PROPOSED GUIDELINES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LIMITED FACE-TO-FACE LEARNING (F2FL) AT BULACAN STATE UNIVERSITY

The Province of Bulacan has been under the Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ) status since October 2020. Based on the guidelines of Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), areas under MGCQ may conduct limited face-to-face learning in Higher Education Institution as long as the IATF guidelines will be strictly implemented. Furthermore, no other than the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chair, Prospero De Vera in an interview conducted last December 1 suggested that HEI’s could have an option to conduct limited face-to-face classes under certain restrictions and guidelines. Moreover, the Joint Circular Memorandum No. 01-2021 is highly considered in the implementation of the guidelines.

Committed to continuing her goal of providing quality education, the Bulacan State University intends to look into possibilities of conducting limited F2FL. Along this line, the Educational Development Office (EDO) of the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs drafted the Proposed Guidelines on the Implementation of Limited Face-to-Face Learning limited (F2FL) at Bulacan State University.

The guidelines will be implemented only to the approved laboratory courses that need to have limited F2FL. Flexible Learning Modalities (FLM) implemented by the University in the previous semesters will still be followed giving provision to the implementation of proposed guidelines on the Limited F2FL. Limited F2FL is not mandatory, the personal decision of the parents/guardians in permitting their sons/daughters to attend limited F2FL for laboratory classes is honored.

A. IATF REGULATIONS FOR AREAS UNDER MGCQ CONCERNING ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES

1. Limited face-to-face learning may be conducted in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) as long as there is:
   1.1 strict compliance with minimum health standards
      1.1.1 Safety Protocols
         1.1.1.1 wearing of appropriate face masks/shields and other protective gears.
         1.1.1.2 frequent sanitation and handwashing
         1.1.1.3 avoiding touching of face and other surfaces.
      1.1.2 safe distancing
         1.1.2.1 At least one meter apart
         1.1.2.2 Reconfigured work spaces
         1.1.2.3 Markers in public spaces
         1.1.2.4 No work if showing symptoms
   1.2 consultation with Local Government Units
   1.3 compliance with guidelines issued by CHED
   1.4 no activities that involve mass gatherings

2. For K-12 Basic Education, Basic Education Learning and Continuity Plan of DepEd shall be adopted for the implementation of limited F2FL.

B. PRELIMINARIES

1. Each academic unit/head shall identify the courses where limited F2FL are deemed necessary to achieve the targeted learning outcomes. The report of such courses is to be submitted to the Office of the Chancellors. (Accomplish the Template in Appendix A.)
2. The Executive Vice President in concurrence with the Chancellors shall recommend the approval of the courses for limited F2FL.

3. The academic unit shall prepare
   3.1 the scheduling/rescheduling of classes of the approved laboratory courses
   3.2 the modification of the schedule of the faculty affected by limited F2FL

4. A Teaching Laboratory Plan (TLP) should be prepared by the laboratory heads.

5. The Dean of the College must prepare an Action Plan on the implementation of these guidelines.

C. SECURING THE APPROVAL OF THE CHED and LGUs

1. The Office of the Executive Vice President should form a committee to confer with the CHED and LGUs on the matter consisting of members from the conceived-design and implementing groups.

2. This committee shall present all the necessary documents required.

D. THE ROLE OF THE STAKEHOLDERS

1. Administrators
   1.1 form a committee for the operationalization of the guidelines on the implementation of limited F2FL
   1.2 conduct orientation/training to the faculty members/students/staff on the requirements of delivering limited F2FL
   1.3 ensure safety of all the members of the community on the delivery of limited F2FL

2. Faculty Members
   2.1 Prepare the Teaching Laboratory Plan
   2.2 assist the administrators and maintenance staff on the implementation of the delivery of limited F2FL
   2.3 guide the students on the practicing the safety measures inside and outside the laboratory

3. Students
   3.1 follow the safety protocols and safe distancing at all times
   3.2 cooperate with all the procedures to be followed inside the campus and laboratories
   3.3 sign the student permission letter that their parents are allowing them to attend limited F2F classes for laboratory courses.

