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BAQAI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

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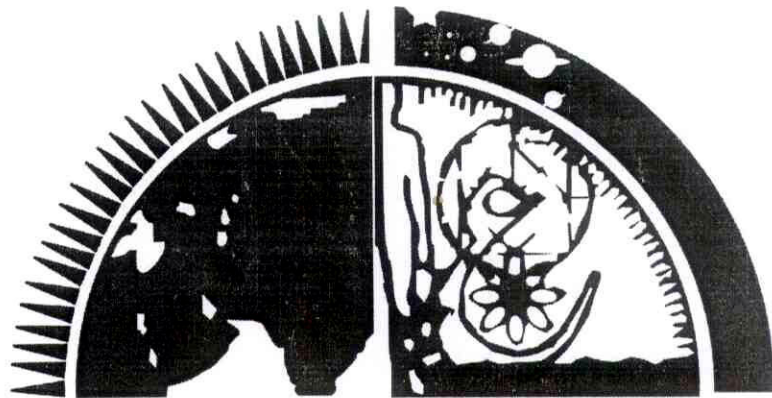
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BAQAI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

**POLICY ON
E-LEARNING**

Version 1.0

2020



Baqai Medical University

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1. SCOPE

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Higher Education Commission (HEC) issued a general guideline for online teaching to all universities of Pakistan. In view of those guidelines, Baqai Medical University has formed this policy to ensure the smooth implementation of online teaching for degree programs both at undergraduate as well as postgraduate levels with equivalent quality of education to that of physical modes.

This policy extends to all the faculties, colleges, institutes, departments, and hospitals that are under the umbrella of Baqai Medical University and also to the personnel including faculty, staff, and students working therein as full time, part-time or on an honorary basis.

2. PURPOSE

The E-Learning Policy of BMU has been formed to provide uniform modus operandi for the teaching of courses both at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. This policy has been developed to start the online education programs under special circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the same may help various constituent institutions of BMU to continue/offer various online programs in the future with timely improvements in the contents of this policy.

This policy does not replace any of the pre-approved rules and regulations of BMU, but it is being prepared to give an additional mechanism towards the start and use of a new era of technology that can be effectively implemented and managed for quality education at BMU.

3. DATE OF IMPLEMENTATION

This policy shall be effective from May 1, 2020.

