

Suggestions for the Semester Examinations of the Academic year 2019 – 2020

With the NLUs closed down from 16th March, 2020, we have covered roughly about 40% of the syllabus in the courses taught. The last date for submission of projects has also been extended. With the reading of the situations in the country, even if the lockdown is relaxed effective 16th April, 2020, I sincerely feel that the academic institutions may not get the priority. Therefore, one can reasonably expect that the second round of lockdown may make it difficult for any educational institution to reopen even by 15th May, 2020. As such, NLUs need to deliberate on the ways and means to complete the Semester examinations of the Academic year 2019 – 2020 meaningfully. The following suggestions are to be discussed among the NLU faculty before a final decision is taken in this regard by individual NLU.

I am personally happy to note that many teachers have been interacting with the students through online lessons. Yet, the prospect for any online test or examination seems bleak. Some students have already raised this issue stating that many students may not have any effective bandwidth for taking the online test. I am also not very sure as to how effective these on line courses taught as well as received by the teachers and the students respectively. Therefore any process of testing based on the online courses or materials sent, unless it is based on recognised MOOCs courses taken from other platforms, would be a viable option for this Semester.

Similarly, it would be difficult for all the students to gather at the institution as there will be continued fear about the Covid 19 virus and the type of travel the students have to take to reach respective NLUs. As I have gathered from the Newspapers and other sources, the educational institutions may not reopen on 15th April as indicated earlier. The Chief Ministers of different States are inclined to extend the lockdown by another two weeks or more. Any relaxation thereafter would be very limited and possibly only for a short period of time. The lockdown is likely to be imposed again for three to four weeks. Considering these aspects, the following suggestions can be taken into consideration by the faculty members for the completion of the present trimester:

1. Whether we could consider the Project marks alone and upgrade that mark to 100 marks in the all the courses. Therefore, this process would also result in some imbalances. However, I

would recommend that the teachers provide topics to all the students in all the courses and direct them to complete the projects by the mid-May or end-May so that the uniformity among students in upgrading the marks can be applied;

2. Along with this project marks, even the attendance marks could be taken based on their attendance up to 14th March 2020. This may be uniformly applied to all the students. The LL.M students may be directed to submit the Dissertations on line, followed by Viva voce examination. This could be done leisurely, even in the month of June 2020;

3. Depending upon the developments in the month of May, 2020, we may direct the students to be present on the campus for about 7 – 10 days even during June 2020 and administer the examination in all the courses. This may be extremely not practical, but we can take a call at the end of May 2020. If only the situation improves drastically and there is no curb whatsoever for travel, this option can be considered;

4. If the classes are not possible at all, the teachers may prepare a set of 20 – 30 questions in their courses with one or more problem based questions made compulsory and send it to the students to write the responses, not typed or printed, and send it by registered post by the end of May 2020. The students can choose any four or any number questions as per the mandate of individual NLUs along with the compulsory problem(s) based questions and each question may carry 20 marks each. These questions may cover the entire syllabus as it would be a sort of open book examination for the students. However, if this suggestion is taken, the students must be clearly warned that if they indulge in any malpractice, they would be disqualified. There may be an alternate plan within this scheme. We can announce an examination schedule and direct the students to be prepared for the exams accordingly. We can release the question papers, as per the schedule on line and upload them on our websites as well. The students will take the exam as an open book exam and submit their papers on line immediately (if sending the handwritten papers by post is not an option). These papers could be evaluated and results announced as per our regulations.

5. The other alternative is to assign one more project topic to each and every student and make two projects mandatory for all students. Each project can be evaluated for 50 marks each. The students may send the soft copies of the projects, which, we may also run them through Turnitin software. This seems to be the best option keeping the situation in mind.

The date for submission of the second project may be prescribed by the last working day in the month of May, 2020. There would be sufficient time for the students to sit and prepare such additional projects in lieu of the written examination. Moreover, many legal databases are available to them and even many journals and books are made available free of cost by the vendors.

In my opinion, the point nos. 4 and 5 seems to be better options. We have to choose one of them to be applied uniformly to all the batches so that we can soon declare that to be the policy for the Semester examinations, 2019 - 2020.

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