

Dated the 1st March, 2021

Government of India
Ministry of Health & Family Welfare

SOP on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 in skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies in technical & professional programs requiring laboratory /experimental work.

(In supersession of guidelines issued earlier dated 8th September 2020)

1. Background

Government of India is following a phase-wise unlocking of activities. In days to come, this would also involve resumption of activities in skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies in technical & professional programs requiring laboratory /experimental work.

2. Scope

This SOP aims to enable safe resumption of teaching/ training activities in skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies in technical & professional programs requiring laboratory /experimental work.

As far as **skill or entrepreneurship training** is concerned the same shall be permitted in national skill training institutes, industrial training institutes, short term training centres registered with National Skill Development Corporation or State Skill Development Missions or other Ministries of Government of India or State government, National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE), and their training providers.

Similarly, for Higher Educational Institutions conducting PhD or technical and professional programs requiring laboratory / experimental works will be permitted by Department of Higher Education in consultation with Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

This SOP outlines various generic precautionary measures to be adopted in addition to specific measures to be taken at these institutes to prevent spread of COVID-19.

3. Generic Preventive Measures

The generic preventive measures include simple public health measures that are to be followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19. These measures need to be observed by all (faculty, employees, students and visitors) in these places at all times.

These include:

- i. Individuals must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet (2 gaj ki doori) in public places as far as feasible.
- ii. Use of face covers/masks at all times. They must be worn properly to cover nose and mouth. Touching the front portion of mask/face covers to be avoided.

- iii. Frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty. Use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers (for at least 20 seconds) can be done wherever feasible.
- iv. Respiratory etiquettes to be strictly followed. This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue/handkerchief/flexed elbow and disposing off used tissues properly.
- v. Self-monitoring of health by all and reporting any illness at the earliest.
- vi. Spitting shall be strictly prohibited.
- vii. Installation & use of Aarogya Setu App shall be advised to all.

4. All Institutions conducting skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies shall specifically ensure the following arrangements

- i. Online/distance learning shall continue to be permitted and shall be encouraged.
- ii. Skill or entrepreneurship training have been permitted with effect from 21st September 2020.
- iii. Higher educational institutions conducting PhD or technical and professional programs requiring laboratory / experimental works will be permitted by Department of Higher Education in consultation with MHA strictly following guidelines as indicated in the SOP.

4.1 Before opening up of the institution

a) Planning of reopening of institutions

- i. The institutions conducting skill or entrepreneurship training institutions, higher educational institutions conducting doctoral courses and post graduate studies shall only be allowed to open if they are outside the containment zones. Further, students and staff living in containment zones will not be allowed to attend the Institution. Students and staff shall also be advised not to visit areas falling within containment zones.
- ii. Prior to resumption of activities, all work areas intended for conduct of skill or entrepreneurship training, doctoral courses and post graduate studies including hostels, laboratories, other common utility areas shall be sanitized with 1% sodium hypochlorite solution, with particular attention to frequently touched surfaces.
- iii. Wherever skill-based trainings on equipments are envisaged to be utilized, place the equipment 6 feet apart, wherever feasible, to facilitate physical distancing. Similarly, utilize any outdoor space by relocating equipment outside like in verandah, courtyard, shed, etc.
- iv. Instead of biometric attendance alternate arrangements for contactless attendance may be made.
- v. For ensuring queue management, inside and outside the premises, specific markings on the floor with a gap of 6 feet may be made and be adhered to.
- vi. The institute should display State helpline numbers and also numbers of local health authorities etc. to faculty /trainees / staff to contact in case of any emergency.
- vii. For air-conditioning/ventilation, the guidelines of CPWD shall be followed which mentions that the temperature setting of all air conditioning devices should be in the range of 24-30° C, relative humidity should be in the range of 40-70%, intake of fresh air should be as much as possible and cross ventilation should be there.
- viii. Lockers of students will remain in use, as long as physical distancing and regular disinfection is maintained.