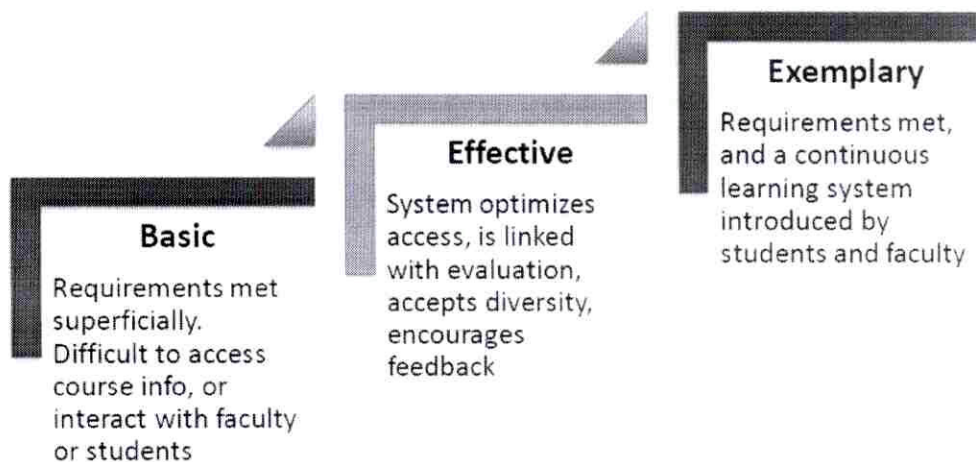
4. POLICY STATEMENT

4.1. General Requirements

1. The university shall take necessary actions from time to time to make sure that the E-Learning/Online Education or Distance Learning Program is running smoothly and effectively.
2. For this purpose, the university shall develop an Online System. The online system shall be comprised of the technology, i.e., development/acquisition of a Learning Management System (LMS), an online library facility, and other relevant requirements/facilities which are necessary for an online education system.
3. The LMS should be maintained and run in a way to provide necessary information on the programs offered, track progress, coordinate activities, and govern the system.
4. The university shall ensure that a Campus Management System (CMS) shall be developed/acquired in due time and implemented as soon as possible.
5. It will be the core responsibility of the IT department of the university (BIIT) to manage and make sure the smooth running of the LMS and CMS systems and make necessary arrangements thereunder.

4.2. Formation of Online Academic Council

1. The university shall constitute an Online Academic Council (OAC). The basic working principle of the OAC shall remain the same to that of the Academic Council as approved in its charter and mentioned in the codebook. The composition may, however, be altered as per the need and technology-friendly skills by the VC of the university.
2. The OAC shall be the supreme academic body of the BMU to approve online courses, certify the online faculty, and adjudicate the disputes or complaints.
3. The OAC shall check the readiness of a program and shall give the final approval for the start of an online program. It is the responsibility of the OAC to ensure that the quality tier for online education, as prescribed by HEC, is always met and should not be less than 'Effective'.



4. The OAC shall approve the relevant policies, SOPs, and guidelines prepared thereunder for an online program offered by any of the constituent institutions of BMU.
5. There is no limit for the maximum number of meetings of the OAC. It shall conduct its meeting on a need basis. However, a minimum of two meetings per year shall be conducted to oversee the progress made and induct any proposals submitted by the constituent institutions.
6. The OAC shall also look into the matters other than the E-Learning during any unusual circumstances like COVID-19 pandemic or any other unforeseen circumstances where the meeting of regular Academic Council is not possible. The matters approved therein shall be implemented in full letter and spirit. Likewise, the matters of OAC can be brought to the regular Academic Council whenever deemed necessary.

4.3. Formation of Various Boards and Committees

1. The VC shall form an E-Learning Committee of the university including members from all the concerned institutions for undergraduate programs. The committee shall be given the task to keep things in order by holding regular meetings and guiding on various parameters including preparation of study guides, online courses, time tables, lesson plans, faculty and student training, students and faculty registration on LMS, quiz, assignments, etc. This shall be done by following the approved SOPs and guidelines

provided by the HEC (and concerned councils, if any). The recommendations of this committee shall be submitted for the final approval of the OAC. The Chairman of the committee may add a few more members if deemed necessary to further strengthen the committee with the approval of VC.

2. The VC shall also constitute an HEC Liaison Committee as per the directives of HEC. This committee shall make a link between BMU and HEC for online education. Similarly, the VC may form any other committee or board as per the requirements or on the directives of HEC or any concerned regulatory body.
3. The Registrar/Secretary BASR shall constitute an E-BASR or any other E-Committee as deem necessary for the postgraduate programs with the approval of the VC. The board or committee formed thereunder shall constitute the working SOP and will send it to the OAC for final approval.
4. The Registrar with the approval of the VC may also constitute an Online Ethics Committee to perform the work already assigned for such a committee that has not been possible during unusual circumstances or university closure (e.g., Corona pandemic).
5. The constituent institutions shall form their E-Academic Board and E-Learning Coordination Committee. The Head of the Institutions shall decide as per the need and technology-friendly skills for the selection of the members and will send it to the OAC for final approval.
6. Internally, any of the constituent institutions of BMU that are offering E-Learning programs may form any other committee(s) or teams as deem necessary and submit a copy of the same to the Registrar's Office for information. For undergraduate programs, the Principal/Director of the Institution shall be the main authority to form such committees and for postgraduate programs. The Dean of the Faculty shall approve the members of the committee.

