

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY REGIONAL CENTRE: VIJAYAWADA

GUIDELINES TO SCs/PSCs/SSCs FOR OFFERING SUPPORT SERVICES

You are aware that the University through its Regional Centres and Study Centres offers a variety of academic programmes in the form of Certificate/ Diploma/ Degrees and Post Graduate Degrees. Study Centres, Programme Study Centres and Special Study Centres have been opened under the Regional Centre for offering support services for distance learners associated/ attached with the SCs, PSCs and SSCs. These Learner Support Centres are of different forms/ types which will provide services to distance learners. On behalf of the University, we thank you very much for your continuous support since you have associated with the Indira Gandhi National Open University. The models of Learner Support Centres under the Regional Centre are:

1. Study Centres (Regular),
2. Programme Study Centres, and
3. Special Study Centres

You may be aware that Special Study Centres are meant for special categories such as women, minority communities, socially and economically disadvantaged groups, tribal and low literacy areas and for other special groups. The University shares programme fee with the Special Study Centres depending up on the number of students enrolled in each programme. Such centres are expected to manage all student support services as per University norms on their own from the share of fees received from the Regional Centre. However, the Special Study Centre Coordinator will be paid a monthly honorarium.

In case of Study Centres and Programme Study Centres, payment is made as per norms of the University. Many guidelines were circulated to Study Centres and Programme Study Centres time-to-time in this regard. These Study Centres are fully supported with part-time staff and the number of staff to be engaged depends on the student numbers attached to the centre. In case of Programme Study Centre, a fixed number of staff has been permitted.

The expenses incurred for conducting counseling, practicals, evaluation of assignments or any other operations that is relating to these aspects of Study Centres and Programme Study Centres (other than examinations) will be paid by the Regional Centre as per norms of the University. The activities/ operations of study centre in providing student support and the norms that govern in conducting these operations and payments to be paid in managing these operations are discussed below:

1. ADMISSION ACTIVITIES

1. **Brochures/ Handouts for publicity and promotion:** If any centre would like to have promotional material, please write to us. A few publicity materials prepared by the RC are being sent separately. All publicity brochures are being printed by the Regional Centre and the same will be supplied to Study Centres/ Programme Study Centres/ Special Study Centres. In case, if any, centre (other than SSCs) intend to take up specific publicity, they may take an approval from the Regional Centre before they take up such publicity measures within the available norms of the University.
2. **Prospectus for Prospective Learners:** The Centres are required to send their requirements for Common Prospectus well in advance (at least one month) before admission starts for each session. The Centre is required to maintain necessary records for prospectus and send money realised towards the sale of prospectus to the Regional Centre in the first week of every month.

3. **Allotment of students to centres.** All newly enrolled students (in the first year) and the students enrolled under the re-registration (in the subsequent year/ semester) will be allotted to study centres along with the list of students programme wise/ course wise for conduct of induction (for new students), academic counseling, receipt of assignments, evaluation etc. On receipt of the list of admitted learners, centres are advised to intimate learners' about induction, counseling etc. The Centres may guide learners for any change in name, father's name, address, optional courses (within 30 days), study centres, electives etc., to be done through the Regional Centre. The Regional Centre will be sending the Identity Card, Fee Receipt and Induction Guidelines to students directly. You are requested to advice students to study the guidelines carefully before they attend induction.

2. STUDY MATERIALS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR LEARNERS

The RC will issue the required study materials to students either through RC or SC. The RC will inform students about place of collection of materials. If a SC distributes study materials, the centre will be given Rs.10/- per student for distributing study materials and assignments.

3. INDUCTION FOR NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS

1. Every centre is required to conduct induction programme for all newly enrolled students. Invite officers from RC for induction for interacting with learners. While fixing induction date and time, you are advised to please consult officer, In-charge of Admission at the RC. The expenditure incurred towards the induction will be paid by the Regional Centre. The Centres are required to maintain attendance records during induction. In case of large number of students, the centres may devise suitable plan for maintaining student attendance programme-wise. Rs.10/- (Rupees Ten only) will be allowed to be spent on each student for induction. You are requested to provide refreshments to all students who attend the induction. No induction programme will be organized for students who are already enrolled in the previous semesters/years. Organization of induction is must for students as this would provide an opportunity for newly enrolled students to interact with officers of the University and staff and counselors of the Study Centres.
2. **Schedules for Counselling Sessions:** Counseling schedules could be prepared, at least, for two months in the beginning or fully for the whole semester, and distributed to students during induction. The centres are required to send counseling schedules to those students who could not come for induction. Please provide photocopies of schedules to every learner. Coordinators/ PICs are requested to arrange at least one academic counseling on the day of induction as learners come from different places with high expectations that they would be aspiring to meet faculty and staff of the Study Centre who could give them adequate guidelines in their studies. Similarly, counselling schedules for re-registered students could be sent by post/ in person. The Centres may claim all expenses in sending counselling schedules to students.