4. Parents/Guardians
   4.1 ensure the health condition of their children before allowing to go to the school
   4.2 consistently remind their children of the safety protocols and safe distancing at all times
   4.3 ensure that their children bring health kit (alcohol/sanitizer, mask, face shield, gloves, et.) at all times
   4.3 if possible, prepare food for their children to bring to the school to avoid buying and using of other’s utensils
   4.4 sign the permission letter that they are allowing their sons/daughters to attend limited F2FL classes for laboratory courses (Appendix C).
E. IMPLEMENTATION/OPERATIONALIZATION

The offices of the EVP and the chancellors shall take charge for the implementation but not limited to the following:

E1. The School and Classroom Physical Design to Offer Limited F2FL
1. Signages and markings should be available and visible in all places in the University to observe safe spacing. Provide safety distancing guides, such as tape, paint, or chalk on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that staff and students remain at least 1 meter apart in lines, hallways, sanitation facilities (toilets), and at other times.
2. The laboratory rooms/classrooms should be designed to make sure that safe distancing will be followed. One meter distance from each other is a must to observe safe spacing.
3. Maximize the available classrooms to distribute equipment/tools for laboratory activities.
4. Non-hazardous/risky laboratory activities may be assigned to other available classrooms to make sure that limited students will use the facility no and safe distancing will be observed.
5. Erect physical barriers between workstations/areas when possible and appropriate.
6. Excess furniture that will NOT be conducive to the social distancing spacing should be stored when not in use.
7. Position the seats/desks with space of at least 1 meter apart. Provide physical cues such as tape or chalk to guide spacing.
8. Face all desks/tables in the same direction. Have students sit on only one side of the table.
9. Ventilation is an important part of maintaining good indoor air quality and reducing transmission of respiratory diseases. Ventilate with as much outside air as possible before, during and after occupancy, and while cleaning and disinfecting. Open windows when possible.
10. Establish one-way circulation in hallways, classrooms, and school facilities. Assign staff to monitor hallway, classroom, and facility traffic to ensure physical distancing guidelines are followed.

E2. Teaching Laboratory Plan (TLP)
1. Faculty members handling laboratory courses should develop a detailed Teaching Laboratory Plan (TLP) that describes the environmental changes that will support safe distancing, the methods used to support community protective equipment, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) use, and the cleaning/disinfecting protocols for their specific lab course.
2. More restrictive measures can be adopted if the specific conditions require.
3. Plans should be reviewed by the Program Chairs and input of the College Dean and Secretary should be considered.
4. Please refer to Appendix B for the template of TLP.
E3. Schedule of Classes
1. Number of hours for lecture and laboratory stated in the CHED Memorandum Order on the policies, standards and guidelines for a certain program should be carefully implemented.
2. Assigned number of hour/s for lecture must be done in Synchronous Learning (SL) mode. Time allotted in the laboratory should be maximized for hands-on activities only.
3. Classes should be designed to compensate for the number of hours required for laboratory activities and make it sure that all students will have their schedule.
4. Schedule of classes should be designed in a way that limited students will enter the University, and a limited number of students will use a particular laboratory per day.
5. Schedule for each laboratory activity should have one hour break to give time for the maintenance staff to clean the frequently touched surfaces and areas in the laboratories in between classes.
6. Mass gatherings are not permitted in any form of activity within the University.

E4. Safety of Instructors and Students
1. Students who will enter the University should be fit for limited F2FL. Students have to follow the health protocols upon entering the university.
2. Health protocols should be practiced at all times like safe distancing, wearing facemask, face shield, gloves, bringing personal alcohol, and proper washing of hands.
3. Instructors should practice safe distancing in dealing with the students who are asking for assistance.
4. Worksheets or other materials to be submitted to the instructor during laboratory hours should be untouched for a 24-hour period before handling them (based on Centers for Disease and Control Prevention, 2020). This is also the same when the papers/materials will be returned to the students. A box per section/activity should be provided for storage of submitted materials. Online submission is still strongly recommended for safety purposes.
5. Both instructors and students are prohibited from borrowing materials like ballpen, pencil, eraser, whiteboard marker, etc..
6. Students are not allowed to roam around or stay longer in the campus before and after their classes. Students should only go to school for their scheduled laboratory classes and will go home once their classes are done.
7. Instructors should not give collaborative activities inside and outside their laboratory classes.
8. Symptoms like coughing, vomiting, shortness of breath and fever should be reported immediately to the University Infirmary for immediate action. In this case health protocols should be applied to those who have contact to the person.

