

Academic Guidelines

2020-21

General points for all Programmes



1. General

The office of the Dean of Academic Affairs (DoAA) is called the Academic Cell. It takes care of all the *academic* matters of the Institute – from admission of students to the awarding of degrees.

The following Departments and Centers are currently offering courses at IISER Kolkata:

Department of Biological Sciences
Department of Chemical Sciences
Department of Earth Sciences
Department of Mathematics and Statistics
Department of Physical Sciences
Department of Computational and Data Sciences
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Center of Excellence in Space Sciences, India

1.1 Responsibilities:

The Academic Cell decides on all academic issues both for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students and implements the decisions taken by the Academic Senate. The Academic Cell is further responsible for –

- i. Receiving, processing and maintaining all records related to the Academic program – curricula, Academic Calendar, registration of students, leave of students, examinations, grades and award of degrees and prizes / medals at the annual Convocation of the Institute.
- ii. Disseminating information pertaining to all academic matters
- iii. Issuing necessary memoranda/orders related to academic matters
- iv. Acting as a platform of communication between students, instructors and the Departments
- v. Preparing Time Table for regular classes and examinations.
- vi. Preparing grade-cards, transcripts, provisional certificates, medal certificates, degree certificates, CNR Rao Foundation Prize certificate, etc. DoAA will be the authorized signatory. The Chairperson, BoG (Board of Governors), the Chairman, Senate and the Registrar will be the signatories for degree certificates.
- vii. Administrative work related to up-gradation of research scholars – from JRF to SRF
- viii. Publication of advertisement for IPhD and PhD admissions.
- ix. Issuing ‘Academic No Objection Certificate’ and ‘Migration Certificate’.
- x. Keeping track of semester-wise student intake, sources of scholarship for Bachelor of Science and Master of Science (BS-MS), Integrated-PhD and PhD students, and helping the office of Dean of Students’ Affairs with the information about graduated students.

1.2 Admission:

- i. For the BS-MS program, students are admitted in end-July or early August every year. The admission process is governed centrally by a Joint Admission Committee (JAC) which is formed by all the seven IISERs and is Chaired by one IISER by rotation. Details of the admission process, criteria, etc., can be found in the IISER admissions website. For SC/ST/OBC/PD candidates the seats are reserved as per Government of India rules.

Modified plan due to COVID-19 pandemic:

The admission process of the new batch (20MS) of BS-MS students will be conducted online. Accordingly, their Autumn semester is starting in December. As a result, their Autumn Semester will spill over to the next year, implying that there will be an overlap of Autumn 2020 and Spring 2021 of different batches. The two semesters of the first year will be completed by July 2021 and the academic schedule of the 20MS batch will merge with that of the other batches from August 2021.

- ii. For the Integrated PhD Programme, students are admitted in July every year through a written examination and/or interview conducted by the respective Department.
- iii. For the PhD Programme, students are admitted twice a year, during July and December or as and when decided by a particular department. Advertisements for the same are duly announced in the Institute website.

Due to COVID-19 pandemic this year the admissions are provisional and have been conducted online.

- iv. All students admitted (provisionally or otherwise) to any academic program must submit self-attested copies of their mark-sheets, (provisional) certificates and/or other supporting documents of the qualifying examination and category certificates within 30 days from the date of admission. The Senate may cancel the admission of any student who fails to submit the required documents by the specified date. The Senate may also cancel the admission at any later stage if it is found that the student had supplied false information or suppressed relevant information while seeking admission. Further, the Institute has the right to cancel the admission of any student and ask him/her to leave the Institute at any stage of his/her career on grounds of unsatisfactory academic performance, irregular attendance in classes or indiscipline.
- v. **Foreign students** will be admitted through the “Study in India” programme launched by the MHRD in the BS-MS Programme and PhD/PhD Programme. Admission to the PhD programme will also be done through direct application to the Institute’s admission portal.

Admission of foreign students to the BS-MS Programme through ‘Study in India’ will be based on:

- (10th in Science with 60%) *and* (10+2 in Science with 60%)
- Has to clear IND-SAT or Indian Institute of Technology-Joint Entrance Examination (IIT-JEE) Advanced rank within 10000 in the Common Rank List (Additional cut-off criteria are applicable).
- Selection will be done on the basis of a web interview

Selection of PhD students will be on the basis of their academic record up to Master’s level (5 years after school), and a web interview.

Selection of IPhD students will be on the basis of their academic record up to Bachelor's level with a minimum of 60% marks from their respective Universities/Institutes, and a web interview.