4.4. Preparation for Launching an Online Program

1. For launching an online program, basic requirements must be fulfilled before its start and the same may be informed to the OAC. These requirements may include:
 - i. **Preparation of Study Guides:** A study guide for any program should include (but not limited to) course introduction, learning objectives, course contents, time table, lesson/lecture schedule, suggested books and reading materials, attendance rules, quiz and assignment criteria, any other relevant or necessary item/policy. Every institution of BMU must take prior approval of courses to be offered online through OAC submitted through the respective E-Academic Board by the Institutional Head. The Department of Medical Education shall provide the necessary guidance to the constituent institutions in the preparation of the study guides.
 - ii. **Training of the Faculty:** The OAC should be informed about each faculty member who will be involved in online teaching. Proper information regarding their training/certification shall be furnished to the OAC before the start of an online program. BIIT shall facilitate the constituent institutions of BMU in the training and certification for online teaching and use of LMS and CMS.

iii. Training of the Students: All concerned students should be informed and registered well in advance for the online program to be offered. For registration of students, basic information such as name, roll number, enrolment number, complete mailing address, cell and WhatsApp number, email address, etc., should be made available. The main responsibility to gather and provide the updated information to the concerned institutions is of the Student Affairs Department. However, the Student Affairs Department may seek the assistance of the concerned institution for updating the required information. Similarly, the BASR Secretariat shall provide the same information for postgraduate students.

iv. Online Readiness and Technical Support: All online programs shall be designed and offered in proper liaison with the IT department of BMU so that proper technical support shall always be readily available. The IT department shall do the students and faculty registration and training on LMS and CMS by issuing proper IDs. They will install, run, maintain, and look after the whole LMS and CMS.

v. Dry Run: A dry run shall be performed with the faculty to test the system and identify any unforeseen problems particularly for a faculty first time offering any course.

2. In the case of lab classes and clinical rounds, proper methodology shall be developed by the concerned constituent institution in collaboration with the QEC and DME of BMU in light of the guidance provided by HEC. The document shall be submitted to the OAC for final approval.
3. A uniform and robust student assessment or examination policy shall be formed for all the constituent institutions of BMU. The policy shall be made by the QEC, DME, Examination Department and the concerned institutional Heads considering the annual, semester, and modular systems as well as the directives of the government, HEC, and respective councils.

4.5. General Guidance for the Preparation of Standard Operating Procedures

1. The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) shall be prepared following the E-Learning Policy of BMU and the standard and parameters set by the Higher Education Commission (HEC).
2. Considering all the points suggested in this policy, the concerned institutional Head in collaboration with the QEC shall draft a working SOP for their respective programs to be offered online. These SOPs shall be submitted to the OAC for review and final approval.
3. E-learning should be based on both synchronous (online lectures) and asynchronous (recorded lectures) methods of teaching.
4. The concerned college/institute has to identify the ratio or pattern which they adopt for any of its E-learning programs. However, in any case, the quality of teaching and benefit to the student should always be the prime objective.
5. It should always be kept in mind that the internet quality and speed is not uniform for every student and even teachers. Distortion during live sessions due to internet speed

may occur either from the end of the teacher or students. Mishaps like electricity failure, problems in the LMS, error in software, or hardware may occur at any time. There should always be a proper backup/makeup plan and facility as the core objective of BMU is always to provide quality education to its students.

6. The internet dependency of students should also be considered and very long sessions either in synchronous or asynchronous teaching should be tried to be avoided to the best possible option.
7. Time tables and lesson plans should be set in the easiest of the way.

4.6. Cyber Security and Technology Options for LMS and CMS

1. The IT department of BMU shall look into the matters related to the cyber security and technology options in light of the directives, if any, provided by the HEC for online teaching.
2. The IT department shall time-to-time inform the OAC in writing about the existing mechanism and shall suggest for improvements in the existing technology for a better outcome.