4. ORGANISATION OF ACADEMIC COUNSELLING

1. The Centre is requested to sequence the Counselling Sessions for theory as well as practicals (course-wise) so as to maintain uniformity (as far as possible) in the Region in such a way that students are not put to inconvenience, when they go on transfer/change of Centre from one – Region/ Study Centre to another Region/ Study Centre.
2. The Counselling should commence during August and conclude during November for the July Session and commence in February and conclude in May for the January Session. Every Centre should complete Counselling sessions well before the Term-End Examination.

3. The Centre should send Counselling Schedules (CS) to students at least 7-10 days before the commencement of counselling sessions with a hard copy of the same to the Regional Centre. Please note that sending Counselling Schedule to the Regional Centre is mandatory as this would help officers in guiding/ meeting students and counselors and staff at Centres and also in processing of claims of centres by the RC.
4. The Counselling hours as per norm must be completed ensuring quality in both theory and practical inputs. If centres supply counseling schedules well on time to Regional Centre, RC will be in a position to announce/ place them on its website.
5. The Counselling sessions for any programme should not start before 8 A.M. in the morning and must not go beyond 7 P.M. in the evening in the interest and safety of student community. This will make better student participation in sessions.
6. **Postponement of sessions:** As far as possible, please avoid postponement of sessions, unless unavoidable. Missing counselling/ practicals due to such situations, may put student to inconvenience in terms of travel, resources and many a times even lead to shortage of attendance in compulsory/ practical courses.
7. **Avoid changing counselling schedules** frequently as informing students and changing records to that effect would be difficult and even it may lead to confusion for students in attending sessions and even for RC in processing the recoupment bills.
8. You are instructing to ask the staff in-charge and academic counsellor to see the programme Guide carefully and prepare the counselling schedule for theory and practical. While preparing schedules you must also see the payment norms to make sure that they are as per the payment norms. Please make sure that sessions should be organized in such a way that students would be encouraged to participate.
9. Every Academic Counsellor should be supplied with the counselling schedule well in advance. Similarly every counsellor should be given the relevant study material for reference.
10. You are advising the counsellors to encourage students to read the study materials before they come to contact sessions. Inform counsellor to have more discussion and interaction with students on the theme proposed for counselling rather than teaching alone.
11. In case of courses where actual student numbers allotted are a few, the centre may apply such methods whereby the maximum student participation comes. Otherwise, the centre may resort to such methods whereby the maximum student participation happens. It does not matter, even if, a centre organizes a few sessions in such situations, but please make sure such sessions are conducted in consultation with students making sure of their participation.
12. Tele – Conferencing.

5. APPOINTMENT OF PART-TIME STAFF

All functionaries at study centre are Part-time staff and their appointment is made on annual basis.

1) Coordinator/Programme-In-Charge (PIC)

Regular Study Centre (SC) and Special Study Centres (SSC) are headed by Co-ordinators and Programme Study Centre (PSC) by a Programme-in-Charge. Co-ordinators and Programme-in-Charges are appointed by the University from a panel of three names (preferably from among the academics serving in the institution) recommended by the host institution (SC/PSC/SSC) in order of preference. The following provisions shall be observed while recommending the panel:

- Name of the head of the institution where the Study Centre is proposed to be located should not be recommended.
- Persons recommended should be fairly senior, preferably with some administrative, organizational experience.
- Persons should be willing to work for the promotion of the open learning system.
- Should not be retired persons or nearing retirement.

2) Part-time Staff other than Coordinator/PIC:

The request for the appointment of Part-time staff other than Coordinator/PIC at SC/PSC should be submitted to the Regional Centre by the respective Coordinator/PIC in the prescribed proforma. As per IGNOU norms, a regular Study Centre is entitled to get prescribed number of Assistant Coordinators, Assistants, Attendants and Safaiwala in accordance with the student enrolment. PSC would qualify for supporting staff such as an Assistant, an Attendant and a Safaiwala (only 3 staff members) provided they have an enrolment of 100 or more students. In the case of PSCs activated for the programmes offered by SOHS, would qualify for supporting staff provided the student enrollment is not less than 30. In case of Special Study Centres, there is no provision for engaging part-time staff other than Coordinator as they would be running the centre on fee sharing basis.

