

UGC issues guidelines for reopening of colleges

Only 50% of students will be allowed on campus at a time

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Reopening of colleges and universities should start with libraries and laboratories, research scholars, science and technology postgraduates, and final year students, according to the University Grants Commission guidelines issued on Thursday. For all other students, online and distance learning would continue to be the preferred method.

More than seven months after educational institutions across the country were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, some students are now set to return to campuses in a cautious and gradual manner.

Only institutions outside the containment zones could be reopened, and students and staff living in these zones would not be allowed to attend physical classes, the guidelines said.

The Union Home Ministry had given the States permission to reopen schools and colleges from October 15, de-



A worker sanitising a classroom in Noida. ■PTI

pending on the local situation. Several States have announced plans to reopen high schools and colleges and universities this month.

For the Centrally funded institutions, it was up to the head of each institution to take a decision on reopening if they were satisfied with the feasibility of physical classes. All other institutions, whether private or State-funded, must depend on the decision of the respective State governments, the guidelines said.

Administrative offices, research laboratories and libraries would be the first to

reopen, followed by students of all research programmes and postgraduate students in science and technology programmes. Final year undergraduates may also be allowed to join for academic and placement purposes. Other students have been encouraged to continue online learning but may visit in small groups for consultation with faculty, after seeking prior appointments to avoid crowding.

Hostel stay

Only 50% of the student strength would be allowed on a campus at a time. All personnel on campus would be required to wear masks, and follow hand-sanitising practices. The installation of Aarogya Setu app was being recommended wherever possible. Although the guidelines discourage hostel reopening, they would be permitted so long as there is no sharing of rooms and 14-day quarantines are imposed on the students coming from other locations.