PCATP Policy Guidelines for Online Teaching-Learning and Assessment Implementation during COVID-19 Pandemic

The evaluation process of PCATP is designed in a way that facilitates identification of strengths and weaknesses of the programs under accreditation. PCATP is more concerned regarding non-accredited batches which are supposed to graduate in June/July. Since one of the major objectives of PCATP regarding accreditation is to enhance the stature, credibility and influence of the Institute and its members, the institutions are expected to take the following measures to facilitate PCATP in its **accreditation process**;

i. The organizational resource should be available on the institute's/department's official webpage that is easily accessible to all. Each undergraduate degree program should follow the guidelines provided by the PCATP / HEC curriculum. Therefore, both theory and studio courses' objective, outline and outcome should be uploaded on the official webpage for accreditation purposes. The overall teaching-learning and assessment methods should be appropriate for, consistent with, and provide supportfor the attainment or achievement of the learning outcomes.

ii. The institutions/universities should provide free access to an adequate digital library, secured research database such as jstor and design software.

iii. The institutions/universities should possess a software that deters plagiarism. All assignments and projects should be free of any plagiarized content.

iv. The details of the faculty and staff relevant to the program area as per the accreditation guide should be uploaded on the official webpage.

v. Re-designing and re-structuring the assignments or projects for theory and studio courses keeping in mind the limited resources available to students. All institutions should upload or send PCATP directly both the assignments/projects that were designed before the notice (if any) and updated ones.

vi. PCATP enjoins all the institutions/universities to either upload electronic files of students' portfolios on their official webpage or send PCATP directly for quality assurance purposes.

vii. PCATP does not recommend that data collection for thesis/projects which involves physical interaction. At the same time, it encourages the use of electronic means for data collection purposes.

viii. All institutions/universities have to share the list of students, their contact numbers and with information stating what device, for example, laptops, tablets, smartphones, etc. can be available to them or are using to connect themselves to Distance Learning Mode.

ix. PCATP instructs all the Architectural/ Town planning institutions/universities to prioritize their graduating batches (4th and 5th year B.Arch and 4th year BSc. CRP) and make arrangements for the proper conduction of their online classes. At the same time, it also encourages the commencement of online classes for other batches as well.

x. PCATP strongly condemns slashing salaries of faculty members by any percentage as this will negatively impact the accreditation process of institutions/universities.

xi. PCATP urge all institutions/universities to consider the following points to assess their readiness with regard to implementation of distant learning approaches. PCATP further requests all to come up with their respective plans and strategies as soon as possible.

a. Is your University ready to adopt "Distance Learning Mode"?
b. Is the content of the courses ready for "ON LINE" or "Distance Learning Mode"? Has a management system in this regard prepared or in the preparation mode?
c. Is your faculty trained already or is acquiring any IT training?
d. Are you aware of the Infra-structure requirements for "ON LINE" teaching and management system?
e. What is the level of e-library and Research Bank's availability and access system available to faculty and students in order to facilitate "ON LINE" teaching protocol?
f. Are the students ready for "ON LINE" learning? A program needs to be put in place to counsel students who might need assistance. Students need to be taken on board in confidence when introducing these teaching methods.
g. Another important point is the holding of studio teaching for Design Studios and related internal and external Juries involved.
h. How is the examination and evaluation system being designed to ensure quality education in "ON LINE" teaching environment? This has far reaching consequences with respect to accreditation of degree awarding institutions. This aspect is also important from the point of view of acceptance of degree / qualification abroad under "On line" teaching system. This aspect also refers to the putting in place Quality System to ensure positive outcome and acceptability. Hence a Quality Assurance system (QAS) is to be put in place to ensure Quality Education for accreditation& acceptance.

In addition, PCATP maintains a constant bimonthly follow-up with the HODs of all Architecture/ Town Planning institutions/universities.

Status of Architectural/Town Planning Institutes w.r.t adopting On-line Teaching Learning Approaches

PCATP invited a total of 33 architectural schools/institutions and 5 town planning institutions/schools to participate in an online conference meeting held via Zoom. PCATP requested them to share their level of preparedness on the following issues;

   i. Viable online teaching, evaluation and attendance system.
   ii. Infrastructure and human resources capacity building.
   iii. The Studio Courses requiring special attention.
   iv. Final Year Thesis Design Jury.

