PRADHAN MANTRI UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

(PM-USHA)

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP)

UNDER THE COMPONENTs OF

MULTI-DISCIPLINARY EDUCATION AND RESEARCH UNIVERSITY (MERU),

GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN UNIVERSITY (GSU) &

GRANTS TO STRENGTHEN COLLEGE (GSC)

INTRODUCTION

1. Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to fund States/UTs institutions with the vision to attain higher levels of access, equity, and excellence in the State higher education system with greater efficiency, transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. The first phase of the scheme was launched in 2013 and the second phase was launched in 2018. The third phase of RUSA scheme has been launched as Pradhan Mantri Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (PM-USHA) in 2023.

2. Under RUSA 1.0 and RUSA 2.0, there has been significant progress towards enhancement of access and quality in selected Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as reflected in the positive growth for indicators like Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER), and Accreditation (Quality Reforms), Student-Teacher Ratio, etc. PM-USHA aims to improvise by addressing the key gaps and issues pertaining to inclusion, quality enhancement, skilling, employability, technology, etc. which were identified in the Evaluation Report of Centrally Sponsored Schemes by the NITI Aayog.

3. The components of the scheme have been structured to improve the higher education scenario in States/ UTs by targeting:

i. Existing Higher Educational Institutions, in keeping with the philosophy of NEP 2020, to consolidate and transform

ii. Districts as a unit of planning and strategizing for improving access and equity, and

iii. Areas with no HEIs, to improve educational parameters in unserved and underserved areas.

4. The components of PM-USHA and their unit cost are as given below:

i. Multi-Disciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERU) (with an upper limit of Rs 100 Cr for each unit)

ii. Grants to Strengthen Universities (Accredited & Unaccredited Universities) (with an upper limit of Rs 20 Cr for each unit)

iii. Grants to Strengthen Colleges (Accredited & Unaccredited Colleges) (with an upper limit of Rs 5 Cr for each unit)

iv. New Model Degree Colleges (with an upper limit of Rs 15 Cr for each unit)

v. Gender Inclusion & Equity Initiatives (with an upper limit of Rs 10 Cr for each unit)

vi. MMER Grants (1% for States and 1% for Central MMER)

5. The main thrust of the National Education Policy 2020 is to transform higher education by creating large multidisciplinary universities, model degree colleges and conversion of HEIs into clusters/knowledge hubs. In line with the vision of the NEP 2020 to promote Indian languages, efforts may be encouraged to open departments and introduce programmes/courses in various Indian languages.

6. Multidisciplinary Education and Research Universities (MERUs) is a component aimed to attain the highest global standards in quality education. Each MERU would strive to attain the following focus areas –

i. Multidisciplinary education and research – Multi-disciplinarity shall be promoted by integrating humanities and arts with commerce, science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

ii. Flexibility of learning – Imaginative and flexible curricular structures shall be developed offering multiple entry and exit points.

iii. Enhanced institutional capacity – Institutional capacity will be developed through strengthening of departments and programmes.

iv. Research and innovation – Quality of research will be enhanced by setting up start-up incubation centres; technology development centres; centres in frontier areas of research; and interdisciplinary research including humanities and social sciences.

v. Digital learning through ICT & ODL promoting accessibility of higher education – Strengthening of interventions for ODL/ online/ blended mode of education, developing ICT infrastructure including smart classrooms, computer centres etc., promoting blended learning modes towards increased access to higher education. In this regard, infrastructure will be strengthened for ODL/ Online/ Digital mode of education in the States/ UTs.

vi. Promotion of regional languages and indigenous knowledge system – With an aim to promote teaching-learning in regional languages, high-quality learning materials will be developed in different scheduled languages. Apart from this, indigenous knowledge system shall be promoted to become a part of global knowledge system.

vii. Internship with local industry – Research internships and internships with local industry, businesses, artists, crafts persons, etc. will be promoted.

viii. Industry – academia linkage – Integrating vocational education with higher education and enhancing employability by focusing on increased industry- ready courses and imbibing 21st century skills.

ix. Inclusionary approach – Enabling access to quality education and employment opportunities to women and transgender communities to ensure gender inclusion and equity.

x. Mentoring and guiding other HEIs – For overall quality improvement of higher education especially in unserved areas, centrally funded HEIs may handhold through training programmes for selected HEIs of PM- USHA. Similarly, Universities under PM-USHA with high NAAC grade may support and mentor unaccredited institutions in improving education and research quality. In this regard, collaboration with other schemes such as ATAL Innovation Mission, PMMMNMTT etc. could be explored.

IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN IN THE GUIDELINES AND THE PROJECT APPROVAL BOARD (PAB) MEETINGs:

1. Approved educational institutions shall share the resources, especially equipment, facilities, etc. procured/ developed under PM-USHA/ RUSA with the other institutions and shall also upload the same on the Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map (I-STEM) of the Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) available at website https://www.psa.gov.in/i-stem.

2. Approved educational institutions shall make use of the Samarth initiative of the Ministry, which provides for a fully managed, cloud based, comprehensive ERP that is custom built for HEIs of the country. It shall be ensured by the State that no cost is incurred under PM-USHA for procurement/ development of such ERP systems.

3. The cost of the approved projects is limited component wise, i.e.

a) **MERU** – to the maximum of Rs. 100 Crore or the cost approved by the PAB whichever is less. Universities for which the proposal cost is more than Rs. 100 Crore, would be restricted to Rs. 100 Crore.

b) **GSU** – to the maximum of Rs. 20 Crore or the cost approved by the PAB whichever is less. Universities for which the proposal cost is more than Rs. 20 Crore, would be restricted to Rs. 20 Crore.

c) **GSC** – to the maximum of Rs. 5 Crore or the cost approved by the PAB whichever is less. HEIs for which the proposal cost is more than Rs. 5 Crore, would be restricted to Rs. 5 Crore.

4. As per the guidelines of the scheme, institutions are required to undertake activities as mentioned in their proposals as per details given below:

a) **MERU** – Approved educational institutions shall undertake all the 44 mandatory activities as part of their proposal. The details of the mandatory activities are given in the guidelines. The mandatory activities which have been left out from the proposals would be added on the PM-USHA Portal and undertaken by the State/ Universities. The progress of all the 44 mandatory activities would be provided by the States/ UTs/ Universities on the Portal.

b) **GSU** – Approved educational institutions may undertake any of the 31 suggestive activities as part of their proposal. The details of these suggestive activities are given in the guidelines.

c) **GSC** – Approved educational institutions may undertake any of the 19 suggestive activities as part of their proposal. The details of these suggestive activities are given in the guidelines.

5. Approved educational institutions are advised to recheck the proposed outcomes to be in line with the objectives of component under PM-USHA. The details would be submitted on the Portal.

6. Approved institutions shall submit the revised/ updated project/ activity details that would be undertaken in the approved institutions at the earliest on the Portal.

7. The institutions shall undertake efforts to increase recruitment of sanctioned faculty. The funding to the States/ UTs would be dependent on the efforts made by them in this regard.

8. The activities/ construction/ renovation would be undertaken as per the State/ UT norms like SSR, DSR, etc.

9. Institutions approved under the scheme shall not use the funds for undertaking any of the activities in the negative list of PM-USHA guidelines.

10. As per the MoU of PM-USHA "*As a condition, if the commencement of a project does not happen within 6 months of approval by PAB, the State/UT shall surrender the funding and other institutions within or outside the State/UT shall be preferred under the same component for funding.*" Accordingly, States/ UTs are requested to expedite commencement of the approved projects at the earliest.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES (SOP) FOR MERU/ GSU/ GSC COMPONENT

1. The University/College shall abide strictly by the scheme guidelines and various other laws, rules and procedures, as relevant, while implementing the scheme.

2. **Revision in the proposals**: The State can re-align the proposals by revising activity details, proposed outcomes, approved cost and mandatory activities on the Portal. Only State Approving Authority (SAA) can submit the revised proposal to National Project Directorate (NPD) after e-sign. State Project Director (SPD)/ State Nodal Officer (SNO) can modify the proposals after giving necessary justification for revisions. Under MERU component, the submission of all 44 mandatory activities on the Portal should be in sync with the guidelines and timelines of the scheme.

3. Proposed Outcomes can be rechecked and should comply with the output- outcome framework of PM-USHA guidelines, i.e., cumulative in nature and within the scheme timeline of 31.03.2026.

4. A detailed implementation plan may be prepared by the States/ UTs for the Universities and executed smoothly, within the stipulated timeline, so as to accord early benefit to the students. States/ UTs/ Universities/ Colleges have to obtain necessary administrative approvals for commencement of the various activities of the proposals.

5. The Civil work (constructions/ renovations/ upgradation) may be undertaken as per State financial norms, rules and procedures.

i. Construction: Should have land map, land title, executing agency permission, cost estimate as per SSR/ DSR, architectural blueprint, technical sanction, geo-tagged photos of the site before the work starts, during construction and after completion of structure to be documented, etc.

ii. Renovation: Should have land map, location, floor, stability of existing structure (structural audit), local authority permission/sanction letter, cost estimate as per SSR/ DSR, executing agency, architectural blueprint, technical sanction, geo-tagged photos of the site before the work starts, during construction and after completion of structure to be documented, etc.