1.3 Registration:

1.3.1 Registration of students for all semesters is centrally organized by the Academic Cell.

- i. Every student is required to initiate the registration process through the pre-registration online portal after paying the requisite fees through online transaction, before a semester begins. Dates for this process are announced in the Academic Calendar.
- ii. Every student is required to be present and to complete the registration before the commencement of each semester on the day fixed for and notified in the Academic Calendar.
- iii. Under exceptional circumstances a student may take prior permission from the DoAA and DoSA for late registration. This late registration will have to be within one week of the announced day of registration. Late registration is allowed only in special cases with late fine as per norms (presently Rs. 1000/-, may vary from time to time). Requests for registration beyond the stipulated time will not be entertained. Allowance of any candidate not appearing for registration within the stipulated time will be done only through the recommendation of the Academic Senate.
- iv. Only those students will be permitted to register who have cleared all Institute and Hostel dues of the previous semester(s), have paid all required prescribed fees for the current semester, and have not been debarred from registering for a specified period on disciplinary or any other ground.
- v. If a student remains in the Institute and utilizes the facilities, then he/she will have to pay the tuition fees. If a PhD student resigns the studentship after submission of the thesis, the Thesis will be processed and upon successful defence of the thesis, degree will be awarded.
- vi. Registration for the PhD students, who have already finished their course work, may be done on-line.

1.3.2 Cancellation of Registration:

Registration of a student from all the courses will be cancelled automatically, if he/she remains absent for a period of four weeks at a stretch during a semester without intimation to the DoAA. Information regarding the same has to be sent to the Academic Cell by the concerned instructor. However, a student can appeal to the Chairman, Senate for reconsideration.

1.3.3 Withdrawal from the Institute:

In case a new registrant decides to withdraw from the Institute, a refund of fees will be calculated as per rules. Refer to the guidelines of the office of Dean of Students' Affairs. Office of Academic Affairs is not involved in the procedure.

1.4 Academic Programs:

Presently the Institute has four academic programs (i) 5 Year BS-MS Dual Degree Programme (ii) Integrated PhD Programme, (iii) MS By Research Programme and (iv) PhD Programme.

1.5 Academic Session: The academic session is divided into two semesters: an Autumn Semester (August-December) and a Spring Semester (January-May).

1.6 Academic calendar: The approved schedule of academic activities for a session, inclusive of dates for registration, mid-semester and end-semester examinations, inter-semester breaks, etc., shall be laid down in the Academic Calendar for each session. The Academic Calendar is prepared by the Academic Cell which is formally announced after approval by the Senate.

1.7 Time table: Time Table for a given semester will be finalized before the end-semester examination of the previous semester, on the basis of course choices given by students till that time.

1.8 Courses and evaluation: The syllabus, text books and reference books to be followed for each course are mentioned in the webpage related to that course. The division of marks normally is

Mid-semester examination: 20

End-semester examination: 50

Internal assessment: 30

In case a teacher changes the above evaluation scheme, it has to be announced at the beginning of a session. The teacher should also announce the division of marks in various components of internal assessment.

1.9 Tutorial classes: Problem solving is an important component of most courses and tutorial classes provide scope for adequate practice. Thus, the tutorial classes associated with a course are meant for problem solving, where the course instructor, the faculty tutors and teaching assistants help the students. The person-to-person interaction in smaller groups greatly benefits the students in clearing doubts and difficulties. Presence of all students in tutorials is mandatory.

1.10 Teaching Assistants: The TAs are chosen from a pool of PhD students and eligible 5th year BS-MS students. The teaching assistants should attend the relevant theory classes which will help them in conducting the tutorials effectively. The number of TAs in laboratory courses will be 1 per 15 students, and that of theory courses will be 1 per 20 students.

TAship can be broken into blocks, and for a single lab/theory course different TAs may serve different parts of the course. In such courses the TAship may be calculated on hourly basis.

The departments will suggest the basis of TAship amount to be paid.

If an MS student wishes to do more than one TAship or a PhD student wishes to do more than two TAships, approval of the concerned supervisor must be sought. Beyond two TAships, the quantum of remuneration will be as per norm (presently Rs. 10,000/- per semester but may vary from time to time).

Under exceptional cases, with DoAA's approval, 4th year MS students may also be allowed to take part as TAs.

Technical Assistants and Project Assistants will be allowed to do Teaching Assistantships in Laboratory classes. Departments may assign TAship to Post-doctoral fellows as well; however, they will not be entitled for any remuneration towards TAship.

PhD students have to perform at least two TAs within the course of their tenure as obligatory duty, for which no TAs money will be paid. A supervisor may however advise a student not to take TAs in a particular semester depending on the research plan.