4.7. Student Support Cell

1. The university shall form an online Student Support Cell (SSC).
2. The purpose of this SSC would be to act as a point of contact (POC) and manage the issues and complaints (if any) being received from students regarding online teaching and take necessary actions for the solution.
3. A team for the said purpose may be formed by the VC that shall include all Principals, Directors, Deans, Registrar, Controller of Examinations, Director of Students Affairs, and the IT department.
4. All queries and complaints will be forwarded to the concerned institutional heads, Registrar, Director of Students Affairs, IT department, and the concerned Deans through the online SSC webpage with a copy to Director QEC. Director QEC may take time-to-time feedback regarding their resolution and response.
5. A separate email ID should be issued to Director QEC to avoid any confusion or delay. This email ID must be displayed on the University Website.
6. All academic complaints and queries shall be dealt by the concerned institutional head (undergraduate by Principal/Director and postgraduate by Dean). Similarly, all technical complaints and queries will be handled by the IT department. Queries related to the administration will be dealt with by the Registrar.
7. The students and the faculty shall be informed of the contact details and the same information may also be made available on the university website and social media.
8. The QEC in collaboration with DME (if required) will perform surveys to check student satisfaction for online education and matters involved therein.

4.8. Support for Technology Deficient Students

1. In case, if any student is living in such a remote area, where there is no internet access or the internet facilities have been blocked by law enforcement agencies of Pakistan or the internet facility has been interrupted due to any technical reason during the ongoing online classes, such student has to inform immediately the SSC or the concerned Principal/Director of the college/institute.
2. In such extraordinary circumstances, the complete online lectures and reading materials with all other necessary information/material may be provided to the student on a CD/DVD or flash drive or both by the university.
3. The SSC, with the concerned Principal/Director and Controller of Examinations, shall decide for the assessment/exam, quiz, and assignment performance of the affected student and the student shall be informed of the alternate schedule.
4. In case if a student is not willing to take the online session and wants to continue his/her studies physically at BMU of the same course, the student can do so whenever the same course will be offered with any junior batch. Likewise, the graduating/completion time for the program may exceed for that particular student due to reversion in a junior batch. No additional fees have to be paid by the student if all dues are already cleared.

4.9. Support for Technology Deficient Faculty

1. The training of the faculty involved in an online teaching program is an integral part of any E-learning program to be offered by any constituent institution of BMU.
2. However, any faculty member who does not have access to the required electronic gadgets such as laptop or desktop computer and smartphone or tablet or the same has gone out of order during the progression of the session, the university shall provide support to such faculty members either at the main campus or in the BIIT city campus at Nazimabad.
3. The faculty member has to make himself/herself available at the said campus for the delivery of online lectures at the scheduled time and date.
4. There shall be no separate traveling allowance. However, utilization of the university transport shall be at the discretion of the competent authority as well as on the availability of transport resources.

4.10. Code of Conduct for Faculty Involved in E-Learning

1. It is the sole responsibility of the teacher to maintain professionalism for online teaching activities carried out from home.
2. For all classes and activities that will be performed from home, the faculty member has to self-arrange and utilize the necessary items such as the internet, laptop or desktop computer, smartphone, etc.
3. All faculty members shall use the official email IDs for all types of professional activities related to BMU.

4. The faculty member shall also maintain the log of their activities including emails, lectures, topics, etc. performed for any online program.
5. It is the sole responsibility of each teacher to continually thrive for improvement in the quality of lectures.
6. The teacher should always maintain the integrity of the profession and should not carry out any work that is against general teaching ethics.
7. No online class or discussion should be carried out in an informal environment especially when the video and audio options are open, e.g., taking a class with baby dandling or doing kitchen or domestic work, improper dressing, continuous movement from one area to another, smoking, etc.
8. Anything which can create disturbance during the online class shall be avoided to the utmost possibility.
9. Punctuality to the prescheduled timing shall always be maintained.
10. The teachers should always record their online sessions either themselves or by the IT department.
11. The faculty should always make themselves available online during the university timings from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm from Monday to Friday and if required even on Saturday.
12. Any electronic or social media app that is being used by the concerned college/institute/university for any correspondence shall be considered as official, e.g., Email, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, Goggle Meet, etc.
13. Self-practice for the use of LMS and effective online teaching is mandatory and sole responsibility of the teacher. If a teacher who despite training of online teaching failed to deliver online lectures effectively just because of lack of self-practice, this shall be considered as a clear case of lack of interest and commitment towards his/her assigned duties/responsibilities. All such matters will be dealt with according to the approved policy of BMU on Conflict of interest and commitment.