6. With respect to purchases of Equipment, State purchase norms through GEM portal, etc. should be followed.

i. Equipment: Should have list of equipment, location or place of use, specification, quantity, and cost along with executing agency.

ii. Soft component activities to strictly follow expenditure as per UGC norms only aligned with NEP implementation guidelines.

7. **DPR Submission**: A Detailed Project Report (DPR) is to be prepared by the approved institutions and is to be uploaded on the Portal. An indicative DPR format can be circulated by the States/ UTs to the Universities/ Colleges.

8. As per the scheme guidelines, submission of DPR and blueprints etc. is mandatory for the approved projects. However, if DPR has not yet been prepared/ approved, an

undertaking would be required from States/ UTs that the activities mentioned in the DPR would not vary from those given in the proposal which was approved by the PAB. If there are any changes in the proposal so as to comply with scheme guidelines and PAB instructions, necessary justification should also be provided along with the revised DPR.

9. Approval of the Competent Authority (in the State/ UT) for the DPR may be taken as per the various laws, rules and procedures in the State/ UT.

10. **Nodal Officers**: The details of the State Nodal Officer (SNO)/ University Nodal Officer (UNO)/ College Nodal Officer (CNO) responsible for implementation of the project and its monitoring should be shared/ updated on the Portal regularly.

11. **Financial compliance**: All the Implementing Agencies (Universities/ Colleges, etc.) have to onboard on PFMS Portal by following Ministry of Finance (MoF) instructions on revised procedure for release of funds for Centrally Sponsored Schemes. All the Universities have to open Zero Balance Subsidiary Accounts so as to use the State's Single Nodal Agency account with clearly defined drawing limits set for that account. Instructions issued by the MoF/ Ministry from time to time are to be followed by all.

12. After release of the central share, State share should be released as per the timelines prescribed by the MoF instructions. Other MoF instructions should be followed, including the transfer of central and state shares from State treasury to the SNA account, remitting the interest into the Consolidated Fund of India and Consolidated Fund of States, etc.

13. **Fund releases**: Release of funds to the States/ UTs would be subject progress made in utilization of funds, compliance to MoF instructions, Budget availability with the MoE and availability of SNA bank balance, etc. The funding to the States/ UTs would also be dependent on the efforts made by them to increase recruitment of sanctioned faculty. For the States/ UTs onboarded on SNA SPARSH Model of PFMS, mother sanctions would be created based on demand of funds from the States/ UTs, budget availability with the MoE, utilization of funds in the last release, compliance to the MoF instructions, etc.

14. **Monitoring of the scheme**: The progress of the project should be monitored regularly by the States/ UTs in the Universities/Colleges. The progress made on various activities to be undertaken should be updated regularly on the PM- USHA Portal by the UNOs/ SNOs. The Utilization Certificates (UCs) of the projects would be submitted quarterly on the Portal. The achievements on Outputs/ Outcomes would also be updated on monthly/ quarterly/ annual basis on the Portal.

15. The States/ UTs must monitor that the below given Negative List of Activities (not exhaustive) are not supported under PM-USHA:

i. Payment of salaries, pensions, and other benefits,

ii. Recurring/ non-recurring cost for any project under PM-USHA beyond the phase of the scheme,

iii. Celebrations like college fests, annual days, graduations, etc.,

iv. Scholarships, fellowships, or stipends to students,

v. Expenses incurred for travel by faculty for academic research & other events not covered under PM-USHA,

vi. Advertisements of institutions, and promotional events not related to PM- USHA

16. **Project completion**: Project completion certificate would be submitted on the Portal after completion of the project.

OVERALL PROCESS FLOW

1. Submission of proposals by the States and UTs

2. Approval by the PAB based on the evaluation and appraisal by the TSG

3. Submission of revision in the proposals on the Portal on the basis of PAB instructions

4. Allocation and release of funds to the States and UTs on the basis of progress in utilization of funds, compliance to MoF instructions, Budget availability with the MoE and availability of SNA bank balance, etc. For States in SNA SPARSH model, mother sanctions would be created on basis of demand of funds from the States/ UTs, budget availability with the MoE, utilization of funds in the last release, compliance to the MoF instructions, etc.

5. Transfer of funds from State treasury to the SNA bank account. Release of funds through daily claims by SNA SPARSH States.

6. Monitoring the progress of the projects based on various activities to be undertaken by States/ UTs. Updating progress on the Portal along with Output/ Outcomes on regular basis.

7. Submission of Utilization Certificates on quarterly basis

8. Submission of Project Completion Certificate on successful completion of the project

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