1.11 Attendance: Attendance in all classes (lectures, tutorials, laboratories) is compulsory.

- i. A student will be debarred from appearing in examination of a particular subject if his/her attendance is less than 70% in that subject. At any point of time, if a student's attendance goes below 70%, the concerned instructor should report it to the Academic Cell. The Dean of Students should also be intimated, who will ensure that the student is appropriately counselled at the Mind-Care and Wellness Centre.
- ii. Attendance record may be obtained from the biometric attendance system. The concerned course instructor may also maintain an attendance record by calling the rolls. Teachers should notify the Academic Cell if any student fails to appear in classes for a span of one week.
- iii. **Attendance requirement in online teaching:** Attendance in online classes is desirable, but not mandatory because students may miss lectures due to internet issues. So in Autumn Semester 2020, the 70% attendance rule will not be imposed and attendance should not be given any weightage in the evaluation process. This concession is applicable only for the semesters conducted online.

1.12 Leave:

1.12.1 In order to avail leave, an application should be submitted to the DoAA through a form available at the Academic Cell. For PhD students and 5th year BS-MS students, the leave must be recommended by the supervisor. Upon approval of the leave, the Academic Cell will inform the concerned instructors and the Warden of the corresponding hostel. The office of DoAA will keep the record of leave for each student. A prior approval from the DOAA will be required for any extension of the leave period.

1.12.2 Medical leave:

- i. If a student falls sick during a semester, he/she must see the Institute doctor and get the recommendation of the doctor recorded in the medical book. Official leave is granted on that basis.
- ii. In case of mental illness, the rule is the same as above. One has to see the Counsellor in the MCWC and get the recommendation of the Counsellor recorded. Leave is granted on that basis.
- iii. In case a student falls physically or mentally sick during a vacation, he/she may be treated by an outside doctor. But the student has to see the Institute doctor as soon as he/she returns to the campus, and has to get ailment and course of treatment recorded in the medical book. Subsequent course of action will depend on the recommendation of the Institute doctor.
- iv. It is to be noted that leave is not granted on the basis of the prescription of a doctor who is not associated with the Institute.

1.13 Academic Feedback: The Institute strives to improve knowledge delivery continuously, and periodically reviews and updates the curriculum. Students' feedback on the courses and instructors is invaluable in that process. It is mandatory for students to submit academic feedback. Semester results will be withheld for those who do not submit course feedbacks. For attendance defaulters, teaching feedback will be considered without the numerical score.

Modified plan due to COVID-19 pandemic:

In order to improve online teaching, feedback of the faculty on online teaching will be taken.

1.14 Counselling for students performing below expectations:

A 'Mind-care and Wellness Centre' (MCWC) under the supervision of the DoSA will look after the needs of the students who are not performing up to expectations. After the mid-semester examination, each faculty member should provide the names of the students who have not performed well in the examination and/or students who have a poor record of attendance. The Academic Cell will intimate the names of such students to the DoSA for initiation of appropriate counselling. The MCWC should inform the guardian about the shortcomings of the student. When a student remains absent from classes for a longer period (more than a week), the Instructor-in-charge should send the name(s) of the student(s) to the Academic Cell which may forward these names to the Counselling cell for further action.

1.15 MS to PhD Switch over: A student can apply for switch-over from BS-MS to PhD program of the Institute any time after the commencement of 5th year of the program. Students of the MS by Research Programme may also apply for switch-over.

- i. The student must have CGPA of 8 or more at the time of switch over, and must maintain a CGPA above 8 until the end of the 5th year. In case the CGPA of the student falls below 8, his/her candidature as a PhD student will be cancelled.
- ii. BS-MS students may apply for "BS-MS to PhD switch over programme" till the end of their 10th semester.
- iii. Their selection interviews will be conducted along with the selection interviews of the new PhD applicants. The respective department will conduct their selection interviews.
- iv. The students thus inducted into the PhD programme are encouraged to bring their own fellowships from external funding agencies like CSIR, UGC, INSPIRE. Until a student secures funding from some external agency, he/she will be considered as an Institute Fellow, and will be subject to the rules pertaining to the Institute Fellowship.
- v. For these students coursework will be waived except the Research Methodology Course (if not done during MS course work).

1.16 UGAC and PGAC:

The Undergraduate Academic Committee (UGAC) and the Postgraduate Academic Committee (PGAC) will be responsible for implementing the academic programmes in the undergraduate and postgraduate levels respectively. The DoAA will be the ex-officio Chairperson of the UGAC and the Associate DoAA will be the ex-officio Chairperson of the PGAC. The DoAA and the ADoAA will choose the chairpersons of the two sub-committees, who will directly assist in running the Academic Cell. Their tenure will be for 3 years.

Each department will have a UGAC and a PGAC comprising 4-5 members, headed by a 'Convenor'. The conveners of the departmental UGACs and PGACs will be the members of the Institute-level UGAC and PGAC.

