



Comprehensive Guidelines for Conducting Virtual Classes

Hamadan University of Medical Sciences

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Part One: Generalities and Theoretical Foundations

1.1. Introduction and Necessities

Considering the rapid developments in the field of higher education and the valuable experiences of recent years, Hamadan University of Medical Sciences has undertaken the development of a comprehensive guideline for conducting virtual classes with the aim of improving educational quality, facilitating access to education, and optimizing resources.

Virtual education is considered not only as a temporary solution but also as a complementary and reinforcing component of the university's educational system, which can provide flexible, interactive, and technology-based learning opportunities for the university community. The university's approach in this regard is an integrated and intelligent approach that combines the advantages of face-to-face and virtual education and brings the best learning experience to students.

2.1. Strategic Objectives

1. Developing sustainable technical and educational infrastructures for conducting virtual classes
2. Enhancing the quality of education through the utilization of modern educational technologies
3. Creating flexible and accessible learning opportunities for all students
4. Empowering faculty members in the production and delivery of electronic educational content
5. Standardizing virtual education processes throughout the university
6. Maintaining and strengthening faculty-student interaction in virtual environments
7. Ensuring information security and privacy in the virtual educational environment

3.1. Scope and Application

This guideline includes all educational, research, and healthcare units under Hamadan University of Medical Sciences and is applicable to all educational levels, including bachelor's, master's, specialized doctoral programs, and residency courses. It should be noted that this guideline only covers theoretical courses, and all practical, workshop-based, laboratory, and clinical courses are conducted in person and are subject to approved health protocols.

Part Two: Organizational Structure and Responsibilities

1.2. Virtual Education Management Structure

To effectively implement this guideline, the following structure is proposed:

1. **Virtual Education Center:** Responsible for technical support, conducting training courses, and monitoring the quality of virtual classes.
2. **Virtual Education Liaison of Each Faculty:** Each faculty is required to appoint one faculty member or educational expert as the virtual education liaison. This person acts as the communication link between the faculty and the university's Virtual Education Center.

2.2. Duties and Responsibilities of the Faculty Virtual Education Liaison

The virtual education liaison of each faculty is considered the executive arm of this guideline within the faculty and has the following duties:

1. Providing the necessary training to faculty members regarding the use of educational platforms
2. Providing technical and educational support to faculty members throughout the academic semester
3. Collecting problems, challenges, and suggestions from faculty members and students and conveying them to the Virtual Education Center
4. Monitoring faculty members' compliance with the provisions of this guideline
5. Coordinating the organization of required training workshops within the faculty
6. Providing a monthly report on the status of virtual education in the faculty
7. Participating in the design and continuous improvement of virtual education processes

3.2. Support Provided by the University Virtual Education Center to Virtual Education Liaisons

The Virtual Education Center will provide the following support to enable virtual education liaisons to effectively fulfill their roles:

- Conducting specialized electronic learning training courses
- Establishing a communication network among liaisons from all faculties for the exchange of experiences
- Providing required equipment and software
- Technical support

Part Three: Rules and Regulations for Conducting Virtual Classes

1.3. Combination of Online and Offline Classes

With the aim of benefiting from the advantages of both educational methods and considering the existing limitations, the following combination is determined for conducting classes:

A maximum of 50% of the total hours of each theoretical course may be provided in an offline format. This percentage can be adjusted according to the nature of the course, the opinion of the educational department, and the approval of the Faculty's Vice-Chancellor for Education; however, it must not exceed 50% under any circumstances.

At least 50% of the total hours of each theoretical course must be conducted online and interactively. These sessions must be held at the times specified in the weekly schedule, with the simultaneous presence of the instructor and students, and through the platforms introduced by the university.

2.3. Regulations for Offline Classes

Offline classes must have the following characteristics:

1. **Uploading high-quality content:** The provided offline content must be scientifically accurate, up-to-date, and consistent with the approved course syllabus.
2. **Format diversity:** Content may be provided in various formats, including:
 - High-quality educational videos (minimum 30 minutes)
 - Narrated presentations (PowerPoint presentations with audio explanations)
 - Interactive educational texts
 - Educational simulations (for practical courses)
 - Infographics and educational images
 - Rich textual content (lecture notes, electronic books, articles) may also be provided as supplementary materials.
3. **Appropriate scheduling:** Offline content must be made available to students at least 24 hours before the scheduled broadcast time to allow sufficient opportunity for downloading and studying.
4. **Interactive assessment:** Each section of offline content must be accompanied by interactive activities such as short quizzes, exercises, forum discussions, and assignments to evaluate students' level of learning.
5. **Storage:** All produced offline content must be uploaded to the university's LMS (Samalive system), and its intellectual property rights shall belong to the university.

