, and are commensurate with the number of academic programmes and learners' strength thereto: -
 - 2.5.1 . Provided that the Institution shall not carry out any of its activities related to the ODL mode at places other than LSCs under a different name such as Information Centre, Facilitation Centre, Nodal Centre, Knowledge Partner, Partner Institution, Multimedia Centres and similar such names.
 - 2.5.2 . Provided further that, no LSC shall be established beyond the jurisdiction of the Institution or under any franchisee or outsourcing agreement, as described in these Regulations.

3. Admission and Programme Fees. - Admission of learners to the Institution to a programme in ODL mode shall be offered in a transparent manner with Self Learning Material designed and developed directly by the Institution, which shall be solely responsible for all activities relating to admissions or registration or evaluation processes, duly approved by the respective statutory bodies of the Institutions. In no case these activities shall be outsourced. However, quality Self Learning Material developed by any other Institution recognized by the AICTE to run ODL programmes could be used under a mutual agreement after seeking approval of the AICTE:

Provided that a Learner Support Centre shall not admit a learner to any programme in Open and Distance Learning mode for or on behalf of any other Institution.

Every Institution shall publicise a prospectus on its web portal before the expiry of thirty days prior to the date of commencement of admission to any of its programmes in the ODL mode. The prospectus shall contain the following information for learners seeking admission to any programme of the institution and for the general public: -

- (i) each component of the fee and any other charges or deposits payable by the learners admitted to such Institutions for pursuing a programme in ODL mode, and clear terms and conditions of such payments to be charged by the Institute;
- (ii) the percentage of tuition fee and other charges refundable to a learner admitted in such Institutions in case such a learner withdraws from the institution before joining or after full completion of a course or programme of study and the time within, and the manner in which such refund shall be made to the learner;
- (iii) the number of seats approved in respect of each course or programme of ODL mode;

- (iv) eligibility conditions for admission, including educational qualifications and experience as prescribed by the AICTE, or by the institution, where no such qualifying standards have been specified by the AICTE;
- (v) the process of admission and selection of eligible learners applying for such admission, including all relevant information in regard to the details of test or examination, if any, for selecting such candidates for admission to each course or programme of study and the amount of fee to be paid for the admission test;
- (vi) details of the academic faculty at the Headquarters or Regional Centres or Learner Support Centres, including therein the educational qualifications and experience in teaching or the conduction of ODL programmes and also indicating therein whether such a faculty member is on a regular/part time basis or visiting or contract basis;
- (vii) the minimum pay and other emoluments payable for each category of faculty and officers of the Institute;
- (viii) physical and academic infrastructure and other facilities, including that of each of the Study Centre or LSC and in particular the laboratory, library and Information and Communication Technology facilities to be provided to learners on being admitted to the institution; and
- (ix) The broad outline of the syllabus specified by the AICTE or by the institution, as the case may be, for every course or programme of study.

3. [1: The Institutions that have completed five years of existence, offering a programme in Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode in Management and allied areas, Computer Applications and Travel & Tourism in pursuance of an approval granted to it till the year 2017-18 for the purpose by the University Grants Commission (UGC) and/or intending to offer a programme in Open and Distance Learning mode from the academic session immediately after the notification of these guidelines shall, for grant of recognition, make an application to the AICTE in such form and manner as notified by the AICTE on fulfilment of the following conditions, namely: -] [Substituted by Notification No. F. No. AICTE/P&AP/ODL/2020, dated 25.2.2020.]

3. [1.8 The Institution shall submit an undertaking to the effect that it will attain a National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) score of 3.26 on a 4 point scale or NBA accreditation with at least 700 points on a scale of 1,000 or equivalent before the end of academic session July 2019-June 2020, failing which the AICTE shall not accord any approval to the ODL Programme to the Institution.] [Inserted by Notification No. F. No. AICTE/P&AP/ODL/2020, dated 25.2.2020.]

4. Norms for Empanelment of Academic Counsellors. - No academic staff in the Learner Support Centre shall be appointed who does not fulfil the minimum qualifications as laid down from time to time. In addition, such academic staff should have familiarity with; the characteristics of ODL mode, learners and their needs, difference between ODL and conventional face to face education, awareness about instructional design, the learner-centric approach in blended mode of learning, use of different delivery media including online and computer mediated communication, and Information and Communication Technology enabled learning.