1.16.1 Functions of the Departmental UGAC:

- i. To review the curricula periodically and to suggest revisions
- ii. To propose introduction of new courses for approval by the Senate
- iii. To advise students in choosing the elective courses wisely
- iv. To monitor the performance of students, to identify students who need help, and to liaise with MCWC to ensure proper counselling
- v. To assign project supervisors to the 5th year students and to conduct the evaluation process through project seminars
- vi. To assign Teaching Assistants to courses
- vii. To decide on the major choice of students
- viii. To decide the departmental components of the Teaching Plan of each semester.
- ix. To conduct the IPhD admission process

1.16.2 Functions of the Institute-level UGAC:

- i. To propose all policy matters related to undergraduate education and to place for approval of the Senate.
- ii. To monitor the implementation of the policies decided by the Senate.

1.16.3 Functions of the Departmental PGAC:

- i. To formulate the content of advertisements for admission
- ii. To form interview boards
- iii. To forward progress reports of students to the Academic Cell
- iv. To schedule and conduct comprehensive examination,
- v. To be involved in the process pertaining to thesis, from initiation to completion
- vi. To decide on the number of PhD students that can be taken by a department
- vii. To conduct orientation for new students

1.16.4 Functions of the Institute-level PGAC:

- i. To propose all policy matters related to postgraduate education and to place for approval of the Senate.
- ii. To monitor the implementation of the policies decided by the Senate.

1.17 Storage of old answer-scripts: As per *Record Retention Schedule In Respect Of Records Common to All Ministries/ Departments* (2012), Government of India, vide Sl. No. 6 of “Records Other Than Files” (Page 19), the retention period for “Answer books of departmental examinations/tests” is “C-1 from the date of declaration of results”, where C-1 denotes “Category C files to be kept for 1 year”. Accordingly all answer-scripts will be maintained for one year and then will be destroyed. No request for viewing the answer-script will be entertained after this period.

1.18 National Academic Depository: The National Academic Depository (NAD) is an initiative of MHRD, Government of India wherein academic institutions can securely lodge details of all academic certificates issued to students. IISER Kolkata has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NSDL, Mumbai – one of the designated platforms to address various issues such as storage, authenticity and verifiability associated with the use of academic awards. As part of this MoU, IISER Kolkata is able to securely lodge details of all academic certificates issued to students.

- i. Students need to register with National Academic Depository (NAD) through the link <https://www.nad.ndml.in/NAD/newStudentRegistrationScreen.html>". This is mandatory to get their final degrees. A screenshot of the step-by-step process for NAD registration is available on the intranet.
- ii. Students can register with Aadhar Number (preferable). In this case it has to be ensured that their phone number and e-mail are updated in their Aadhar cards for receiving communications from NAD.
- iii. In case a student does not have Aadhar, he/she has to register to get a NAD ID. NAD ID registration would require online confirmation from the Institute; hence the student must intimate the Academic Cell if he/she exercises this option. The form for the same is available on the intranet.

1.19 No Dues

- i. In order to initiate the process of No Dues, a student will have to submit an application to the Academic Cell for release.
- ii. A student will have to get 'No Dues' only from the parent department, the Library, and the Academic Cell. Information on 'No Dues' from the other departments will be obtained over email by the Academic Cell from the concerned Department offices. The Head of a Department may sign on behalf of a supervisor if the latter is not available.
- iii. Graduating students should ensure that there is nothing outstanding against him/her well in advance before the submission of thesis. This is mandatory for issuance of degree certificate/release order.

1.20 Research Ethics: A guideline on research ethics has to be read and signed by all PhD, IPhD students and final-year BS-MS students. The document is available on Intranet under DoAA Guidelines and should be submitted to the concerned department office after being signed by the students. At least one question from the document will be asked by the RPC during the comprehensive examination of PhD students.

1.21 Safety Guidelines : A guideline on safety rules has to be read and signed by all PhD, IPhD and final-year BS-MS students. Every laboratory as well as departments should have their own "Safety-Guidelines". All PhD, IPhD and final-year BS-MS students should sign the same and submit to their concerned laboratory as well as department.

1.22 One-credit courses in specialized areas: 1-credit courses will be offered which will have 12 lectures (+tutorials) and one exam. These will be advanced-level courses offered by the faculty of the Institute as well as by the Adjunct and Honorary faculty who will be invited for a couple of weeks to offer such courses. The courses will mainly be meant for 5th year BS-MS students, IP students (3rd year onward), and PhD students. Non-disciplinary subjects like science journalism, web-design, art appreciation, etc., may also be offered using specialists in these areas visiting us for short periods or on weekends. These courses, along with the grades obtained, will be reflected in the transcript as 'additional courses' and will not contribute to one's CGPA.

1.23 Audit courses: Students will be allowed to take Audit course/s if (a) Time-Table permits, and (b) the pre-requisites are met. One has to attend classes, submit assignments regularly, and appear in examinations. The course/s will be graded similar to the Credit courses. Audit and/or additional courses with credits will reflect in the transcript. However, these grades will not be considered for

SGPA/CGPA calculation. A student would be allowed to audit a maximum of two courses per semester.

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