6. RENEWAL OF PART-TIME STAFF

The request for renewal request for the Coordinator/PIC in the prescribed proforma to be recommended and forwarded by the Head of the institution. In the case of other part-time staff, the request for renewal should be forwarded by the Coordinator/PIC of the concerned SC/PSC. The renewals should be submitted to the Regional Centre well before 15th November every year.

7. ACTIVATION OF ADDITIONAL PROGRAMMES

The Centres interested for activation of additional programmes need to submit a specific proforma providing the information on infrastructure and faculty available at the centre giving relevance for activation.

8. USE OF APPROVED ACADEMIC COUNSELLORS

1. You are requested to maintain the list of approved Academic Counsellors programme-wise in the format prescribed.
2. Please make sure that the **approved Counsellors** take counselling sessions.
3. The Centre may engage **prospective Counsellors** (who are qualified), in case approved counsellors are not available/short of counsellors. All such cases (prospective Counsellors) should have been forwarded to the Regional Centre for approval. Such prospective Counsellors (pending for approval) may be used for counselling sessions for a period of **six months** or **till the approval** orders are issued whichever is earlier.
4. The SC/PSC/SSC must ensure that they have at least one counselor approved for each theory and practical course. Subject to eligibility, a counsellor can be appointed for more than one course.

5. The Student Attendance records (both entry and exit time) must be maintained for each counselling session (theory and practicals) on day to day basis. Counselors are required to sign authenticating the attendance records of students in sessions.
6. The renewal of counselors will be done every year during November/ December by the RC based on Study Centres' recommendations.

9. HANDLING OF TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. The Centre is required to receive, acknowledge assignments and evaluate Assignments by awarding grades/marks and writing comments (feedback) and returning the evaluated Assignments to students as early as possible, in any case, before the next Term End Exam.
2. For every session, the Centre should maintain course-wise record of assignments received, sent for evaluation, received after evaluation and returned to students.
3. There is only one Assignment (TMA) per course unless it is specified in the Programme Guide.
4. Please retain a copy of the assessment sheet of each assignment course-wise and programmes-wise for reference and monitoring purposes. Every centre is required to forward sample assignment responses to RC for onward transmission to the discipline of the School of Studies for monitoring and feedback.
5. All Assignments including practical Assignments will be accepted by centres as per the guidelines specified in the programme Guide/starter kit supplied to students/Centres. No penalties/late payments are allowed for submission of any type of Assignments at the SC/PSC/SSC for whatsoever may be the reason.
6. All evaluators should be instructed to prepare award lists in triplicate (hand written) by quoting the correct Enrollment No. and grade/mark awarded to each assignment he/ she has evaluated. Please ensure that the Assignment awards prepared is complete in all respects. The required details should be furnished in the award list such as programme, Study Centre, Assignment No., course code, Date and Signature by evaluator, name and address of evaluator, signature of coordinator, date and seal of SC/PSC/SSC should be there. As a healthy practice, the unused rows in the award list need to be compulsorily struck off by the evaluator. Original award lists along with a soft copy need to be sent to RC in one lot before the deadlines (i.e., 10th June for January cycle and 10th December for July cycle). The second copy needs to be sent along with the bills. The third copy needs to be retained at the Study Centre for reference.
7. The SC/PSC/SSC must ensure that assignments are evaluated by IGNOU approved counsellors only in respect of the courses for which he/ she is approved.
8. Please advise students to retain photo copy of assignment responses they submit to centre in their own interest, to take care of rare occasions of missing original assignment responses due to certain unavoidable reasons.
9. The Centre should submit the assignment award lists to the Regional Centre in both -hard copy and soft copy. Soft copy to be entered by study centre in the prescribed online assignment software. The dates of submission of Assignment awards to Regional Centre:
 - a) For Jan – June Semester – by 10th June
 - b) For July – December Semester – by 10th December

10. OFFICERS VISITS, MEETINGS WITH CENTRES/STUDENTS

Officers from the Regional Centre will visit the Centres periodically to meet students, Counsellors and staff of the Centre. They will be discussing/interacting with you on students support related matters and advise/support the centre suitably with a view to create mutual confidence and improve the quality of student support. The observations of visiting officer will be brought to the notice of the centre from time-to-time for feedback and improvements. The officers and Regional Director will try their best using the support of centres for introducing best practices in the interest of the system.

