PEC Policy Guidelines for Online Assessment and Examination during COVID-19 Pandemic

1. Introduction

Reference with developed *PEC Policy Guidelines for Online Teaching-Learning and Assessment Implementation during COVID-19 Pandemic* issues to HEIs on 15th April, 2020 to facilitate HEIs for online readiness to continue imparting knowledge and skills for students learning and their assessment in a hybrid/ blended mode of virtual TLA system in engineering programs during the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. All VCs/ Rectors/ Head of Institutions were requested to play their key role and take responsibilities to assure quality education and robustness of the entire online TLA mechanism by advising their M&E/ Coordinating committee to prepare and submit their implementation plans in mapping with PEC policy and essential requirements to satisfy their devised online TLA (synchronous/ asynchronous) system after internal statutory approval of HEI.

Furthermore, as per the Government direction, HEC has issued its updated document (Policy Guidance No.6) entitled; "HEC Policy Guidance Series on Covid19" pertaining to Assessments and Examinations. Keeping in view revised HEC Policy, PEC is required to review its existing Policy Guidelines on Assessment and Examination (*Sec 2(ii) & (iii) i.e. remaining Final Term Exam of 40%-50% weightages, including the hardcore Labs*) to accommodate online assessment and mechanism for Cognitive and Psychomotor domains without losing significant time of students in order to facilitate in their academic/ career growth further.

2. Guidelines

Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) has revised/ updated the existing policy in consultation with PEC Vice Chancellors Committee (VCC) held on June 4, 2020 and organized Washington Accord signatories' workshop jointly with IES Singapore on *sharing Best Practices and Policies for Online TLA system and Virtual/ Remote Accreditation process* dated June 13, 2020. These guiding principles are intended to assist all PEC accredited programs in maintaining the education quality standards, while ensuring compliance to the following documents in general, keeping consistency with Policy Guidance No.6) entitled; "HEC Policy Guidance Series on Covid19", dated 21 May 2020, in particular:-

  i. Accreditation Manual 2019
  ii. PEC Regulations
  iii. PEC Policy Guidelines as revised and approved periodically

Guidelines in this regard, are hereby given to facilitate the students particularly the final semester students to conclude their academic career smoothly and well in time and to serve the said intention to qualify the accreditation cycle being reviewed for the graduating bathes based on certain quality criteria and desk review by EAB, PEC:

  a. *It was principally agreed that students will not be promoted to next semester without assessment in-line with international practices. As far as the assessment of cognitive domain is concerned, the online examination will be conducted for students of all semesters through a specialized assessment mechanism approved by respective statutory forums of HEIs in intimation to PEC. In this regard, the HEIs has the autonomy to devised suitable assessment and grading mechanism approved by respective*

statutory bodies (i.e. BOS/ BOF/ Academic Council/ Syndicate etc.) in-line with HEC requirement/ policy. The students be assessed by providing more slots instead of a single assessment and introducing multiple assessment methodologies/ criteria (e.g: assignments, self-learning tasks & assessment, quizzes, OHTs, take home/ 0pen book exams, individual or group discussion/ viva by faculty, etc.) as part of Formative Assessment.

b. *For psychomotor domain, flexible mechanism to be devised by HEIs for the assessment of the remaining Labs of final and other semester (including graduating batch) and may be conducted through simulation software/ virtually or video-demonstrations ensuring the quality and attainment of GAs, along with the verifiable evidences provided during the accreditation visit by PEC after normalization of lockdown situation. The students enrolled other than final year/semester, provision of grade "I" (deferred assessment) may be considered/ assigned to promote in the next semester with no impact on CGPA/ grades. The same shall be included later-on after its physical accelerated teaching & assessment at normalization of the lockdown situation.*

c. *Capstone projects/ FYDPs must be considered as an important part of assessment in the final semester being culmination of four years degree program to demonstrate their competency of knowledge and skills, and therefore faculty/ supervisors should come-up with specialized methodology of assessment by using rubrics mechanism (virtually i.e. through video presentation/ relevant software/ simulation etc. or physically keeping all preventive measures imposed) in-line with designed PLOs set for this purpose. The provision of Pass/ Fail grading or any other option is the prerogative of the HEI only for this year graduating batch, subject to approval of their statutory bodies, and in intimation to PEC.*

d. *Summer school/ Semester opportunity may also be considered for all students enrolled in different semesters, depending upon the HEIs capacity to carry out, however it should be provided at-least to final year students particularly who are enrolled in Breadth & Depth courses to conclude their academic pursuits and for improvement of grades in the same lines as mentioned in para (a) above. Further, the grading policy, mode of teaching/ assessment (i.e. online examination, assignments etc.) should be devised by HEIs and approved by their statutory forums.*

3. Admission Policy

Reference with PEC Regulation on Engineering Education and in line with Accreditation Manual 2014 (amended edition 2019), the requirement of qualifying Entry Test is mandatory (virtually or physically keeping all preventive measures) towards the admission merit of aspiring students for engineering programs. Various mechanisms and approaches are under discussion to have complete or blended virtual solutions at this stage by the PEC Vice Chancellor's Committee and EAB. In this regard, any change in the policy for this year intake of Fall-2020 will be communicated when approved.

4. Validity

The above Guidelines are the guiding principles to be applicable to all accredited engineering programs of PEC offered by all HEIs in the country with effect from the stipulated date/ schedule for an HEI opting paradigm of online TLA system in intimation to PEC/HEC until the COVID-19 pandemic is under adequate control by the respective Provincial and Federal Government of Pakistan, and/or further review of this revised policy by PEC.