E5. Use of Other Students' Facilities
1. The use of other students' facilities such as library, canteen, activity center, and student lounges should be limited to 50% of the capacity of the area and ensure safe distancing is being observed.
2. The canteen and other concessionaires are not allowed to provide utensils for the food that the students and faculty will buy.
3. Students are encouraged to bring their own food and use their own utensils.
4. Provision for the use of computer laboratories for those students who are economically challenged to provide themselves with gadgets and internet connectivity should be available within the University. Schedule of students who wish to use the computer facilities of the University must be properly designed for safety distancing.

E6. Guidelines for the safety of the BulSU community

1. Prepare the faculty, students and non-teaching staff on the re-opening of the campus for limited F2FL through webinars on highly considering safety at all times and increasing physical and mental resilience of the BulSU community.
2. Educate maintenance staff performing cleaning, laundry, and trash pick-up to recognize the symptoms of COVID-19.
3. The Office of the Vice President for Administration and Finance (OVPAF) should develop guidelines for worker protection and provide training to all cleaning staff on site prior to providing cleaning tasks. The guidelines must include the development of schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
4. Training should include when to use PPE, what PPE is necessary, how to properly don (put on), use, and doff (take off) PPE, and how to properly dispose of PPE.
5. Ensure maintenance staff are trained on the hazards of the cleaning chemicals used in the workplace.

E7. Cleaning and Disinfecting of Laboratory Facilities and other Areas by the Maintenance Staff

1. In-between classes cleaning of Facilities may include:
   - door handles/knobs including outside
   - light switches
   - common use counter tops
   - instructor and facilitator stations
   - tables, desks, and high-touch areas
2. Disinfection of classrooms and other frequently used areas should be done daily after class.

E8. Support and Safety Measures along the Campus

1. The Security Services should design safety protocols on the movements of the students inside the campus.
2. The Security Services should assign staff to monitor that safe spacing is observed during school arrival and departure and among students during breaks.
3. The Management Information System (MIS) should assist in the planning and development of an application for easy recording/storing of the data of the students who will enter the campus following the health protocols.

F. Identification of COVID-19 positive students and personnel

1. In case that a student or personnel is identified positive in COVID-19, “Omnibus Interim Guidelines on Prevention, Detection. Isolation Treatment, and Reintegration Strategies for COVID-19” will be followed.
2. The University through its Infirmary Office will develop protocols that include provisions from the Provincial and City Health Office for the prevention, detection, isolation, treatment, and reintegration strategies.
Everyone should take part and do their utmost to provide the best service they can at this time. Being versatile and patient when working with limited F2FL is crucial for everyone. All stakeholders, including students, faculty, staff and parents, will need patience with a can-do attitude to ensure that limited F2FL is both purposeful and effective.

Definition of Terms (Centers for Disease Control, 2020)

- **Cleaning** physically removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects by using soap (or detergent) and water. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

- **Disinfecting** kills germs on surfaces or objects. Disinfecting works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection. Clean surfaces and objects using soap and water prior to disinfection.

Appendix A. Permission Form for Limited F2FL

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<th>Name and Signature of Department Head</th>
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<th>Name and Signature of Dean</th>
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<th>Name and Signature of Health and Safety Officer</th>
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Please list all the Courses in your Program that require a Face to Face component.

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<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Course to be delivered limited F2FL</th>
<th>Building and Room #</th>
<th>Max # of students in space</th>
<th>% of total course time delivered limited F2FL</th>
<th>Please explain why the courses identified are essential to have limited F2FL</th>
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Explanation should answer the following questions: (Teaching Labs COVID-19 Guidance / Environment, Health and Safety, 2020)

Teaching labs should consider these questions as they make their final class and space decisions:

1. Is this activity essential to an academic outcome or experience that can’t be replaced in a later semester?
2. Are virtual alternatives not acceptable? Why not?
3. Do the benefits of in-person contact really outweigh the risks of possible COVID transmission?
4. Are there ways to assure equity in access for students who are required to be in quarantine or isolation?

If the answers to these questions are yes, teaching labs may re-open.

Recommendation Approval: by the Chancellor and the Executive Vice President

Approved by: the President
Appendix B. Template for Teaching Laboratory Plan (TLP)

I. Rationale
II. Safety Measures and Protocols
III. Cleaning and Disinfecting of tools/equipment/surfaces
IV. Design of Instructional Spaces
V. Pedestrian Flow

The suggested design of instructional spaces by the National Council on School Facilities and Cooperative Strategies (2020), could be contextualized on the size of the classroom in the campus. The instructional spaces could be designed with the help of the Planning and Management Office (PMO).

