

NORMS FOR ENSURING QUALITY IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (ODL) SYSTEM

The following seven key areas are being identified and described as the requirements for ensuring quality of teaching and learning in the ODL system:

1. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Dual Mode Universities	Open Universities
1. Director	1. Vice-Chancellor
2. An Advisory Council having a representative of DEC	2. Pro-Vice-Chancellor/ Rector
3. Learner grievances redressal cell	3. Statutory bodies like Planning Board/ Academic Council/ Executive Boards etc.
4. At least one faculty for each discipline	4. Director/ Head for each unit like-School/ Department/ Division etc.
5. Adequate supporting staff	5. At least three faculty members per discipline
6. For Professional programmes institutions to follow the norms/ guidelines of respective Statutory Councils	6. Adequate supporting staff (As prescribed in the DEC Handbook on Recognition of ODL institutions)
	7. Learner grievances redressal cell
	8. For Professional programmes institutions to follow the norms/ guidelines of respective Statutory Councils

2. PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF ACADEMIC PROGRAMMES

- The programme should emanate from/ be a part of the perspective plan
- Development of academic programmes should go through three stages namely: Programme formulation, Instructional Design and Material Development, which is as follows:

Programme Formulation	Instructional Design	Material Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need Assessment • Defining Target Groups • Course Identification based on level of the programme to provide desired knowledge, competencies and skills • Adoption of a house style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formulating Structure • Selection of appropriate media for delivery of instruction • Finalizing Unit wise Course Outlines for all courses • Identifying Themes for print/ audio-video programmes/ elearning components etc • Deciding Strategies for Course Delivery • Deciding Student Evaluation and Feedback System 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Writing • Content Editing • Format Editing • Development of Graphics, Illustrations etc • Finalizing Manuscript • Integrated Content, Language and Format editing • Testing of Material • Printing and/or Formatting for the Website • Periodic Revision and Updating of Material by obtaining feedback from students and stakeholders

- Materials developed should be in self learning format and could be in the form of a media mix comprising of print, audio/ video programmes, web based materials, CD-ROMs, including animations
- Production of materials may be outsourced to professional agencies incase in- house facilities are not available
- Modular approach may be followed with provision of multiple entry/ exit points, leading from lower to higher qualifications
- Curriculum should be pitched at the level of the programme i.e. certificate/diploma/UG/PG/etc.
- UGC model curriculum may be a point of reference, however, to meet the specific needs of learners and demands of the society (at large) updation is recommended
- Expert Committees, with experts drawn from industry as well, should be constituted for the development of curriculum and the design of programme
- The programme should be approved by Statutory bodies of the University
- Nomenclature of the degrees must be as per UGC guidelines
- Material should be ready before the launch of programme
- Study input for each programme should be well defined in terms of credits (1 credit =30 study hours) depending on the level of the programme-

Table 1: Norms for offering programmes through distance mode based on credit system

Level of the programme	No. of credits	Duration ¹ Minimum
Certificate	12-18	6 months
Diploma/PG Diploma	28-36	1 year
Bachelor's Degree (General/Professional)	96-100	3 years
Bachelor's Degree (Technical)	160- 165	5 years
2 nd Bachelors Degree	48	1 year
Master's Degree (General)	64-72	2 years
Master's Degree (Technical/ Professional)	96-124	3 years
M.Phil	48	1 ^{1/2} years
PhD (without MPhil)	96-100	4 years
PhD (with MPhil)	60-64	2 years

- SELF LEARNING MATERIALS (SLMS) be delivered at the door step of the learner and available on the website as well
- Timely dispatch of materials to learners preferably in one or two lots
- Despatch of SLMS to all Study Centres and Regional Centres

3. DESIGN OF SELF LEARNING MATERIALS (SLMS)

- SLMs could be in the form of print, audio, video, CD, web based, computer aided etc.
- Credit value of the programme to determine the number of units (**), counseling sessions (theory and practical), assignments are as proposed in Table-2.

