



HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

H-9, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN, Website: <http://www.hec.gov.pk>

Dr. Nadia Tahir

Managing Director
Quality Assurance Agency

No.DD-1(QAA)/HEC/2020

Dated: 21.4.2020

Subject: **Establishment of Online Academic Council (OAC) in HEIs to oversee the Quality of Online Education.**

Dear Vice Chancellor/Rector/Head of the Institution

Your kind attention is invited to HEC Policy Guidance No.05 (Online Readiness) circulated to all HEIs for compliance, and also available at HEC website (<https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/Pages/Covid-19-Guidance.aspx>).

In order to ensure the quality of online education during the prevailing situation, HEC will use the concept of "Online Readiness". Detailed guidance has been issued on the elements of online readiness.

The first step in this process is the formal adoption of a policy and SOPs for the authorization of the online delivery of qualified courses.

A draft model policy document is attached for your guidance. It is requested that such a policy framework is adopted finally by the decision making body of the university. Pending the endorsement of the decision making body, provisional authorization may kindly be provided by the Vice Chancellor/Rector/Head of Institution.

The second important step, as described in the model policy document, is the establishment or designation of a formal decision-making body which will authorize online delivery of current courses, and adjudicate any disputes or disagreements arising in relation to these courses. The document refers to it as the online Accreditation Committee (OAC). In practice, universities can choose from a number of alternative options including;

- a. Establishment of a new, adhoc committee chaired by the Vice-Chancellor and including the Deans.
- b. Establishing it as an interim committee of the Academic council.
- c. Designating an existing body, e.g. the Academic Council to function as the OAC.

Third, the university needs to adopt transparent SOPs for the process of designating a course as an online course. For example, the SOPs may include the following steps.

1. The HOD ensures that all HEC requirements have been met by the faculty members & the case, and recommends as per approval.
2. The Dean initiates it to the OAC for a decision.
3. The OAC forwards the data and approval on a case by case basis.
4. The OAC solicits daily student feedback on the performance of the course.
5. In case of problem, the HOD and faculty members are directed to address these.
6. If the HOD and/or Faculty member have obtained approval through misappropriate of facts, action would be initiated against them.

With best regards

Yours sincerely,

Nadia Tahir

(Dr Nadia Tahir)

All Vice-Chancellor/Rector/Head of the Institute

Encl.: Online Readiness Form.

For further queries please contact Mr. Ghazanfar Bhatti, (e-mail: mgbhatti@hec.gov.pk)

Draft: Online Readiness Model Policy

Theme	#	Indicator	Y	N
University Readiness	1.1	Has the University formally adopted a policy for approval of courses that can be delivered online?		
	1.2	Has the University formally adopted standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the approval of courses for online delivery?		
	1.3	Has the University notified a governing system (e.g., an "Online Academic Council" / OAC) responsible for approving online courses?		
	1.4	Does the University have an operational Learning Management System (LMS)?		
Course Readiness	2.1	How many courses have been authorized for online delivery?
	2.2	For each course that has been authorized for online delivery, please certify that the following elements have been uploaded onto the LMS. 1. Introduction to the course 2. Learning Objectives 3. Textbooks to be used for the course 4. Description of the system of evaluation (exams, etc.) 5. Detailed lesson plans for each remaining lecture 6. Key dates, time and venue of meetings		
Faculty Readiness	3.1	For each course authorized for online delivery, please certify that the faculty member or faculty members concerned have successfully completed an introductory course in online teaching, as advised by NAHE.		
Technology Readiness	4.1	Has the university acquired certificates for all required software, including the LMS, and, as needed, MS Teams, Zoom, or Google Classroom?		
	4.2	Has the university provided all faculty members and students access to a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to enable them to access required material offline?		
	4.3	Has the university set up a tech support system (for trouble-shooting and real time assistance to faculty and students in online classroom management)?		
Library Readiness	5.1	Does the university have a valid subscription to HEC's Digital Library?		

	5.2	Are the required materials for all courses available through the online library system?		
Student Readiness	6.1	Has the university collected information on the online readiness of its students, including the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place of residence • Contact information (email, mobile, WhatsApp numbers) • Type of Internet access (landline, mobile) • Preferred Mobile service provider (Jazz, Zong, Telenor) • Nature of devices (desktop, laptop, table, smart phone) 		
	6.2	Has the university distributed required certificates to all students (e.g., MS Teams, Zoom, Google Classroom)		
	6.3	Has the university established a system under the Director of Student Affairs to address students' complaints regarding connectivity and other problems with online education?		
Evaluation Readiness	7.1	Has the university adopted a uniform policy for student evaluations in online courses?		
Laboratory Readiness	8.1	Has the university coordinated with professional councils on possible and permissible alternative modes of delivering psychomotor information, e.g., with regard to laboratory requirements?		