3.3. Regulations for Online Classes

Online classes must be conducted in accordance with the following principles:

1. **Proper planning:** The time of online classes must comply with the class schedule announced by the Education Department and must be communicated to students. Changing the class time is only possible in necessary cases and with prior notification and coordination with students and the Education Department.
2. **Effective interaction:** Online classes must have a dynamic and interactive environment. The use of methods such as question-and-answer sessions, group discussions, virtual whiteboards, and live polls is recommended.
3. **Attendance:** Attendance is mandatory for all online sessions. Attendance recording methods must be diverse and designed to prevent cheating.

4. **Session recording:** Considering intellectual property rights and with prior notification to students, online sessions may be recorded. These files must be made available to students no later than 24 hours after the session.
 5. **Appropriate duration:** For every 2 theoretical course credits, the instructor must conduct 60 to 75 minutes of simultaneous online classes per week with two-way communication capability.
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Part Four: Educational Platforms and Technical Considerations

1.4. Authorized Platforms

Faculty members may use one of the following platforms according to the educational needs of their courses:

1. Samalive (University Centralized Electronic Learning System)

- First priority for conducting all courses
- Advantages: Integrated with university systems, high security, internal support
- Features: Online classes, content uploading, conducting exams, automatic student attendance tracking

2. Skyroom

- An alternative platform with automatic recording capability for conducting online classes
- Limitations: Requires an appropriate internet bandwidth

3. Google Meet

- An alternative platform for specific courses with special requirements
- Conditions of use: Activation of all security settings
- Limitations: Not to be used for final examinations

2.4. Technical and Security Requirements

1. Session Security:

- Using passwords for all sessions
- Activating the waiting room and manual approval of participants
- Restricting screen-sharing capabilities to instructors and assistants
- Preventing the entry of unknown guests

2. Privacy Protection:

- Informing students about session recordings
- Prohibiting the public distribution of class content
- Automatic deletion of recorded files after the end of the semester (except for archived cases)

3. Accessibility:

- Providing appropriate infrastructure for students with special needs
- Enabling offline access to core content

3.4. Minimum Technical Standards for Faculty Members and Students

For Faculty Members:

- Providing an appropriate internet connection speed for uploading
- Having an HD-quality webcam
- Having a dedicated microphone (headset or separate microphone)
- Providing a suitable and professional workspace

For Students:

- Providing an appropriate internet connection speed for downloading
 - Having headphones or earphones to reduce noise
 - The ability to connect to classes via mobile phone in case of lack of access to a computer
 - Installing the required software on personal devices
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Part Five: Evaluation and Quality Assurance

1.5. Modern Evaluation Methods

Considering the nature of virtual education, evaluation methods must be reviewed and updated:

1. Continuous Assessment:

- Conducting short quizzes throughout the semester
- Participation in online discussions
- Submission of phased assignments through the system
- Individual and group virtual presentations

2. Final Examinations:

- Designing questions based on higher levels of cognition
- Possibility of conducting open-book exams with appropriate design
- Diversity in question formats (descriptive, short-answer, case analysis)

3. Electronic Portfolio:

- Collecting students' work samples throughout the semester
- Self-assessment and peer assessment
- Final presentation as part of the final grade

2.5. Monitoring Mechanisms and Quality Assurance

1. **Continuous Monitoring:** Educational experts of each faculty are required to periodically monitor virtual classes.
2. **Regular Surveys:** Conducting surveys among students during the middle and end of each semester to evaluate the quality of virtual education.
3. **Feedback:** Providing constructive feedback to faculty members to improve virtual teaching methods.
4. **Content Evaluation:** Includes quantitative and qualitative evaluation of uploaded content. Quantitative evaluation is conducted through self-reporting and declaration of class hours held by instructors to the Education Department of each faculty. The Virtual Education Center may monitor this self-reporting process, and qualitative evaluation, which includes reviewing the scientific and educational quality of the produced offline content, will be conducted by the heads of educational departments.
5. **Reviewing Statistics and Reports:** Analyzing attendance statistics, participation rates, and student performance to identify strengths and weaknesses.

3.5. Key Performance Indicators

To evaluate the effectiveness of virtual education, the following indicators will be examined:

- Attendance rate in online classes
- Quality of produced offline content
- Student satisfaction with virtual education
- Learning outcomes and final grades
- Level of utilization of technical and educational support services

To evaluate the quality of online and offline classes, the following checklists will be used:

Offline Class Quality Evaluation Checklist

N o.	Eval uati on Are a	Questions	Acceptable	Appropriate	Inappropriate	Unacceptabl e
1	Content Access and Organization	The educational content of the session has been uploaded to the educational system on time.				
2		Access to files and educational content has been easily possible for students.				
3		The provided educational content has been consistent with the approved course syllabus.				
4		The materials of each session have been presented in an organized and				

		structured manner in the system.				
5	Educational Content Quality	The provided multimedia content (video, slides, audio files, etc.) has had appropriate quality.				
6		The explanations provided in the content have been clear, understandable, and appropriate for the students' level.				
7		The duration of the provided content has been appropriate for learning.				
8		The examples and explanations provided have contributed to a better understanding of the materials.				
9	Learning Interaction and Activities	Appropriate educational activities (assignments, short quizzes, or discussion forums) have been considered for each session.				
10		Students have had the opportunity to ask questions or participate in educational discussions.				
11		The instructor has provided appropriate responses to students' questions or activities in the system.				