11. GUIDELINES/ PAYMENT NORMS AND RECOUPMENT BILLS

1. The Guidelines/Payment Norms sent to you from time to time should be strictly followed with regard to counselling (theory and practical) and handling of assignments and other student support related matters while raising the recoupment bills/any other claims. Please do not raise any claim which is not included in the payment norms given for a particular programme.
2. The Centre is required to submit recoupment bills month – wise before 15th of every month. The periodic submission of bills will help the RC to process and release the payment to Centres timely within 20-30 days. Please remember the payment norms/differ from programme to programme and even the centre to centre (i.e. SC/PSC/Special SC/Recognized SC, etc.). The Centre must raise recoupment bills/other bills according to the type of centre under which the centre has been notified.
3. Please remember that the Regional Centre receives the Quarterly Grants from the University, and hence the recoupment bills received at the Regional Centre will be processed based on first-cum first serve basis and accordingly the payments will also be released. Every recoupment bill received at the Regional Centre will be recorded date-wise in order to maintain the sequence and release of payments.
4. **The late submission of bills** (i.e. after 15th of every month) from Centres will be discouraged. However, if any Centre submits the recoupment bills ignoring the above, RC has no other choice but to place them in the forth-coming/ next lot of recoupment bills according to date of receipt at the RC.
5. Please make sure that every recoupment bill should reach our office:
 - timely on or before 15th of every month with relevant vouchers/claims
 - enclose counseling schedules. If any changes made, enclose the revised schedules too.
 - the covering letter should have the required explanatory notes wherever required giving the reference to head of expenditure for relating facts in processing.
 - the clarifications if any sought on recoupment bills should be submitted within 2 weeks.
6. The amount recouped by the Regional Centre should be recorded in the centre's Imprest Register. In some cases there may be an objection from the Regional Centre due to over claiming that also should be recorded separately in the Imprest Registrar.
7. Payments should be made to academic counselors, evaluators and for other purposes through cheques only. Avoid payments in cash with a view to avoid litigation and audit objections. Petty expenses could be made from the Imprest.
8. Maintain Registers in the required format for Prospectus, library books, furniture and equipments, etc.

12. TERM END EXAMINATION (TEE):

1. **Theory:** The University conducts TEE twice a year viz. June and December. Students are required to submit examination forms to the University. The exam form can be submitted in two ways:
 - I. **Online submission** – students can conveniently submit the examination form through IGNOU Website (www.ignou.ac.in).
 - II. **By Post/ in person** – the exam form along with Demand Draft (with prescribed exam fees) has to be sent to the concerned Regional Centre, under which their examination centre falls. The Demand Draft to be made must be in favour of IGNOU payable at the city of the Regional Centre where the student is submitting the exam form. Students are allowed to submit exam forms in person too.
2. In the examination form every student have to fill up the courses for which he/she intends to appear (whether theory or practical) along with fee.
3. The students, who are eligible, based on the attendance reports, which has to be provided by the centres will be permitted to appear in the practical examinations.
4. The Centre will submit a list of eligible/ not eligible students, having required attendance in practical/ lab courses course-wise. Eligible students will be issued Hall Tickets/ Intimation Slips for appearing in Practical Examinations based on the attendance proof to be submitted to the Regional Centre.
5. The Centre should issue certificates to students declaring the eligibility providing percentage of attendance course-wise to students and a consolidated list to the Regional Centre. For students, centre may issue certificate as soon as the centre completes practical sessions scheduled. The centre may submit a list of eligible students to Regional Centre giving details in the prescribed format, well before 10th June for Jan-June session and 10th December for July-Dec session.
6. Practical examinations of CIT, BCA and MCA and other for which practical examinations will be conducted during July/ Jan respectively every semester/ year will be decided by the University.
7. The Coordinators/ PICs, staff and counselors are advised to see the programme guides/ practical manuals/ kits for conduct of practical examinations and inform students accordingly for appearing in practical examinations.

13. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS AT SC/PIC/SSC

The Study Centres and Programme Study Centres are required to maintain Admission Records (semester and year-wise), Counselling and Practical Schedules, Attendance Register for theory as well as practical for lab courses, Assignment Records/ Registers, list of Academic Counselors, Cash Book, Imprest register, Assets (Non consumable register), Stamp Register, Library accessories register for books, Bank reconciliation statements, Computer lab/other lab log details (i.e., PCs used for practicals, time duration etc.). The Master files of correspondence with RC, study material stock register (to show receipt – issue and balance), Sale of Prospectus and stock registers for consumables and non-consumables, and other which are required, depending upon the transactions and operations which the centre undertakes. Every centre is subject to Audit as well as RTI as IGNOU is a Central University with which SCs/PSCs/SSCs/others are associating.

14. IGNOU'S WEBSITE

The University website (www.ignou.ac.in) carries the academic and administrative matters pertaining to operationalisation of Student Support Services in the University. The Centres are advised to make themselves familiarize regarding RSD, SRD, SED, MPDD and EMPC and the various Schools of Studies and Divisions of the University and their operations/ roles in providing student support.