5. Deployment of manpower and other support at LSCs. - The LSCs shall be headed by a Coordinator, not below the rank of an Assistant Professor and shall be augmented with academic and non-academic staff depending on the number of learners assigned for adequate support to the learners. Capacity of intake per programme should be commensurate with the available qualified faculty in relevant area, library, online connectivity and Information and Communication Technology facilities, and appropriate infrastructure. Normally it would be expected to restrict the total intake capacity for ODL programme to the capacity specified for a similar programme being conducted in the conventional mode by the Institution where the LSC is located but in no case it should exceed two times of that.

5. [1 [Substituted by Notification No. F. No. AICTE/P&AP/ODL/2020, dated 25.2.2020.] (a) Number of qualified counsellors to number of students per theory course: 1: 100

(b) Number of qualified supervisors per practical course of 2 credits: 1 or more

5.2 The laboratory needed for the ODL programme on offer should be in a recognised Institution and running a similar course in conventional mode for a period of not less than 3 years.]

5.3 Ideally total number of learners admitted at any LSCs should not exceed 500 at any time, but for those located in Institutions providing education to more than 500 students, the total strength of ODL mode

learners at any time should not exceed 1000, subject to fulfilment of other conditions as prescribed in the Guidelines for this purpose.

6. Conduct of End Semester or Term End Examination. - 6.1. All Examinations for ODL mode programmes shall be conducted within the Institution where the Learner Support Centre is located under the direct control and responsibility of the ODL mode Institution. Also, all Government institutions like Kendriya Vidyalaya(s), Navodaya Vidyalaya(s), Sainik School(s)/ AICTE approved institutes etc. can also be identified as examination centre(s) under direct overall supervision of the Institution offering education under the ODL mode.

- 6.2 All processes of assessment of learners in different components of Testing and Examination shall be directly handled by the ODL mode Institution and no part of the assessment shall be outsourced.
- 6.3 For ensuring transparency and credibility, full-time faculty of the ODL mode Institutions or qualified faculty from the AICTE recognized Institutions only should be associated to function as invigilators, examination superintendents, observers etc.
- 6.4 The Examination Centre should have adequate seating capacity and amenities including adequate lighting, ventilation, washrooms and clean drinking water facilities.
- 6.5 The Examination Centre shall have proper monitoring mechanisms for Closed-Circuit Television (CCTV) recording of the entire examination procedure and biometric attendance system and in case of non-availability of the Closed-Circuit Television facilities, the Institution shall ensure that proper videography is conducted and video recordings are submitted by particular in-charge of examination centre to the concerned Institution.

7. Monitoring of functioning of the LSCs. - Generally in the Open and Distance Learning Mode, Institutions have to manage a fairly large and well-spread system with a variety of learner-centric operations for a number of heterogeneous groups of learners to meet their expectations and self-learning requirements using multimode programme delivery. To effectively manage these challenges and complex operations for a learner at a distance, a very dynamic, interactive communication system between Headquarters, Regional Centres and Learner Support Centres has to be established on priority. Thus, it is desirable that an Information and Communication Technology network connecting the Headquarters, Regional Centres and Learner Support Centres should be established at the earliest and used for faster and reliable operations such as: -

- (i) username and login ID should be generated for every learner so that learners can see all relevant information as their study progresses in an ODL programme and also provide constructive feedback for improvement in ODL programme delivery;
- (ii) Headquarters, Regional Centres and LSCs should maintain a web portal, giving all relevant information about the Open and Distance Learning programmes being delivered and the content of these should be updated at least on a weekly basis;
- (iii) Regional Centres should collect a holistic report about all functions assigned to LSCs and all aspects of quality of programme delivery periodically, especially during the Admissions, Examinations, and Counselling Sessions etc., and share a consolidated report with the Headquarters at least once a week.
- (iv) these reports along with responses by learners should be periodically analysed for the quality audit of a programme and its delivery besides the quality of performance of the LSCs;
- (v) any remedial action should be jointly ensured by the Headquarters, Regional Centres and LSCs and in a prompt manner;
- (vi) regular visits, at least twice a year by the academic staff of the Institution for on the spot monitoring and interaction with functionaries of the Regional Centres and LSCs, the learners and the counsellors; and
- (vii) ensuring access of SWAYAM and other repositories of Massive Open Online Courses, National Digital Library etc. by the learners at Learner Support Centres.