- ix. Gymnasiums shall follow MoHFW guidelines (available at: <https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/Guidelinesonyogainstitutesandgymnasiums03082020.pdf>).
- x. Swimming pools shall function in accordance with SOP issued by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports (in consultation with MHA).
- xi. Prominently display signages, posters and standees must indicate the dos and don'ts for the staff and students.

b) Planning and scheduling of activities

- i. The academic calendar shall be planned with a view to avoid overcrowding, congregation etc. As far as possible, the academic calendar should promote a mix of regular classes and online teaching/ training, assessments.
- ii. The day-wise, time-wise scheduling of teaching/training activities may be done in a staggered manner so as to avoid overcrowding at any one location on any day.
- iii. For practical activities in laboratories maximum capacity per session based on redesigned spaces, may be planned and scheduled accordingly.
- iv. All employees who are at higher risk i.e. older employees, pregnant employees and employees who have underlying medical conditions to take extra precautions. They should preferably not be exposed to any front-line work requiring direct contact with the students.

c) Availability and management of supplies

- i. Appropriate back-up stock of personal protection items like face covers/masks, visors, hand sanitizers etc. shall be made available by management to the teachers and staff.
- ii. Provide an adequate supply of thermal guns, alcohol wipes or 1% sodium hypochlorite solutions and disposable paper towels, soap, IEC materials on COVID.
- iii. Pulse oximeter to check oxygen saturation levels of any symptomatic person must be arranged.
- iv. Ensure availability of sufficient covered dustbins and trash cans
- v. Provision for proper disposal of used personal protection items and general waste in accordance with CPCB guidelines (available at: https://cpcb.nic.in/uploads/Projects/Bio-Medical-Waste/BMW-GUIDELINES-COVID_1.pdf)
- vi. Housekeeping staff to be informed & trained about norms for waste management & disposal.

4.2 After opening of the teaching/training institutions

a) At the entry point

- i. Entrance to have mandatory hand hygiene (sanitizer dispenser) and thermal screening provisions. Multiple gates/separate gates, if feasible, should be used for entry and exit while maintaining physical distancing norms.
- ii. Only asymptomatic persons (faculty, employees, students and visitors) to be allowed in the premises. If a faculty/employee/student/visitor is found to be symptomatic, he/she should be referred to nearest health center.
- iii. Posters/standees on preventive measures about COVID-19 to be displayed prominently.
- iv. Proper crowd management in the parking lots, in corridors and in elevators – duly following physical distancing norms shall be organized by the management/ any out-sourced agencies.
- v. Entry of visitors should be strictly regulated/restricted.

b) Conduct of teaching activities in the classrooms

- i. Seating arrangement to ensure a distance of 6 feet between chairs, desks etc.
- ii. Staggering of classroom activities to be done, with separate timing slots, to allow for adequate physical distancing and disinfection of classroom premises.
- iii. Academic scheduling should have inter-mix of regular classroom teaching and online teaching/ assessments.
- iv. The teaching faculty will ensure that they themselves as well as the students wear masks throughout the conduct of the teaching activities.
- v. Sharing of items like laptops, notebook, stationary etc. amongst students should be avoided as much as feasible.

c) Conduct of skill based training in workshops/laboratories

- i. Ensure that the equipment has been disinfected, particularly the frequently touched surfaces before each use.
- ii. Ensure a floor area of 4m² per person is available for working on equipment/workstation.
- iii. Ensure that members sanitize their hands before and after using training equipment. For such purpose hand sanitizer should be provided at workstations/simulation labs etc.

d) Activities in common area – library, canteen, common rooms, gymnasium, etc.

- i. Physical distancing of 6 feet needs to be maintained.
- ii. Person using the common areas need to use mask/face cover all the time.
- iii. Canteens shall be allowed to function in accordance with MoHFW's SOP on preventive measures to contain spread of COVID-19 in offices (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/SOPonpreventivemeasuresstocontainspreadofCOVID19inoffices.pdf>).
- iv. Wherever applicable, avoid cash transactions and e-wallets etc may be promoted.

e) Transportation to and from the institution

If transportation facility is being managed by the institution, proper physical distancing, sanitization of buses/ other transport vehicles (with 1% sodium hypochlorite) shall be ensured.

