

# Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur

## DETAILED PLAN AND PROTOCOLS FOR PhD SCHOLARS TO RESTART THEIR RESEARCH IN VNIT-Nagpur POST-LOCKDOWN PERIOD OF COVID-19

### **1. General**

1.1 Please note that all should adhere to all the Covid-19 related advisory/ order/ notification and guidelines issued from time to time by Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India, NMC and other Govt. agencies.

1.2 **Note that VNIT hostels are being used as quarantine centre and Covid care centre.** It is therefore proposed to offer an option of **Semester withdrawal or work from home** to all PhD students, if they choose to do so.

1.3 If students opt for semester withdrawal, they will not be entitled for assistantships. However, six year restriction will be extended by semester withdrawal period.

1.4 Students who are in their final stages of PhD may request the Institute for joining laboratory and hostel for research purposes. Project staff also need to send their request. All students (both male & female) will be accommodated in guest house.

1.5. The student should intimate and obtain the permission from the respective supervisor & HOD through an email (with cc to Dean (R&C)). In case of Project staff, the permission to be accorded by PI with CC to HOD and Dean R&D. The student's/ project staff's email should include a "self-declaration"(template enclosed). They should have Arogya Setu installed and updated on his/her mobile device.

1.6 They should carry face mask and adequate quantity of sanitizer/soap/hand wash.

1.7 They should enter only from the MAIN GATE (South-IT park side).

1.8 They must observe all the advisories/ guidelines issued by the authorities from time to time and cooperate in all the instances.

1.9 When allowed to work in their respective research laboratories/ departments/ centers, must follow the relevant Protocols/ guidelines mentioned below (in 6.0) and any additional guidelines given by the supervisor or Institute administration.

1.10 PhD scholars admitted after 2018-2019, shall continue work from home till further order.

### **2.0 Guidelines for the Head, Department and supervisor for individual laboratories**

2.1 Ensure availability of sanitizer, soap and other items.

2.2 Ensure periodic sanitization of the laboratories and sitting rooms of the student.

2.3 Maintain strict adherence to the prescribed protocols for laboratory (see below section 5.0) .

2.4 Please note that the total number of researchers( PhD student/post doc/ project staff) in a lab at any day should not violate the requirement of 125 sq. ft per student. Supervisors are free to rotate the students as per the urgency of work. This will be reviewed after 15th September 2021.

2.5 No person will be allowed entry without prior permission from the HOD or higher authority. HODs will send a list of the students/ project staff who should be allowed in the campus on

a daily basis(based on the entry Nos or the names suggested by supervisors for project staff/asst.)

2.6 Safety guidelines should be displayed at the entrance of the lab.

### **3.0 Handling of Suspect Cases**

3.1 To be immediately reported to Health Centre

3.2 Consultation over phone/ VC/ Checking by a team of doctors

3.3 Isolation/ quarantine/ testing/ calling the ambulance as applicable.

### **4.0 Protocol to be followed in the laboratories:**

**(Strictly to be enforced by Lab in charge / supervisor / HOD)**

#### **[A] General Guidelines for working in the Labs**

- a) All the currently functional labs opened during lockdown should be properly sanitized prior to opening the institute for other research scholars. Sanitization should be done in all labs at regular/periodic intervals as they open as they (possibly every day thereafter). The doorknobs, switches, working bench sanitization can be made essential. A logbook should be maintained in each lab/dept and all the related activities be recorded and checked every day by cleaning supervisor.
- b) Students are suppose to keep Sanitizer/soap with them for regular use in the departments.
- c) Shoes may be removed before entering in the lab as far as possible.
- d) Logbook should be maintained in each lab and students should be asked to sign and mention the time of entry and exit every day.
- e) Lab in charge / P.I should ensure that all the labs should have a sanitizer/soap. Students should wipe their hands with sanitizer each time entering the labs and while leaving. They should soap wash their hand frequently in the lab (in case water is not available, nearby water facility should be used).
- f) Students should be wearing mask, lab coat(with name of student), and gloves(non — transferable) all the time while working in Lab. Supervisors/ PI to ensure this.
- g) To fulfill social distancing, students should be allowed to work on rotation, if required. Maximum number of students permitted to work at a time should be lab space divided by 125 sq. ft (per student norm). Seating arrangements can be made according to the distance norms ( 5 - 6 ft).
- h) Standard operating procedure in lab related to sanitization of equipment and lab material used by each student can be developed as flyers and displayed in the labs for all to see and follow.
- i) As always, mouth spitting is strictly not allowed in any lab.
- j) Students can have lunch at dedicated areas in the lab /or that identified by the respective Departments. Students should preferably bring their own water bottle every day.
- k) Students may be suggested to avoid going to eateries and Mall, Nescafe, etc together and avoid ordering food/ non-essentials from outside.
- l) "NO visitor policy" may be adopted. However, outside persons will be allowed in case of

repair of equipment/start up or in any other emergency issues.

- m) o) There should be minimum in-person meetings with co-workers and supervisors as far as possible. Use of video conference facilities for most of the required meetings may be encouraged.
- n) p) In addition to labs, appropriate distance from colleagues should be maintained in research scholar rooms/waiting rooms.

Please inform your students that the housekeeping staff should be wearing mask and gloves in the lab. They should wash the mop strip prior to use in each lab. Presently they wipe the labs and rooms back to back without washing in disinfectants. Anyone who exhibits signs of sore throat/cold/fever/breathlessness should be reported and allowed to leave/ consult Health Centre.

### **[B] USE OF EQUIPMENT / INSTRUMENT / WORKSHOP TOOLS**

- a) All equipment/instruments or workshop tools should be handled with disposable gloves if handled by multiple users(which should be disposed in bio-safety bags following standard protocols) and may be sanitized each day.
- b) Supervisor/ P.I may depute one student (by rotation) for safe handling of bio-safety disposal bag. Every day Department shall collect such Disposable Bags from their Labs and send them to Bio-waste disposal point located centrally. Disposable bags are available with all the chemical supplier/ vendors.
- c) For using equipment in common instrumentation facilities, it is advisable that they take prior appointment with the staff in the facility. Instrument to be handled by one dedicated staff/student only.

### **[C] Arrival schedule and working hours in Research Labs**

- a) Each lab should have a list of students/staff working in lab and a roster should be prepared by respective lab-in-charges/ Research Supervisors/PI considering the above guidelines. Supervisors may plan multiple shifts to accommodate all students/ research staff Shifts may depend on number of students in a group and supervisors may decide as per research requirements. It is preferable to have minimum two students to be present in every lab.
- b) The prioritization of allowing usage of laboratory amongst various students/project staff rests with the supervisor.

**Cautionary Note:** Corona virus is highly contagious and as per Govt. guidelines if a positive case is detected entire community who came in touch with him/her will be tested and quarantined for 14 days. Entire lab will be sealed. Considering the fact sometime it can be asymptomatic, We suggest you to exercise utmost caution in deciding to call the PhD day scholars/ Post doc/ Project staff. Furthermore monitor strict compliance of safety protocols in the lab, as this is going to be the responsibility of the lab In charge/ Supervisor/PI.

Please fill Self - Declaration form ( next page)

**Dean (R&C)**