Meeting with Architectural Institutions/Universities

Out of 33, 29 participated and 19 apprised us of any measures or steps that they have taken or planning to take in order to ensure the continuity in imparting education in the face of pandemic. The institutions/universities that put forward their views, concerns and shed light on complications faced while adopting DLM are divided into four categories. These four categories are divided on the basis of their level of preparedness on the above mentioned issues.

Group A: Strong

This group consist of those universities which have witnessed a strong IT infrastructure and has already adopted and pursued the distance learning approaches. This group has successfully implemented the DLM.

Institution	Technologies	Issues/Concerns
1. NCA Lahore	Zoom, creating their own online teaching platform	Handling a large strength during online lectures
2. University of Lahore	Moodle, Zoom	Increased work load on teachers due to large intake
3. IAC, Lahore	Google Classroom	Increased work load on teachers due to large intake, accountability issues with students
4. Indus Valley School of Art & Architecture, Karachi	Google Classroom, online lectures, virtual juries	Virtual burnout for both students and faculty, grading criterion needs revision; unfair to just pass or fail, trust students generously
5. SADA, NUST Islamabad	Microsoft Teams	Uncertainty for graduating batch, how external jurors will evaluate
6. Dawood University of Engineering and Technology, Karachi	Microsoft Teams	Connectivity in remote areas and non-availability of smart phones
7. UMT,Lahore	Online classes using multiple interfaces	Limited internet access, inaccessible libraries and guide books, exclusion of remote area students, redesigning studio classes, prolonged online classes not viable for teachers

Group B: Moderate

This table grouped together those institutions which are endeavoring towards adopting a resilient and robust IT interface. These institutions have planned or are already taking online classes.

Institution	Technologies	Issues/Concerns
1. COMSATS, Islamabad	Microsoft Teams, PowerPoint Presentations with integrated audio and short videos. Online classes from April 14th	Internet connectivity issues for remote students
2. LCWU,Lahore	Online course directory consisting of online lectures, assignments and links to books	Absence of uniform and standardized system for all institutions

	Institution	Actions	Issues/Concerns
3.	COMSATS, Lahore	Microsoft Teams, PowerPoint, Online Classes from April 14th	Revising grading criterion, hectic schedule, ensuring quality education

Group C: Weak

This group comprises of those universities which lack a strong IT structure to facilitate online classes. These institutions have not yet started DLM and lack the technology and interface to do so.

	Institution	Actions	Issues/Concerns
1.	Superior University, Lahore	Lack resources to initiate DLM	Quality of education seriously compromised via online teaching
2.	Hazara University, Mansehra	No LMS system in place, using WhatsApp	Faculty is not trained
3.	UET,Lahore	Thinking to launch DLM in stages	Body language missing in online teaching, not all faculty is well-versed in using technology
4.	NFCIET, Multan	If the lockdown continues, the university will arrange online summer school with the help of Zoom and WhatsApp	Worrying concerns for graduating batch
5.	CECOS, Peshawar	DLM protocol not in place, online classes are expected to start soon	Evaluating studio work and course exams online
6.	Karachi University	Online Classes are expected to start	Inaccessibility for students who don't have either smartphones or reliable internet connection
7.	CEAD, Jamshoro	None, university has announced vacation till 31st May	-
8.	Mehran University, Jamshoro	None, university has announced vacation till 31st May	-
9.	SSUET, Karachi (concerns addressed in writing sent to PCATP prior to the meeting)	Testing different distant learning platforms, juries and exams scheduled in June, Faculty on leave.	Inaccessible infrastructure(limited server capacity), limited faculty training, unstable internet connections on the students' end

Group D: Special Category

BUITEMS-Quetta, is one of the only universities that has a strong IT infrastructure, an operative LMS and is capable of adopting Distance Learning Mode but has failed togather students and faculty members on an online platform. The students/faculty members living in rural areas of Balochistan are devoid of any internet facilities or cell-phones connection.

The Head of Department revealed that unfortunately only 12.5% students could have been contacted so far and only 20% of whole Balochistan has access to internet facilities.

