Policy & SOP Regarding Re-Opening of the University & Its Constituents Institutions with Special Reference to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Prepared By	Special Committee
Approved By	Academic Council
Version No.	Version 1
Date of Issue	OCT 2020
Total Pages	05
Custodian	Registrar Office

BAQAI MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

POLICY & SOP REGARDING GRADUAL RE-OPENING OF THE UNIVERSITY & ITS CONSTITUENT INSTITUTIONS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Version 1

2020

Baqai Medical University

30.6.2020

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan discussed the possibilities of gradual reopening of the HEIs during an online meeting with the Vice-Chancellors of public and private sector universities of the country, held on 23rd June 2020. According to the presentation, given by the Chairman, HEC, the government has decided that all the educational institutions will be reopened in a planned and gradual manner. The reopening or otherwise of the universities will be decided by the Vice Chancellors through their syndicate and/or governing boards. However, this has to be a planned reopening under certain conditions / SOPs described in the Draft Strategic document of the HEC.

In view of the above, the Baqai Medical University (BMU), after a high level meeting decided to submit this policy document to the HEC as the policy of the BMU regarding gradual reopening of the university.

2. PURPOSE

The main purpose of this policy document is to submit and communicate its willingness about the gradual reopening of the BMU with the objectives, plans and SOPs, the university will follow in letter and spirit, to save the precious time of the students that have already been affected due to COVID-19 pandemic which resulted in the closure of the educational institutions. No doubt that the university is very effectively providing online education to its students through a well designed and powerful system but the importance and need of practical work and hands on training cannot be ignored in health sciences.

3. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE

1. This special policy and SOPs shall be implemented immediately and will last till the eradication of the pandemic or approval of some other policy in this regard by the competent authorities.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

1. The BMU is willing for the gradual reopening of the university and its constituent institutions with well defined objectives and SOPs following the HEC COVID-19 policies.

2. The university, as a first step, will invite the essential faculty and staff to rejoin. Physically and mentally fit faculty and staff will be allowed only. Work that ~~continue to be~~ being done from home could continue to be done from home.

3. All examinations of any of the constituent institutions of BMU shall be arranged as per the existing standard protocols of the Examinations Department and following the HEC COVID-19 SOPs with proper invigilation. This action will not only save the precious time of the students that have already been affected due to COVID-19 pandemic but also support the community and the country by timely producing healthcare professionals who could provide their services as front line defenders in the current pandemic situation.

4. The University will provide "blended learning" i.e. systematic approach to mix face-to-face teaching with online teaching. The theory will continue to be taught online while the practical/laboratory work to be performed at the campus with strict adherence to

SOPs.The Online teaching makes more effective using Recorded Lectures, Video Demonstrations, Team Based learning, Discussion after Recorded lectures etc. The university is also planning to continue Online lectures even after the University resumes its academic activities. The students will be called in small number or groups for Clinical Rotations, Practical and small group discussions maintaining the SOPs and Safety Guidelines for COVID 19.The Department of Medical education will develop a plan for Asynchronous teaching.

5. The institutional heads will submit the complete plan including the number of students to be invited, their proper scheduling, the availability of the laboratory, spacing under the social distancing policy etc. In all such cases the COVID-19 SOPs shall be followed strictly.

6. The postgraduate students will then be invited following the procedure mentioned in the HEC strategic document. This shall, however, be done after thorough assessment of the then conditions of the area and the university with special reference to the pandemic.

7. The BMU shall continue to provide online teaching and learning to the rest of the students until and unless the situation becomes under control or any new policy may be announced and implemented by the university authorities that superced this policy. Supercedes

8. It is also the responsibility of the students to follow the procedures and directives issued by the university from time to time to keep themselves updated about the current conditions.

9. The university will provide transportation for the faculty, staff and students from the selected points with adherence to the social distancing and other SOPs under the COVID-19 pandemic.

10. All faculty, staff, and students have to sign and submit an affidavit as recommended by the HEC.

11. The SOPs defined hereunder shall be followed to the maximum.

5. STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOPs)

All faculty members, staff and students shall follow the SOPs given hereunder in the best interest of themselves and others at the campus

a. No mass gathering in any area within the campus will be allowed.
b. Wear a mask at all times when in a public space on campus.
c. Maintain social/ physical distancing of 6 feet in classrooms, laboratories, libraries, cafeterias, offices, corridors, staircases, and lifts.
d. Maintain good hygiene practices. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water or use a hand sanitizer, dry the hands before leaving the bathroom. Use a tissue (and dispose it properly) or the crook of your elbow when coughing or sneezing.

e. Use only the designated entrances and exits.
f. Review latest updates and general guidance provided by the University on the web portal to be designed specifically for updating Covid related information.
g. Use communal facilities, e.g., kitchens, canteens, meeting rooms, only in accordance with the designated protocols, as it may be necessary to stagger usage or to continue to hold remote meetings so as to maintain social distancing;
h. Obey all restrictions on the use of communal equipment such as printers and photocopiers;
i. Where biometric information systems have been installed, e.g., at libraries, laboratories, or office buildings, please make sure to enter your code or information when entering or leaving. Similarly, swipe your ID card wherever the relevant machine is available.
j. Maintain and update a Daily Contacts Diary: you must keep a record of where you go, when, and who you see while on campus. Some public spaces on campus may ask you to provide this information.
k. Limit your movements. Try not to move around the campus too much. Stick to your own space as much as possible.