



# GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING OF MEDICAL COLLEGES AND OTHER AFILIATED INSTITUTIONS OF KUHS

KERALA UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

## **KUHS COVID-19 Guidelines for Reopening of Affiliated Colleges**

The following measures shall be strictly followed by all (faculty members, employees, students and visitors) at all times to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19:

- i. **Practice of Safe distancing:** Physical distancing of at least approximately 6 feet (two meters) to be followed as far as feasible
- ii. **Masking:** Use of face shields/masks to be made mandatory.  
(<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>)
- iii. **Hand hygiene:** Frequent hand washing with soap (for at least 40-60 seconds) even when hands are not visibly dirty. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers (containing minimum 70% alcohol) shall be used for hand hygiene wherever hand washing facilities are not readily available).
- iv. **Respiratory etiquette:** This involves strict practice of covering one's mouth and nose while coughing/sneezing with a tissue paper /flexed elbow and disposing of used tissues properly.
- v. **Self-monitoring of health** and being vigilant about prevention by restraining from activities: Those who have directly come across with known cases or suspects are considered as primary contacts and are supposed to go in to self-quarantine (Refer latest guidelines from DHS, Kerala). The Govt. have given specific directions on sanctioning special leave and this should be availed by all means.
- vi. **Prompt reporting of contact/exposure** history and disclosure of any symptoms at the earliest to the relevant superiors / colleagues.
- vii. **Spitting** in the campus, within hospital and public premises should be strictly prohibited.
- viii. Installation & use of **Arogya Setu App** is recommended.

- ix. **Sharing** of objects like pen / pencil / smart phones etc. should be avoided
- x. Having tea/coffee, snacks and food ***in groups*** in canteens, mess and restaurants should be strictly avoided. Disposable cups shall be made mandatory in all places

Special precautions (Getting in to public conveyance / college bus with less number of passengers, adhering to seating arrangements, not getting exposed to gathering or crowded situations, starting ahead of time etc. should be practiced during travel as this has been identified as a high risk event for transmission.

Before resuming activities on campuses, the colleges are advised to device their own schedule of activities tailor-made as per the local prevailing social and public health conditions so as to effectively deal with any eventuality arising due to COVID -19/ Post-COVID-19 conditions. As the disease is still active in the community, utmost sense of vigil and precautions should be practiced by everybody. All closed spaces and crowded places like classrooms and cafeteria where the risk of transmission is high, should be dealt with extreme precaution. The reopening of colleges will relieve the teaching and academic staff, as well as students from uncertainties regarding students' career, mode of functioning including the conduct of physical classes. It is felt that even after the spread of Corona virus is contained, certain preventive measures will be required to be followed for quite some time to avoid its recurrence, especially in educational institutions.

## Issues and Challenges

It may be difficult to comprehend all the challenges/ situations which the colleges may be required to handle while they plan to reopen. At some point we have to resume to normal life and we are carefully planning this as per the guidelines of the Govt. However, some of the issues which they may be required to handle instantly are given below:

- i. To follow the advisories/guidelines/directions issued by the Central/State Government, Ministry of Education, Apex councils, and UGC from time to time to prevent the spread of COVID19. If anybody has doubts, please consult with credible source only.
- ii. Uncertainty among students regarding admissions, modes of teaching-learning, completion of courses, examinations, evaluation, declaration of results and the academic calendar, etc.: Please visit the KUHS site and get updated regularly
- iii. Anxiety, mental health and psychological issues of students developed during the lockdown period and fear of infection after the opening of campuses are important concerns during reopening. Please do not spread negative messages and rely on credible source of information especially while using social media
- iv. Safety measures including sanitization of premises, thermal screening, ensuring physical distancing, face-cover/mask wearing, respiratory hygiene and hand-hygiene etc. need to be practiced by all. Please follow all the instructions even if it is inconvenient to you. Please show co-operation and patience wherever needed.
- v. Preparation for risk assessment and subsequent actions which may be required for hostel facilities for students may be planned sufficiently ahead.

- vi. Varied conditions do exist in relation to the pandemic situation in the state, in terms of geographical locality and environment where the students live in limited facilities. While making risk assessment and planning, these challenges needs to be specifically addressed. Do respond according to your own situation and please do not make comparisons and unnecessary criticisms.

