# Rationality of Working Days for Online LIS Course: A Student Centric Solution

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Human civilization is experiencing the distressing COVID -19 pandemic since the beginning of the year 2020. Lockdown is implemented to restrict human movement at their home so as to stop the spreading of the COVID 19 virus. Students are kept away from their academic institutions while academic activities never stopped. Modern information communication technology (ICT) have succeeded to explore alternative of classroom teaching in different online meeting platforms like Zoom, Jitsi Meet, Webex, Google Meet etc. Practical intensive subject like Library and Information Science (LIS) has also embraced the online meeting platform as a substitute of regular full time classroom teaching. While discussing their needs in the present online mode of teaching-learning, the LIS students urged to provide them longer duration of a semester which means that the semester to be comprising of more teaching days. This study attempts to determine the teaching days required for completion of a semester of LIS course through online mode of teaching-learning. Regarding the full time regular on-campus LIS course, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India has prescribed 90 teaching days per semester for both Bachelor and Master Degree courses of LIS. The UGC recommended 90regular full time teaching days of LIS education is considered as the basis for calculating the required teaching days of the same course in online mode. The present study considers the following two broad categories of principal components of regular full time LIS teaching-learning process:

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**I. Category A**

(i) Regular classroom teaching for both theory and practical

**II. Category B**

(i) Collaborative effort and group study of students at the Departmental Workshop,

(ii) Reference Tools, Classification Schemes and other documentary support from the library,

(iii) Computer laboratory for practice and experiment in ICT.

Practically, Category B is ever emphasized as an integral support system to Category A. Category B has been found to be overlooked during the present COVID 19 pandemic condition because of different restrictions imposed by the governments and authorities. The regular full time classroom teaching may have the number of 90 teaching days per semester which is Category A,the intangible impact of Category B on the Category A during the same semester intensifies thrice (as many components in Category B). Time is most important factor for activities in any of the components of Category B by the students which need to be allotted during the semester in online mode. This study calculates the time duration which is required to achieve the intangible impact of the components of Category B into Category A. The calculation considers equal weight to the components of both the categories and calculates the required time to achieve the intangible impact. The result shows that in online mode of full time LIS courses the students are required to be allotted in total 158teaching days which is about 68 days more to the UGC prescribed 90 teaching days of full time regular classroom teaching.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Library and Information Science (LIS) education is a professional training in librarianship. The training emphasizes both practical and theoretical foundation of LIS. Incumbents develop familiarity with diversity of information sources which led to innovation in service designs. The syllabus of LIS courses designed with both theoretical and practical components to produce efficient library professionals. The practice intensive fulltime LIS courses across the universities in India are allotted 90 teaching days per semester as recommended by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India.

The sudden outbreak of COVID 19 at the final days of the year 2019 resulted into an unexpected lockdown across India since March 24, 2020. 'Lockdown' - the unexampled situation to the genera forced every human being to be restricted at their residence. Academic institutions;government, non-government and corporate organizations and every other places were closed to avoid human gathering as a preventive measure for spreading of the

novel corona virus. The higher education teaching fraternity explored every possible application of information communication technology (ICT) to substitute classroom teaching. Till November, 2021 at least three semesters have completed through online mode of teaching-learning. Therefore, the complete one year of full-time truncated Bachelor or Master Degree courses of LIS have been completed through online mode. This has been observed that the UGC guidelines released for online mode of education during the pandemic situation seems to be conforming the same norms which are laid down for full time regular on-campus courses. The UGC recommended 90 teaching days per semester of full-time regular courses required to be increased to serve its purpose properly in online mode. This study recommends a total of 158 teaching days per semester for online mode of LIS courses.

## 2    OBJECTIVES

The present study attempts to achieve the unitary objective of recommending the required number of teaching days through online mode of teaching-learning in LIS.

## 3    SCOPE

(i)  This article discusses the regular fulltime higher education in LIS.
(ii)  This article analyses the recommendations of the UGC of India on academic calendar of higher education institutions vis-a-vis LIS education. Accordingly following two documents are analyzed:
  - *UGC Guidelines on Examinations and Academic Calendar in view ofthe COVID-19* Pandemic, published by the University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi in July, 2021
  - *UGC Guidelines on Academic Calendar for the First Year of Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate Students of the Universities for the Session 2020-21* in View of COVID-19 Pandemic published by the University Grants Commission, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi in September, 2020.
(iii)  The present article pertains to the LIS curricula in higher education institutes of India.
(iv)  The online LIS education in India during the COVID 19 pandemic period i.e., starting from March 24, 2020 till November 2021 has been considered in this article.

## 4    METHODOLOGY

Recommendation of the UGC on academic calendar of higher education institutions of India is considered as the basis of the present article.This article analyses core components of the LIS curriculum in light of regular on-campus

classroom teaching-learning.

Feedback from LIS students regarding online education during the studied period i.e., COVID 19 pandemic period has been collected through verbal interaction in online mode.

This article also reflects the experience of the author in LIS education.

## 5    COMPONENTS OF LIS EDUCATION

Regular classroom teaching in higher education of LIS courses emphasizes following four aspects which are divided into two major categories:

### *51 CATEGORY A*

Regular classroom teaching for both theory and practical - This includes theoretical foundation of incumbents and practical application of Principles, Canons, Rules of LIS through classroom teaching.

