BAQAI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

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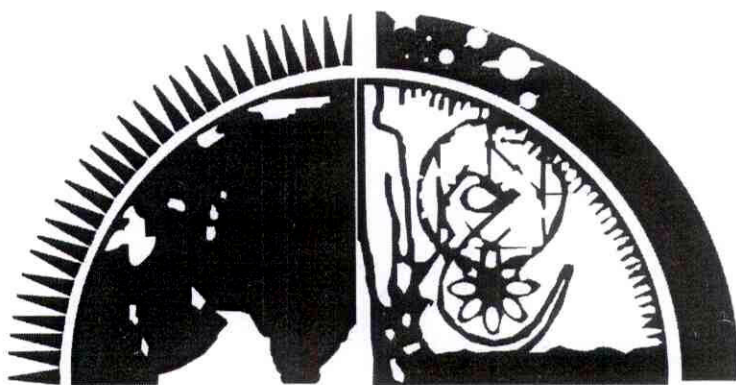
Baqai Medical University

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

Suggestions for Assessing Students During COVID-19 Period

Considering the different requirements of the various regulatory bodies like Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC), Pharmacy Council of Pakistan (PCP), Higher Education Commission (HEC) and others monitoring different disciplines the final summative exams or end of the semester/year exam, are deemed high stakes. End of module or term exams are considered low stakes exams. The testing tools being used will have to be in line with the requirement of these bodies as well as the inherent structure of the disciplines themselves.

The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has on 21st May 2020 published the Policy Guidance Series on Covid-19- Guidance on Assessments and Examinations (Policy Guidance No.6). It has recommended various tools for assessing and testing students. No specific mention has been made for assessing undergraduate or postgraduate students in the health care sector. Problems faced in assessing Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM) Students are given some clarification.

No guidelines regarding online teaching, assessment or evaluation is available from any regulatory, licensing or accrediting body from the health case disciplines like Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC), Pakistan Medical & Dental Council (PM&DC), Pakistan Pharmacy Council (PNC) as to the utility and feasibility of specific teaching or assessment tools to be specifically utilized for remote use during the COVID 19 period.

This fact needs to be kept in focus when developing any policy for MBBS, BDS, Pharm. D, BSN, DPT, or other undergraduate or postgraduate programs. This also needs to be considered for postgraduate who are trained by the university to sit external exams like the FCPS.

It should be considered in such a situation, with due consideration to social distancing the policies given by these regulatory bodies in the pre-COVID 19 days should be applied in letter and spirit. Where physical / social distancing is not possible both during teaching and in the assessment process if an actual patient is to be touched then the feasibility of using Personal Protection Equipment and its cost per candidate to be assessed. This will have to factor in and a balance created yet if pre-COVID 19 teaching and assessment policies as given by the licensing bodies are enforced then the cost might prove to be detrimental. Innovation should be the order of the day and such tools and resources should be utilized to assess the competencies required.

It is to be noted that HEC has discouraged the use of multiple-choice questions unless a sophisticated LMS is used only under limited conditions at this time. The pre-conditions are;

- If delivered through an LMS that randomly generates question sequence, and shows only one question at a time (without the possibility of going back).

- If this is a highly timed activity, with all students concurrently answering the MCQs (without giving time to students to collaborate)

- If this is done traditionally (e.g. by handing over the entire question set), students will collaborate and there would be no way of ascertaining whether a student cheated or knew the material.

The above can easily be met through the current cloud-based MS Teams LMS used by BMU specifically when dealing with formative assessment or even the internal/continuous assessment scoring which is 20% in case of medical and dental graduates and 40 % as mandated by the pharmacy council.

The level of security to ensure non-collaboration and stop cheating by students for High Stakes Exam can be done by deploying a server-based LMS like MOODLE with in-campus examinations so that proctoring / invigilation issues are minimized. It has to be considered that Online Proctoring for examination software not only has limitations yet it is resource-intensive and cost can be prohibitive for smaller universities.

A unique advantage of Baqai Medical University is that it is spread over 125 acres, shares with a few other private universities is the availability of space and the smaller student body. Compared to space or built area. Each class of MBBS program consists of 100 students while BDS consists of 75 students, while other disciplines have a lesser number of students per class. The ratio of space to students can be calculated based on at least 10 lecture halls each with a capacity of seating in pre-COVID days 100 students but with social distancing 25 students. These setups can be used to deploy 100 computers each at a distance of 8 to 10 feet apart allowing 100 students to sit the exam online, without exposure to paper. The proctoring and invigilation for the written exam being on campus can be done by faculty with the support of CCTV.

Similarly, Viva Voce, Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE), Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCE) Laboratory (Video) Examination can be conducted on campus with a strict policy of social distancing and ensuring disinfecting all surfaces.

It is recognized that the primary focus of all disciplines in healthcare is to see the learners' ability to solve presented problems which patients present with, may it be medicine, nursing, pharmacy, or physiotherapy, not just recall of knowledge.

Considering the above parameter the faculty will create assessment plans based on the Learning Objectives with particular emphasis on identifying tools that will test problem-solving abilities as well be as realize the feasibility of the said tool being used in an electronic format or online.