### **Institutional arrangements and planning**

Every college should form a “Covid Jagratha Samithi” to monitor the reopening of the college and to decide on the steps for protecting the students and staff members from COVID infection. The activities of this Samithi should be focused on information, education and communication, action including training, monitoring of adherence to preventive practice, safety tips and event management, helping or liaising with the administration for management of exceptional events related to pandemic. This Samithi will be chaired by the Principal/Vice Principal. The members shall be drawn from faculty, students, administrative staff and PTA. There will be a Nodal officer who is a faculty member for coordinating the activities of the committee. The Nodal officer shall interact with the local health authorities and KUHS. At the KUHS Headquarters, the Dean Student Affairs will function as the University Nodal Officer and all colleges are requested to contact him, whenever needed. With the help of an Advisory Committee, the University Nodal officer will provide necessary advice and help to the colleges. All colleges must also send weekly reports regarding phased opening of the colleges and COVID protocol measures taken, to the Nodal Officer.

## **Pre-requisites**

- The directions, instructions, guidelines and orders issued by the Central and State Government concerned regarding safety and health in view of COVID-19 must be fully complied by all colleges.
- The colleges may develop stricter provisions and guidelines, if they feel it necessary. However, they should be able to defend such decisions based on their unique situation. The colleges are required to make adequate arrangements to ensure the safety and health of students, faculty and staff.
- The colleges are advised to re-open in phase-wise manner.
- The institutions should be ready with a plan for handling the inflow of students, faculty and staff in the campus, monitoring disinfecting measures, safety and health conditions, screening and detecting the infected persons, containment measures to prevent the spread of the virus in the campus, and also alternative plan(s), in case the campus needs to be closed again due to spread of the virus in campus or in the surrounding area(s) in near future.
- All students are instructed to bring duly signed affidavits while attending college for the first time since reopening.
- All seating arrangements need to be made as per recommendations of safe distancing practices.
- Facilities for hand washing and sanitizer should be provided at the entrances to clinics, labs, offices and other buildings.
- There should be sufficient display of relevant information about safety precautions to remind and reinforce the break the chain campaign in the specific locations where ever needed.

- To provide all communications in a timely manner and sufficiently ahead in a responsible and accountable way.
- To take sufficient precautions by providing hand washing facilities, sanitizers etc. by keeping the premises safe and hygienic, by periodically ensuring the maintenance of safe classrooms or labs with enough ventilation and clean physical ambience.
- All services should be provided preferably online (like fees remittance). If online facilities for services are not feasible, services should be provided most efficiently without unnecessary waiting and crowding.

### **Modalities for Physical Opening of Colleges**

- i. Colleges shall plan opening the campuses in phases, only with such activities where they can easily adhere to social distancing, use of face masks and other preventive measures. These measures shall be implemented in clinics, laboratories, libraries and administrative offices.
- ii. For didactic lectures, seminars and discussions, online education by using MOODLE platform shall be continued.
- iii. For all teaching hospitals, at least 30% beds in clinical settings to be allotted to teaching units and all necessary precautions for pandemic prevention must be adhered to. (Admitting routine patients and bye-standers only after negative Covid test; Avoiding visitors; etc.)
- iv. As and when required, students may be instructed to visit their respective departments in small groups (less than twenty) for consultation with the faculty members, after seeking prior

appointments to avoid crowding, while maintaining physical distancing norms and other safety protocols.

- v. Institutions should have a plan ready for students who cannot join the program due to travel restrictions. Online teaching-learning arrangements should also be made for them.

### **Safety Concerns**

- i. The institutions should train their staff and students to assist and undertake the work related to safety and health to prevent an outbreak of the pandemic in their campuses. Non-resident students and staff should be allowed in campuses only after thermal scanning, sanitization of their hands and wearing of face shields and masks. Symptomatic persons should not be permitted to enter the campus and should be advised to contact the nearest hospital for clinical assessment. Primary contacts are also not allowed to enter the campus.
- ii. Regular visits of a counsellor may be arranged by SSGP Nodal Officers so that students can talk with the counsellor about their anxiety, stress or fear.
- iii. To avoid the risk of transmission, the students, faculty and staff should be thermally screened and symptomatic ones be advised to get clinically assessed before allowing them entry into the campus.
- iv. Isolation facilities for symptomatic persons and quarantine facilities for those who were in contact with the positively tested persons should be there on campus or a tie-up may be made in advance with some hospital or approved premises or as advised by the local authorities so that, in case of necessity, prompt action may



be taken. Proper arrangement of safety, health, food, water etc. should be ensured for those in quarantine and isolation facilities.