Group E: **Dormant**

The universities/institutions which have remained silent and have not yet shared their current status or progress in terms of adopting DLM.

Institution	Attended, no participation	Not Attended
1. UET Abbottabad Campus		✓
2. City University Peshawar	✓	
3. USA Lahore	Mail bounced back	
4. Punjab University Lahore	✓	
5. BNU Lahore		✓
6. Imperial College Lahore		✓
7. University of Gujrat	✓	
8. ISP Multan	✓	
9. BZU Multan		✓
10. NEDUET Lahore	✓	
11. NHU Karachi	✓	
12. KITE, Karachi	✓	

PCATP strongly encourage these universities to share their online teaching experiences with us if they have any or inform us of any difficulties/complications they have been confronted with while adopting DLM.

<u>Meeting with Town Planning Institutions/Universities</u>

A total of five institutes were invited for this video-conferencing. 4 out of 5 participated and enlighten PCATP with respect to their current status on Online Teaching and give voice to their concerns and issues.

Group A: Participated

Institution	Technologies	Issues/Concerns
1. UET, Lahore	Microsoft Teams, Classes will commence from 4th of May.	Online exams
2. LCWU,Lahore	LMS, no online classes till 31st May	Final year students cannot collect data and conduct surveys for their thesis
3. UMT,Lahore	LMS, Zoom, On-going online classes	Data collection has been impeded
4. MUET, Jamshoro	MS Teams, no DLM in place	Exams have been suspended

Only UMT has DLM in place and has initiated the task of delivering online classes. UET is expected to adopt distance learning approaches soon.

Group B: Inactive

Institution	Participation
University of Peshawar	**Not attended** the meeting

GUIDELINES FOR ARCHITECTURAL/TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTES

PCATP accrediting process is intended to verify that each accredited program substantially meets meet the norms, standards and other quality indicators specified by PCATP and Higher Education Commission (HEC) from time to time. It also ensures the professional and public interest that the minimum standards attained by graduates of a programs are adequate with regard to design, technical, professional skills, critical thinking and ethical formation required for competent architectural practice. Therefore, considering that the quality is not compromised, PCATP has made the following decisions;

1. Out of 33 architectural universities/institutions only 3 (IVSAA, SADA-NUST, UMT) are optimistic about conducting studio classes online. **As per revised HEC curriculum for B.Arch. 82 out of 174 Credit Hours are dedicated towards Studios/Workshops**. **Thus, PCATP believes that, under the current level of preparedness, virtual jury is simply not a replacement for actual physical juries as it will seriously compromise the quality of work**. Major Juries of 4th and 5th years should be held after institutions/universities reopen at normalization of pandemic crisis. However, if lockdown continues, PCATP will inform all the institutions/universities with alternative plans.

2. PCATP shall maintain its grading and evaluation criteria for every studio course in B.Arch program i.e. 60 percent external evaluation and 40 percent internal evaluation. Therefore, PCATP strongly suggests both architectural and town planning universities/institutions to align their focus on theory courses until lockdown is raised.

3. Town Planning Department/Institutes must ensure that they invite PCATP observer in their terminal exams.

4. The mode of demonstrating the mechanism for such attainments by HEIs, adopting any suitable secured online synchronous/ asynchronous, LMS hybrid/ blended mode of Teaching-Learning and Assessment (TLA) system shall be considered. For this purpose, HEIs opting for a well-prepared mechanism during pandemic situation shall have to satisfy the essential requirements as elaborated in the PCATP Accreditation Manual, however, the spirit and purpose of accreditation shall not be compromised.

5. HEIs are advised that all courses should be planned and implement with a clear mechanism of substantial equivalent for the partial segment of assessments to the current direct assessments in face-to-face TLA system.

6. PCATP suggests all the institutions/universities relevant to the program to hold classes 6 days a week instead of following a 5-day work week as soon as the institutions/universities reopen.

The above General Guidelines are the guiding principles to be applicable to all architectural / town planning programs listed with PCATP with effect from the stipulated date/schedule for an HEI opting paradigm of an online learning system in intimation to PCATP/HEC until the COVID-19 pandemic is under adequate control by the respective Provincial and Federal Government of Pakistan.