Table 2: Norms for delivery of courses through distance mode based on credit system

Credit Value of the course	Study input (hours)	Size of SLMS Range (in terms of units*)	No. of Counselling Sessions Theory (10% of total study hours)	Practical Sessions	No. of Assignments

¹ Open and distance learning being based on the premise of flexible learning, it is suggested that the universities should decide on the appropriate maximum duration of a programme to ensure parity with the regular courses and quality standards.

2 Credits	60	6-8 units	6 hours	60 hours	1
4 credits	120	14-16 units	12 hours	120 hours	2
6 credits	180	20-24 units	18 hours	180 hours	2
8 credits	240	30-34 units	24 hours	240 hours	3

(**) Each written unit should ideally be of around 5000 words

•SLM should contain much more than just information; they must make the learner think, write and do, therefore they should contain:

- Clearly stated objectives or statements of intended learning outcomes
- Content should be broken down into small chunks in the form of sections and sub-sections
- Each learning objective should be covered in the form of sections and sub-sections, self assessment questions and activities
- A unit structure at the beginning of the unit
- Uncluttered visually attractive layout design
- In formal and friendly tone and style
- Readable, fluent and unambiguous text
- Plenty of examples, references to prior learning, case studies, diagrams, illustrations etc.
- An introduction that is stimulating
- A glossary explaining difficult words/ new terms etc
- A summary that is clear and useful
- Responses to self assessment questions and activities
- Adequate suggested recent readings

4. STUDENT ADMISSION

- Preparation of Prospectus and application form containing criteria for admission, fee and duration
- Sufficient number of Prospectus and application forms should be made available at all Study Centres, Regional Centres and HQs
- Registration should be done as per the schedule maximum within 3 months from the last date of submission of applications
- Immediate deposit of student fee on receipt of application form
- Issue of enrolment numbers and identification cards to all learners

- Confirmation of admission should be informed to the learner along with basic guidelines on how to study and learn in the ODL mode within 1 month of completion of process of admission
- Franchising not permitted

5. LEARNER SUPPORT SERVICES

- Organized learner support through Study Centres established and maintained by University/ Institution at existing recognized educational institutions having the required infrastructure and programme requirement
- Study Centres to provide both academic and administrative support services, such as dissemination of information, academic counseling (for both theory and practical courses, see Table 2 for details), vocational guidance, hands-on-experience, multimedia support, library services, evaluation of assignments, feedback, guidance of project work, organization of seminars, field trips, conduct of term end exams, monitoring, etc.
- Study Centres to be identified within the state or outside as per the jurisdiction of the University
- Learners should be made aware of the support services provided to them through programme guides, brochures, letters, website, emails, SMS on mobiles etc.
- Media for supporting learners should be accessible to target groups and interactive in nature to provide timely feedback
- The University/ Institution should also cater to the special needs and requirements of diverse learner groups including women, physically challenged, economically weaker sections of the society and other deprived and denied groups by adopting a diversified delivery approach
- Induction programmes should be made compulsory and held at the beginning of the academic session
- Regional Centres to be established when the number of study centres is spread over large areas, also depending upon the number of learners and number of programmes on offer
- Criteria should be laid down by the concerned Schools/ Departments for selection of qualified academic counsellors
- Provision of adequate manpower to run the Study Centres and Regional Centres-

Regional Centres

For OUs, and

DMUs, (in case they have Study Centres outside their states)

Full Time Staff:

- per 10,000 students:
 - Regional Director -1
 - Deputy Directors/ Assistant Directors- 4
 - Assistant. Registrar – 1
 - Section Officers – 2
 - Assistants – 2
 - Technical assistant-1

