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No guidelines from UGC yet, but JNU to open its doors from June 1

A Phased Resumption In The Works

Manash.Gohain
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Even though a decision on the lockdown is yet to be taken by the government, Jawaharlal Nehru University has decided to open its doors in a phased manner starting June 1.

Documents accessed exclusively by TOI reveal that students returning to the campus from June 1 will have to undergo two weeks of self-isolation and then be tested for novel coronavirus. Sources at JNU said all the recommendations have been approved by the academic council (AC) via email.

As per the plans, "the bulk of lectures for theory courses and theoretical aspects of

'Take it home' exams the way forward?

New Delhi: The School of Environmental Sciences at JNU started its mid-semester exams from Monday; thereby paving way for other centres to begin with theirs too. The school has decided to conduct 'take it home' exams, where students will get the question papers on mail, and will be asked to submit their answers within 24 hours. While some students appreciated the new mode of online test, others, including JNUSU, inquired about the quality of the question paper. "In order to complete the academic requirements for MSc and MPhil/PhD degrees, the School of Environmental Sciences has started mid-semester exams using digital means from today until May 4, 2020. Way to go," vice-chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar tweeted on Monday.

"Questions for the exam will be devised in such a way that students don't find answers on the internet," PK Joshi of School of Environmental Sciences said. — **Mohammad Ibrar**

practical courses will be completed through digital means by May 31." The university is also planning to conduct the mid and end-semester examinations from mid-July and practical examinations in the last week of July.

A detailed plan for each school and centre on the new academic and examination plan has also been spelled out in the document, which includes online examination as a backup plan for students who

cannot access online learning and examination.

This revelation has brought forth the question whether JNU has jumped the gun as a recent announcement by University Grants Commission (UGC) mentioned that guidelines would soon be released based on the recommendations of the two task forces for online learning and examination and the academic calendar.

When contacted by the

TOI, JNU vice-chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar said, "All universities will have to follow the guidelines issued by UGC. The AC members, while considering the recommendations of various schools and special centres, took due note of the UGC guidelines. In any case, our understanding is that UGC guidelines are expected to be advisory to be implemented based on the conditions and preparedness in a university."

Apart from completing the bulk of lectures online, JNU has already started online examinations, starting with School of Environmental Science's mid-semester exams for MSc and MPhil/PhD scholars from Monday.

Asked how the university will address the issue of students not being able to access online classes and tests, Kumar said the administration is offering a flexible approach, including "extra classes, if needed, after the university re-opens. Paper-pen

examinations will be held where online tests are not possible."

Another question is that even if the lockdown is lifted in May, will students be able to travel immediately? Anticipating that the lockdown would be lifted in phases after May 3, Kumar said JNU would not take any autonomous decision and follow the Centre's guidelines. "Even if the lockdown is lifted in phases after May 3, it may take a couple of weeks for students to reach the campus," added the JNU VC.

At present, out of the total strength of 6,400 students, 646 boys and 262 girls are living on the JNU campus. Asked what the university would do if the UGC guidelines are contrary to the plans, Kumar said, "JNU is committed to following the UGC guidelines. We are hopeful that they will take care of the diverse situations in the universities across the country."