The various tools can be divided into broad categories;

Written

- Multiple Choice Questions

  o One-Best

  o Extended Matching

- Short Answer Questions

- Structured Essay Questions

Practical

- Video demonstration of laboratory practical

- Viva Voce

- Objective Structured Practical Examinations

Clinical

- Objective Structured Clinical Examinations

Annexures will elaborate on the utility and feasibility of various tools described above.

REFERENCES

1. Policy Guidance Series on Covid-19. Guidance on Assessments and Examinations (Policy Guidance No.6). Dated 21st May 2020.

2. Boursicot, K., Kemp, S., Ong, T., Wijaya, L., Goh, S., Freeman, K. and Curran, I., 2020. Conducting a high-stakes OSCE in a COVID-19 environment. *MedEdPublish*, 9(1).

3. Harden R, Lilley P, Patricio M. The definitive guide to the OSCE.ASME Medical Education Booklet No. 8 Assessment of clinical competence using an objective structured clinical examination (OSCE)

2. PURPOSE

This policy has been made to provide guidance for online assessment and examinations for undergraduate and postgraduate courses offered online by any of the constituent institutions of Baqai Medical University.

3. SCOPE

This policy extends to all the constituent institutions of Baqai Medical University that are offering online/distance learning programs following semester, modular, annual, or any other system of education.

4. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall be effective from June 1, 2020.

5. POLICY STATEMENT

5.1. Every effort should be made to complete the online teaching in due schedule and conduct the examinations on time to protect the academic calendar and safeguard the precious time of the students.

5.2. There shall be NO promotion of any student in any course of any program without examination.

5.3. All types of assessments and examinations (either theory or practical) shall be conducted online following HEC Policy Guidance No. 6 on Assessment and Examinations.

5.4. In cases where some sort of assessment has been performed before the lockdown, those marks shall be included in the final totaling of the marks and the results shall be announced as a cumulative of both assessment and examination.

5.5. The passing marks, grading criteria, and GPA calculation shall remain the same as already in practice by BMU.

5.6. The attendance policy shall remain the same for each constituent institution of BMU and for online classes the BMU E-Learning Policy and the SOP for Online Education should be followed.

5.7. The marks distribution for assessment and examinations for the online courses of each constituent institution shall be their prerogative and should be as per the guidelines of respective regulatory bodies (if any).

5.8. The online assessment criteria and its pattern for each course shall be informed/explained to the students before its implementation.

5.9. It is the responsibility of the concerned Chairperson/Head of the Department to make sure the same has been done with utmost satisfaction.

5.10. The Controller of Examinations shall be the chief authority for conducting all examinations whereas all assessments shall be performed by the respective course incharge under the supervision of the concerned Chair and Principal/Director.

5.11. The Examination Department in collaboration with the IT Department, QEC, and concerned college/institute shall do all the necessary arrangements that are required in this regard as per their previous practices.

5.12. The announcement of examinations shall be made through the official website of the university, LMS, social media, and emails to the students.

5.13. The Examination Department shall prepare a schedule keeping the dates and timings in a way to avoid clashes between exams for various faculties in the same time frame.

5.14. Similarly, time table shall be prepared in a manner to provide a chance to those students who wish to appear in any previous courses for improvement along with their regular course examinations.

5.15. The time table shall be announced at least 10 days before the start of exams.

5.16. The students shall pay the prescribed examination fee for each paper in the Accounts Department of the university within the due date with no late fee or after the due date with the recommended late fees.

5.17. Admit cards shall be emailed to the students and the list of students appearing in the examinations shall be provided to the concerned Principal/Director.

5.18. The Examination Department/Semester Cell shall intimate the enrolled students about the paper pattern and general protocols to be followed during the online examinations.

5.19. The examination paper pattern shall be as per the policy of the respective institute of BMU and according to the directives of the concerned regulatory bodies.

5.20. It is the liability of the students to keep themselves updated by regularly visiting the university website, checking official emails and social media, and contacting the Principal/Director secretariat.

5.21. Once the exam has been conducted and the student fails to appear due to any reason, the case shall be dealt as per the existing rules and policies of the constituent institution for reappearance and retake of the examination.

5.22. The online retake/makeup/supplementary examinations shall be announced as per the previously implemented policies of each constituent institution of BMU.

5.23. The pattern for the online retake/makeup/supplementary examinations shall remain the same as implemented in the regular examinations.

5.24. In case, if the students are called to appear in the university campus, it is the responsibility of the students to manage the transportation and appear for the examination on due date and time. The university shall not provide any transportation under these extraordinary circumstances.

5.25. In cases where a physical clinical assessment of the candidate is mandatory, an undertaking shall be taken from the student before the examination.

5.26. In the case where a student is not willing with the online assessment and examination system, the candidate on his own will after signing an undertaking can be called to the university campus for appearance as advised by the regulatory bodies. The case shall be dealt with as per the existing freezing policy of the concerned college/institute of BMU.

5.27. All necessary protocols like the use of masks, gloves, sanitizer, social distancing, etc. should strictly be followed where applicable and whenever required.

5.28. Any grievance in any assessment or online examination shall be lodge through the Student Support Cell (SSC). The students should be informed about the role of SSC.