- v. For those who have tested positive, isolation facilities should be in place either on campus itself or as a prior arrangement with some nearby hospital(s) or as advised by the local authorities.
- vi. Colleges should prepare a policy for restricting the outsiders especially unfamiliar visitors on campuses, study tours, field works etc., keeping in mind of the COVID-19 situation. A register should be strictly maintained during entry and exit of any visitors.
- vii. All such programs and extracurricular activities should be avoided where physical distancing is not possible. Meetings should be arranged as far as possible on virtual platforms. Social gatherings and celebrations should be avoided as much as possible or arranged in the simplest way adhering strictly to COVID-19 protocols and with permission of the head of departments.
- viii. Clean and hygienic conditions, as per safety and health advisories of the concerned government departments, are to be maintained at all places, including hostel kitchens, mess, washrooms, libraries, class rooms etc.
- ix. All staff and students are instructed to take a bath immediately after reaching home/hostel. Clothes once used shall be washed before subsequent use. A simple two piece cotton outfit may be advised for convenience and easier maintenance. However, insistence on over coat or any particular type of attire shall be avoided during the pandemic period.
- x. Proper signage, symbols, posters etc. should be prominently displayed at appropriate places to remind the students, faculty and staff for maintaining physical distancing. The details of COVID

Jagratha Samithi established by the institution shall be prominently displayed on all major areas of the campus containing the emergency number, helpline number, email id and contact details of persons to be contacted in case of any emergency in the institution.

- xi. Ensure the norms of physical distancing, sanitization and hygienic conditions while using common facilities, viz., Auditorium, Conference/ Seminar halls, Sports, Gymnasium, canteen, parking spaces etc.
- xii. Technical doubts can be clarified by the Regional PEID (Prevention of Epidemic and Infectious Diseases) Cell of the nearest medical college. Any Covid outbreaks shall be immediately reported to the DMO and district administration.

### **Conduct of Examinations**

Refer guidelines from Govt. of India. The examination centers have been identified as high risk transmission locations. So all general guidelines should be strictly adhered to. Conduct of theory examinations as per this guideline is relatively easy. Even COVID-19 affected healthy persons can be allowed to write examinations using PPE-kit. The conduct of practical and viva examinations are more challenging. Viva may be difficult to conduct maintaining a 6 feet distance between student and examiners. So the local situation should be studied and suitable decisions should be taken to avoid spread of pandemic. As far as possible examiners should be arranged from nearby institutions. During scrutiny of hall tickets, necessary self-declaration also need to be obtained.

## Hostels

- i. Hostels may be opened strictly observing all the safety and health guidelines and preventive measures.
- ii. All Students must bring a RT-PCR report that is negative at the time of re-joining the hostels. In those who had recovered from previous Covid 19 infection, the RT-PCR may be remain positive for up to 3 months. Hence instead of RT-PCR, a negative antigen test result can be accepted from those who are retesting after a positive RT-PCR earlier.
- iii. Symptomatic students should not be permitted to stay in the hostels under any circumstances.
- iv. Students shall be admitted in hostels in batches after thermal screening and sanitization of their belongings. For the first fourteen days they shall be allotted single rooms if possible or at least double rooms. This can be achieved by utilizing the rooms of other batches students. After this period, they may be allotted rooms as per availability. However, rooms shall be allotted to small groups of students who will be attending practicals and clinics together. This will help in containing the spread of Covid 19 among these groups in the event of an outbreak.
- v. Before allotting previously occupied rooms to new students, rooms should be sanitized as per Covid Protocol. Rooms shall be kept vacant for at least three days before occupation by new students.
- vi. Used masks shall be kept in sealed plastic bags and disposed based on biomedical waste disposal guidelines
- vii. Students shall keep personal plates, glasses and spoons to collect food from the mess hall and eat in their rooms only.