Study Centres SOUs and DEIs

- Coordinator - 1 (For up to 1000 students)
 - (One additional Asstt. Coordinator for every 500 students, -----
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 - Supporting Staff –One (One additional Supporting Staff for every 500 students.)
 - Academic Counsellors (course wise) depending upon number of programmes
- Study Centres to function at least for 20 hours in a week
 - Study Centres to maintain records pertaining to:
 - Academic Counsellors and Staff
 - Students Registered
 - Counselling Sessions
 - Assignments Received, Evaluated and Returned
 - Student Queries
 - Administration and Finance
 - Student feedback about the course, delivery, counselor/teacher, facilities, environments, etc.
 - Schedule of counseling sessions should be sent to learners well in advance
 - Organization of counseling sessions should be done course wise on holidays, weekends, after office hours
 - Maximum students attached to a counsellor should not exceed 60 in the case of theory sessions and 20 in practical sessions
 - Library facility should be available at all Study Centres, Regional Centres and HQs
 - Study centres should get the assignments evaluated within maximum 6 weeks from the date of receipt and return the evaluated assignments to the learners with appropriate comments, deficiencies and strengths.
 - Academic counselors should provide regular meaningful feedback to learners through tutor comments
 - Timely tabulation of grades/marks of assignments which should be dispatched to the HQs
 - Monitoring of services provided by Study Centres and Regional Centres to the learners through monthly reports, visits by academic staff at least one per semester, etc.

6. LEARNER ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

- Assessment should be both formative as well as summative.
- Formative assessment should be through tutor marked assignments projects, seminars, hands on experience, practicals linked to the objectives and desired competencies/ skills or expected learning outcomes.
- Turn around time for providing feedback on performance to the learners should not exceed 6 weeks and definitely before the terminal exam commences.

- Formative assessment should contribute to 25% to 30% weightage in the overall assessment
- Summative assessment should be in the form of term end exams for both theory and practicals or any other comprehensive method of assessment
- Summative assessment should be both descriptive and objective and application oriented contributing to 70%-75% in the overall assessment.
- Tools of assessment should be prepared by empanelled experts and widely publicized.
- All tools of assessment should be moderated before being administered to ensure reliability and validity and standards as per the level of the programme
- Preparation of ideal responses for assignments as well as term end examination questions which should be supplied to evaluators
- Examinations should be held at Study Centres/ or any other centre identified by the University having necessary facilities and support environments.
- Availability of at least 2 sets of question papers for each course before commencement of exams
- Use of a common exam form for all courses and programmes
- Issue of hall ticket to learners for appearing in exams
- List of examinees to be provided to exam centres well in advance
- Proper conduct of term end examination and dispatch of sealed scripts immediately to the HQs
- Term-end examination should be held twice a year and the timetable should be circulated to the learners 3 months in advance and put on the website.
- Accurate compilation/ tabulation of grades/ marks by the exam unit for each learner, course wise need be maintained
- Evaluation of term end exam papers, assignments, projects etc. should be done by empanelled evaluators, it should not be outsourced
- Measures should be taken for fair conduct of examinations, such as deputing of observers, sending of flying squads etc
- Time schedules should be adhered to particularly in the declaration of results
- Accuracy/ authentication of Certification should be ensured
- Dispatch of provisional certificates to learners immediately after declaration of results
- Timely award of Degrees or Diplomas

7. USE OF ICT

- Every University/ Institution should have its own Website
- All the relevant information, about various, courses, fee structure, rules, Examination, etc. must be available on the internet.
- Depending upon the nature of the programme, target groups and financial resources of the university/ institution the following communication technologies could be deployed:

Communication Technology	Activities
Radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Broadcast of audio programmes – Counselling (informing, advising, counselling)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Live interaction with learners
Television	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Broadcasting of video – Counselling (informing, advising, counselling) – Live interaction with learners through teleconferencing – Training of functionaries
Telephone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Counselling (informing, advising) and mentoring
Computer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Development and maintenance of databases – On-line interaction – Connectivity of all centers
Internet and Satellite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institutional information – Academic resources – Providing academic and administrative services – Videoconferencing
Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Institutional information – Academic resources – Providing academic and administrative services