5. Hygiene and Sanitation

- i. Daily cleaning of the floors shall be taken up.
- ii. Provision of soap in toilets and hand sanitizers in other common areas in sufficient quantity must be ensured.
- iii. Cleaning and regular disinfection (using 1% sodium hypochlorite) of frequently touched surfaces (doorknobs, elevator buttons, hand rails, chairs, benches, washroom fixtures, etc.) to be made mandatory in all class rooms, laboratories, lockers, parking areas, other common areas etc. before beginning of classes and at the end of the day.

- iv. Teaching materials, computers, laptops, printers, shall be regularly disinfected with 70% alcohol swipe.
- v. Deep cleaning of all drinking and hand washing stations, washrooms and lavatories shall be ensured.
- vi. Disposal of used face covers / masks in separate covered bins shall be ensured.
- vii. Residential buildings, if any, also needs to be sanitized regularly.

6. Risk Communication

- i. Create awareness among the students to follow simple preventive health measures like hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, physical distancing and wearing of masks.
- ii. Ensure regular counselling is done for students reporting mental health issues such as anxiety and depression.
- iii. If a student, faculty or staff is sick, she/he should not come to institute and follow necessary protocols in this regard

7. Additional considerations for medical post-graduate students needs to be ensured.

Post-graduate medical students involved in COVID patient care and in essential non-COVID work shall familiarize themselves with the Infection Prevention and Control protocol guidelines available at: (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf//National%20Guidelines%20for%20IPC%20in%20HCF%20-%20final%281%29.pdf>) besides guidelines on rational use of Personal Protective Equipment available at : (<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/GuidelinesonrationaluseofPersonalProtectiveEquipment.pdf> and

<https://www.mohfw.gov.in/pdf/UpdatedAdditionalguidelinesonrationaluseofPersonalProtectiveEquipmentsettingapproachforHealthfunctionariesworkinginnonCOVID19areas.pdf>)

8. Ensure Safe Stay at Hostels, guest houses and other residential complexes

The measures as proposed above related to use of mask/face cover, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, physical distancing norms and environmental sanitation will apply to hostels and other residential buildings.

Further, the following specific points for Hostels/guest houses/other residential complexes shall also be followed:

- i. Students who are not local residents of the city/town, or do not have any support at home, or do not have facility for on-line education may be prioritized for allotment of hostel rooms.
- ii. Students coming from different locations may bring negative RT-PCR report, as per State protocols and self-monitor their health for 14 days.
- iii. Screening of every boarder needs to be done before they start staying at the hostel. Only asymptomatic boarders should be allowed to join. Symptomatic boarders shall be isolated in the designated isolation facility at the institute, till such time, they are seen by a doctor.
- iv. Proper crowd management in the hostel as well as in outside premises like parking lots – duly following physical distancing norms shall be ensured. Gatherings/congregations should be in accordance with the SOPs of the State/UT concerned
- v. In shared rooms/dormitories, the beds should be placed at a distance of 6 feet from each other. Temporary partitions may be considered, if feasible. Any symptomatic student should be immediately given a single room and then provided requisite medical care.

- vi. Mess facility, if any within the premises, shall follow physical distancing norms at all times. Staggering of meal timings may be done to prevent overcrowding.
- vii. Hostel should be out of bound for all persons except essential staff with known health status.

9. SOP to be followed in case a student/faculty/staff develops symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty in breathing)

- i. Place the ill person in a room or area where they are isolated from others.
- ii. Inform parents/guardians as the case may be.
- iii. Patient will remain isolated while wearing a mask/face cover till such time they are examined by a doctor.
- iv. Immediately inform the nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) or call the state or district helpline.
- v. A risk assessment shall be undertaken by the designated public health authority (district RRT/treating physician) and accordingly further action be initiated regarding management of case, their contacts and need for disinfection.
- vi. Disinfection of the premises to be taken up if the person is found positive.
- vii. If there is clustering of cases in hostel/residential building, inform local health authorities immediately.