Wastes should be disposed in designated containers placed in front of all wash rooms strictly following waste disposal guidelines. Students should follow strict queue system maintaining minimum six feet distance from each other for food collection and washing plates.

- viii. After each toilet / washbasin use, a 1% sodium hypochlorite solution shall be poured over the toilet/ wash basin. After each use a gap of minimum three minutes shall be maintained before subsequent use.
- ix. Anyone developing symptoms suggestive of Covid 19 or any other health problem shall immediately report to the assistant warden who shall take appropriate decision about further management based on Covid -19 protocol
- x. Since residential students may be coming from different locations, they shall remain in quarantine and self-monitor their health for a period of 14 days before being allowed to attend classes or as per the policy opted by the State Government for quarantine (even if they bring a negative test report or the college plan to test them on arrival).
- xi. There should be no crowding in hostel areas where students live in close proximity and share common facilities and utilities. Hence, their numbers need to be limited appropriately to avoid crowding.
- xii. Thermal Screening of all resident students should be ensured by an in-house monitoring team lead by the hostel secretary.
- xiii. Students' density in dining halls, common rooms, playing areas should be limited, keeping in view the requirement of physical distancing.

- xiv. Hygiene conditions should be regularly monitored in kitchens, dining halls, bathrooms and toilets etc by hostel committee and supervised by Jagratha Samithi members.
- xv. Cleanliness is to be maintained in dining areas. Meals should be distributed in small batches, avoiding over-crowding. It must be ensured that the meals need to be served as freshly cooked. A senior staff should monitor the same.
- xvi. Utensils should be properly cleaned using sufficient soap and safe water.
- xvii. Wearing of face cover shields / masks and proper sanitization of hands of the staff engaged for the preparation and distribution of meals should be ensured.
- xviii. Periodic health checkup may be done for the workers doing the cooking and handling in kitchen and they should strictly be provided with health counselling and a health card
- xix. Resident students and staff should avoid or limit visiting the markets. As far as possible, essential items may be made available within the campus by online purchase or home delivery.
- xx. Hostels may define the number of students in attending at any point in time. Mess timings may be increased to avoid overcrowding.

### **Sensitization of Students, Teachers and Staff**

- i. Awareness programs regarding COVID-19 as to how the infection spreads, common symptoms, and precautions and measures required to contain its spread may be launched with distance communication strategies.
- ii. Maintaining hygiene, e.g., how to wash hands, how to cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow, avoid touching of face, eyes,

mouth and nose should be regularly communicated and reinforced.

- iii. The necessity of physical distancing, restriction of social activities including refrain from travel, wearing face covers/masks, hygiene etc. should be brought home to all.
- iv. Activities to stay fit, physically and mentally, should be encouraged like doing exercises, yoga, breathing exercises, meditation, etc.
- v. To improve resilience and mental health, students should be encouraged to share their feelings with friends, teachers and parents, remain positive, grateful, and helpful, have focused approach, take a break from work, eat healthy and sleep timely etc.
- vi. Eating healthy food and fruits, avoiding junk food, frequently drinking warm water, adopting ways to increase immunity etc. should be encouraged.
- vii. Students should be told to regularly sanitize their laptops, audio, video and other media accessories.
- viii. Factual information regarding COVID-19 and consequences of infection, without making them stressed or fearful, should be disseminated. There may be non-credible information in social media and inadvertent sharing need to be avoided.
- ix. Posters and stickers should be pasted at appropriate places in the campus to create awareness about the risk of infection from Coronavirus.
- x. All support and facilities should be provided to persons with disabilities (Divyagjnan).
- xi. No discrimination of any sort based on caste, creed or gender should be allowed to take place. Any sort of human right violation

if observed should be reported immediately to the concerned authorities.

- xii. Sharing of books, other learning material and eatables should be preferably discouraged.
- xiii. Only credible source of information should be resorted to (especially be careful with information in the social media)
- xiv. No stigma or inappropriate behavior should be shown to anybody tested positive or asked to be under quarantine

Guidelines will be periodically updated and published in the University website. Jagratha Samithi Nodal Officers should access the website regularly and disseminate the updated guidelines to other members of Jagratha Samithi. College level jagratha samithi shall report in the attached checklist format by 5th January 2021.

\*\*\*\*\*Thank You for your cooperation and compliance\*\*\*\*\*