### *52 CATEGORY B*

Collaborative effort and group study of students at the Departmental Workshop - The projects, assignments, seminars etc. are carried out through collaborative effort as a part of training in team work.

Reference Tools, Classification Schemes and other documentary support from the library - Capacity building in use of reference tools of the library requires their in-hand use and evaluation by the students.

Computer laboratory for practice and experiment in ICT- ICT application demands a networked laboratory with participatory information infrastructure for developing competency of the LIS trainees.

The afore mentioned components are pedagogical approaches to fulfill the objective of higher education in LIS.Pedagogy is reasonablya perfect word to explain the LIS teaching-learning as it includes the idea and practice of teaching, the seamless interaction between teacher and students to achieve the combined goals of both the learner and the teacher. This one word describes the study of teaching, and the way content is presented and delivered to a learner. It's the creation of an academic process that results in knowledge gain within the learner.

The educational philosophy on classroom teaching-learning in LIS considers knowledge dissemination through direct teaching following curriculum components along with assimilation of knowledge by the target group. The Category B of the foregoing section represents the assimilation part while Category A represents dissemination aspect.

While allocating time for specific curriculum component of regular on-campus classroom teaching, both Category A and Category B are considered simultaneously. It seems to be effective only in on-campus regular classroom

teaching-learning where real time interchange of ideas between the teachers and students taken place.In contrary, while teaching the same curriculum through online mode during COVID 19 pandemic, the Category A and Category B have to be considered separately due the delay and barriers in communication. Therefore, the online mode of teaching-learning necessitates redesigning of time allocation for the same curriculum component of on-campus regular mode.

## 6     TEACHING DAYS FOR ONLINE LIS CURRICULUM

This article analyses two of the aforementioned guidelines published by the UGC of India. In view of the online mode of teaching-learning of the same on-campus regular classroom based LIS curriculum, this article attempts to formulate a logical structure for calculating required teaching days per semester of online mode. The following considerations have been made for calculation of required teaching days in online LIS curriculum.

### *61 CONSIDERATIONS*

In a regular on-campus full time LIS classroom education 90 teaching days are allotted for direct teaching in theory and practical papers.

The pedagogical approaches of Category B are creating intangible impact on Category A. This means that the success of classroom teaching is dependent on each of the components of Category B. Therefore, the components of Category B have triple impact (as many components) on the success of 90 days of teaching-learning. The seamless information communication and accessibility to the resources in a collaborative effort of teachers and students have collective impact on the success of on-campus regular LIS curriculum throughout the 90 teaching days. During COVID 19 pandemic situation the online mode of teaching learning could not have the intangible impact of Category B on Category A simultaneously (within the same 90 teaching days) due to following facts:

- Restriction in Movement - Lockdown, Micro-containment Zone etc. are imposed to restrict human movement
- Data Affordability - Students face problem to afford the amount of data for online classes (Category A) and also supporting activities to their learning (Category B) simultaneously.
- Limited Time - Carrying out the activities of Category A and Category B simultaneously in on-line mode needs more time which is actually goes round the clock in on-campus regular situation.
- Screen Exposure - Looking after the screens for longer period is definitely a serious health issue.
- Motivation - Students may struggle to focus on the screen throughout the day.

- Network Issues - Online education certainly created a sudden overburden to the existing network. Moreover, students are spread across the rural India where network frequency and its compatible gadgets owned by the students is a serious issue.

To overcome the aforementioned barriers, the LIS curriculum in online mode requires to be allotted more than 90 teaching days. Accordingly this article calculates the required teaching days and recommends for its subsequent consideration by the competent authorities. The calculation of required teaching days is explained in the following Table

| Category | Curricular Components | Teaching Days for Online mode of Teaching-Learning in LIS | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | Allotted Days | Required Days (R.D.) | Teaching Days (Required) |
| Category A | Regular classroom teaching for both theory and practical | 90 Days | 90 | **90** |
| Category B | Collaborative effort and group study of students at the Departmental Workshop | - | Teaching Days = 90 Components = 4 R.D. =90/4 = 22.5 | **22.5 * 3 = 67.5** |
| Category B | Reference Tools, Classification Schemes and other documentary support from the library | - | Teaching Days = 90 Components = 4 R.D. =90/4 = 22.5 | |
| Category B | Computer Laboratory for practice and experiment in ICT | - | Teaching Days = 90 Components = 4 R.D. =90/4 = 22.5 | |
| **Total Number of Required Teaching Days** | | | | **157.5 = 158 Days** |

**Table 1: Teaching Days Calculation**

Therefore, a totality of 158 teaching days per semester is found to be required for online mode of LIS teaching-learning in higher education institutions which is 68 days more than the presently allotted duration of 90 teaching days per semester.

## 7    CONCLUSION

Higher education in LIS necessitates extensive laboratory use and rigorous practice in workshop. LIS student are required to embrace collaborative effort to grasp the curricular components as covered in classroom teaching. The complexity in calculation of required teaching days for online LIS curriculum lies in the consideration of intangible impact of pedagogical approaches. This article recommends for allocating 158 teaching days per semester for LIS curriculum in higher education institutions in India. The calculation for such recommendation is based on the existing guidelines of 90 teaching days per semester by the UGC of India.

REFERENCES

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