4.11. Code of Conduct and Discipline Rules for Students

1. It is the sole responsibility of the student to make arrangements for necessary items if he/she is registered in an online program at BMU and attending classes from outside the university such as a laptop or desktop computer and smartphone or tablet.
2. The student should have access to internet service at a reasonable speed to access the E-learning activities of the registered program.
3. It is the sole responsibility of each student to make himself/herself available online during the scheduled timings from Monday to Friday and if required even on Saturday.
4. The students shall always keep their microphones and camera off during a lecture or a class. In case of any question, they have to first take permission by writing in the

chatbox or clicking the raise hand option. Once allowed by the teacher, they can unmute their microphone and ask the question and thereafter immediately mute it again.

5. All students must place their picture on the official LMS profile so that they can be identified easily.
6. The students are strictly not allowed to post or make public the recorded sessions/lectures for any course on social media.
7. Any electronic or social media app that is being used by the concerned college/institute/university for any correspondence should be considered as official, e.g., Email, WhatsApp, Zoom, Skype, MS Teams, Goggle Meet, etc.
8. All students should use the official email IDs (roll-number@bmu.edu.pk) for all types of official correspondence.
9. It is the responsibility of a student to change the password of the official email ID once received from the respective college/institution and must not share it with anyone. For any technical help, they can contact the IT department of BMU at helpdesk@baqai.edu.pk.
10. It is the sole responsibility of the student to regularly check the official email, WhatsApp group, and LMS for any updates or other academic activities.
11. Any relevant matter of discipline will be dealt with according to the rules and regulations of respective institutes and BMU and if required may be sent to the Discipline Committee.
12. The action against the act of indiscipline depends on the nature and gravity of indiscipline. The action may include fines, debarring from attending online classes for a particular period or expulsion from the university, etc.
13. The following (but not limited to) shall constitute as acts of indiscipline for which action may be taken against the student(s):
 - a. Breach of any rule of the college/institute or the university.
 - b. Disobedience to authority.
 - c. Unmuting the microphone during the class unless allowed to do so.
 - d. Muting any other person of the online session.
 - e. Opening the camera unless allowed to do so.
 - f. Making noise or interruption during the class or use of indecent or filthy language.
 - g. Use of undesirable remarks or gestures.
 - h. Posting comments on social media that are derogatory to the prestige/reputation of the College, Institute, Faculty, and University or its personnel.
 - i. Any other matter as decided by the competent authority of BMU.

ANNEXURE A

CHECKLIST FOR THE START OF AN ONLINE PROGRAM

S. NO.	PARAMETER	STATUS	
		YES	NO
1.	Faculty E-Academic Board formed		
2.	Institutional Coordination Committee formed		
3.	SOP for E-learning program developed		
4.	Study guide as per minimum recommendations have been prepared		
5.	Online courses to be offered approved by OAC		
6.	All necessary information of an online program is available on LMS		
7.	Books and reading materials available on LMS		
8.	Faculty trained and certified ready for online teaching and using LMS		
9.	Necessary updated information of students collected		
10.	Students training performed		
11.	Dry run performed (if applicable)		
12.	Code of conduct informed to the faculty		
13.	Code of conduct informed to the students		
14.	Any technology deficient student(s) identified		
15.	Role of SSC informed to the faculty and students		