8. Closure of Non-Performing LSC. - In case a LSC fails to adhere to the prescribed norms or regulations, the Institution shall initiate action for closure of the centre by following due procedures, so that interest of learners is taken care through some alternative arrangement.

Annexure X

Grievance Redressal Mechanism

1. Scope of Grievance Redressal System for Learner: The Institutions, offering programmes through the Open and Distance Learning mode, shall have a Grievance Redressal System and Procedure which shall be published on the portal of Institution and it shall be the responsibility of the concerned Institution to update the same as and when required. Each of the Institutions shall provide an online facility for submitting grievances and track their status. The Institution shall also be responsible for monitoring, assessing and reviewing the effectiveness of its Grievance Redressal Procedures.

2. Guidelines and Standards for the Grievance Redressal System: The Institution shall have the policy on Grievance Redressal System based on following Guidelines and standards, viz.: -

- 2.1 the policy should be unbiased and understandable;
- 2.2 there should be a time line for each stage of the process;
- 2.3 the policy should be published on Institution's portal so that the learners may read and refer to;
- 2.4 the policy should be made available to learners with disability in appropriate format and the provision should be made accordingly in the policy document;
- 2.5 the authority or authorities involved in the grievance redressal process should treat and investigate facts impartially;
- 2.6 the Institution should address the grievances in a timely manner so as to eliminate interruption in learning process of the learner. The Institution should have the proper communication and escalation mechanism which can be operated and maintained through the online software application;
- 2.7 the Institution should maintain the confidentiality of the complainant as far as possible;
- 2.8 the Institution should ensure that officer(s) deputed for the learner support at the Institution, the Regional Centres and Learner Support Centre (LSCs) are able to provide guidance on submitting grievances in the portal;
- 2.9 There should be a provision to withdraw a complaint without prejudice at any time during the procedure; and
- 2.10 The learner should be kept informed of the status in relation to his/her queries or grievance on priority.

3. Rights and responsibilities of a learner. - 3.1. The learner has a right to complain regarding any aspect related to his or her learning path, including programme quality, learning resources, learner support and guidance, teaching, learning and assessment.

- 3.2 The learner is entitled to approach the respective Learner Support Centres (in case of offline or blended learning) for submitting his or her complaint. The learners of online mode may submit their complaint directly to the Institution. The complaint can be submitted individually or collectively by a group of learners.
- 3.3 The learner should submit a formal complaint in a manner prescribed by the Institution regarding expression of dissatisfaction with a service provided or the lack of a service or the quality of a service. Such expression should be correlated with what the learners were entitled to receive.

4. Responsibility of the Institution. - 4.1. The Institution shall work with the principles of openness and collaboration.

- 4.2 The Institution shall continuously improve the services it offers. As and when a grievance is received, the Institution shall investigate it thoroughly and make the necessary improvement(s) in its services.
- 4.3 The Institution shall encourage Learner Support Centres to make initial attempts to address and resolve complaints as close as possible to the point of origin, and with the minimum of formality.
- 4.4 The Institution shall also monitor the Grievance Redressal process through its Learner Support Centres.
- 4.5 The Institution is responsible for privacy and confidentiality, unless disclosure is necessary to proceed in the matter.
- 4.6 The grievance should be accompanied by the reasons for dissatisfaction and expected remedy. The learner should also give the reference to Online Grievance Registration Number generated at the time of submitting

the complaint at the Learner Support Centre.

- 4.7 The Head of concerned Department of the Institution shall investigate the complaint(s) or refer the matter(s) to a more appropriate person, body or committee or departments, as he/she may deem it appropriate.
- 4.8 It shall be the responsibility of the Head of the Institution to monitor the progress and to timely resolve the matter.
- 4.9 The Head of the Institution will respond in writing (letters or email etc.) through offline or online mode, giving reasons for a decision and action taken thereto.