Online Class Quality Evaluation Checklist

No.	Evaluation Area	Questions	Acceptable	Appropriate	Inappropriate	Unacceptable
1	Class Planning and Management	The class has been conducted at the announced time.				
2		The duration of the class has been appropriate for the educational content and course schedule.				
3		The objectives and topics of the session have been clearly stated				

		at the beginning of the class.				
4	Educational Presentation Quality	Educational materials have been presented clearly and understandably.				
5		The pace of presenting the materials has been appropriate for the students' level.				
6		Examples or supplementary explanations have been used to improve understanding of the materials.				
7		An appropriate summary of the materials has been provided at the end of the class.				
8	Educational Interaction	The instructor has provided opportunities for students to ask questions.				
9		Students have been encouraged to participate and express their viewpoints during the class.				
10		The instructor has provided appropriate and timely responses to students' questions.				
11	Technical Quality of the Class	The audio and video quality during the class has been appropriate.				
12		There have been no significant technical problems during the class.				
13		Access to the class has been easily possible for students.				
14		Students have not been unexpectedly disconnected from the class.				
15		The use of virtual classroom system features (screen sharing, slide				

		presentation, chat, etc.) has been properly available.				
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Part Six: Support and Continuous Development

1.6. Faculty Empowerment Programs

The university (Center for the Study and Development of Medical Education) will implement the following empowerment programs/workshops for faculty members in virtual education:

1. Basic Training Courses:

- Familiarization with educational platforms
- Methods of producing electronic educational content
- Teaching techniques in virtual environments
- Principles of electronic assessment

2. Specialized Workshops:

- Professional production of educational videos
- Designing effective interactions in virtual classes
- Teaching practical skills in virtual environments

2.6. Student Support

1. Comprehensive virtual education guide for students
2. Technical assistance to resolve connection and access problems
3. Familiarization workshops on systems at the beginning of each semester
4. Psychological and social support to address the challenges of virtual learning

3.6. Infrastructure Development

1. Hardware upgrades for university servers and networks
2. Purchasing platforms for conducting online educational classes
3. Providing access to content recording studios
4. Preparing loan equipment for faculty members
5. Providing internet packages (increasing the allocated data volume) for faculty members

Part Seven: Disciplinary and Ethical Regulations

1.7. Ethical Commitments of Faculty Members

1. Full compliance with academic standards and professional ethics in the virtual environment

2. Respect for the cultural and ideological diversity of students
3. Maintaining students' confidentiality and the privacy of educational information
4. Adherence to scientific principles and prevention of academic plagiarism
5. Providing timely responses to students' questions and messages
6. Ensuring educational fairness and equal treatment of all students

2.7. Ethical Commitments of Students

1. Observing politeness and respect in all virtual interactions
2. Timely attendance and preparedness for online classes
3. Active and constructive participation in class activities
4. Avoiding any behavior that disrupts the order of the class
5. Respecting the intellectual property rights of faculty members and the university
6. Adhering to academic honesty and avoiding cheating

3.7. Violations and Offenses

The following violations will be subject to disciplinary action:

For Students:

- Entering classes with a false identity
- Unauthorized recording and distribution of class content
- Deliberately disrupting online classes
- Cheating in examinations and assignments
- Using inappropriate language or images

For Faculty Members:

- Failure to comply with the specified percentage allocation for online and offline classes
- Providing insufficient-quality content
- Repeated failure to comply with class schedules
- Failure to observe principles of fair assessment
- Violating students' privacy

4.7. Mechanisms for Handling Violations

1. **Complaint:** Establishing a mechanism for submitting complaints
2. **Review:** Initial review by the head of the department and the Vice-Chancellor for Education
3. Presenting necessary cases to the Faculty Educational Council and, upon approval, referring the cases to the University Educational Council
4. **Disciplinary Committee:** Referring cases approved by the University Educational Council to the Disciplinary Committee / Violation Review Unit

Part Eight: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Revision

1.8. Continuous Monitoring System

1. Monthly reporting by virtual education liaisons to the Faculty / University Vice-Chancellor for Education
2. Unannounced visits to online classes
3. Analysis of system data (attendance, participation, performance)
4. Monthly meetings with the participation of all liaisons

2.8. Effectiveness Evaluation

At the end of each academic semester, a comprehensive evaluation of the implementation of this guideline will be conducted, which includes:

- Analysis of students' learning outcomes
- Review of satisfaction surveys from faculty members and students
- Evaluation of the cost-effectiveness of the program
- Comparison with national and international standards
- Identification of best practices and lessons learned

3.8. Periodic Revision

This guideline will be reviewed and updated once a year based on:

- Changes in current conditions
- Changes in educational technologies
- Feedback from the university community
- Results of annual evaluations
- Experiences of other successful universities