Arranging Instructional Spaces

Example: 960 square feet (30’ x 32’ room, with furniture) 31 12

Icons: iStock/Getty

SOURCE: National Council on School Facilities and Cooperative Strategies
Appendix C. COVID-19 - BulSU Limited F2F Classes for Laboratory Courses Student Permission Form, Release and Hold Harmless

In consideration of _________________________________ (NAME OF STUDENT) being allowed to attend and participate in-person in BulSU Limited F2F Classes for Laboratory Courses, to include but not limited to educational, co-curricular, and extracurricular programs, the undersigned acknowledges and agrees that:

1. The risk to have contact with individuals, who have been exposed to and/or have been diagnosed with one or more communicable diseases, including but not limited to Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID19) or other medical conditions, diseases, or maladies does exist, and, despite University’s good faith implementation of the Inter-Agency Task Force guidelines, it is impossible to eliminate the risk that Student might be exposed to and/or become infected through contact with or close proximity with an individual with a communicable disease. Risk from contracting such communicable disease might include illness, permanent disability, or death.

2. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors for severe disease. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Based on Department of Health guidance, those at high-risk for severe illness from COVID-19 are: people 65 years and older; people who live in a nursing home or long-term facility.

Those at severe risk also include people of all ages with underlying medical conditions, particularly if not well controlled, including, but not limited to: chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma; serious heart conditions; those who are immunocompromised (many conditions can cause a person to be immunocompromised, including cancer treatment, smoking, bone marrow or organ transplantation, immune deficiencies, poorly controlled HIV or AIDS, and prolonged use of corticosteroids and other immune weakening medications); severe obesity (body mass index [BMI] of 40 or higher); diabetes; chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis; and, liver disease.

3. By signing below the undersigned acknowledges that Student does not have an underlying medical condition, as referenced herein, or that if Student has such underlying medical condition that the undersigned will first obtain written permission from a licensed healthcare professional prior to Student attending or participating in School Activities, which written approval will be provided to University in advance of attendance or participation.

4. People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19: cough; shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; fever of 100.4°F (38°C); chills; muscle pain; sore throat; new loss of taste or smell. This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

STUDENT’S INITIALS ________            PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN’S INITIALS ________

COVID-19 - School Activities Student Permission Form, Release and Hold Harmless

5. Student will not attend University limited F2FL classes and Student or Student’s parent or guardian will notify University officials if Student currently has symptoms or have been in
contact with anyone with a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis in the last 14 days.

6. Student will not attend or participate in University limited F2FL classes if they are subject to state or federal government directed quarantine or isolation.

7. School retains the right to deny Student’s attendance or participation in University limited F2FL classes, if School determines that such attendance or participation is an undue health risk to Student or others. School similarly has the right to deny any other individual from attending School Activities if said individual’s attendance poses an undue health risk to that individual or others. School reserves the right to conduct screening measures, including but not limited to, taking Student’s temperature and inquiring about current symptoms, before Student may attend a School practice or event.

8. THE UNDERSIGNED KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUMES ALL SUCH RISKS for Student’s attendance or participation in School Activities.

9. The undersigned agrees that the undersigned and Student will comply with any safety or health related rules, terms, or conditions for participation in School Activities.

10. If Student or Student’s parent or legal guardian observes any unusual, significant hazard during their presence or participation in University limited F2FL classes, Student or Student’s parent or guardian will remove Student from participation and bring such observation to the attention of the nearest School employee.

After fully and carefully considering all the potential risks involved, I hereby assume the same and agree to release and hold-harmless Bulacan State University and its employees, officers, agents, contractors and concessionaires from and against, all claims and liability resulting from exposure to disease-causing organisms and objects, such as COVID-19, associated with Student participating in University limited F2FL classes, to include, but not limited to educational, co curricular, or extracurricular programs.

Date ______________________
Printed Name of Student  _______________________________________________________
Signature of Student ________________________________________________

Printed Name of Student’s Parent or Legal Guardian  _________________________________
Signature of Student’s Parent or Legal Guardian______________________________________

_______________________________
Student’s Signature over Printed Name  Date

_______________________________
Parents or Legal Guardian’s Signature over Printed Name  Date
REFERENCES:


CHED COVID ADVISORY No.7, 24 May 2020


Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2021-001. Guidelines on the Gradual Reopening of Campuses of Higher Education Institutions for Limited Face-to-Face Classes During the COVID-19 Pandemic


* Approved by the University Executive Committee during its EXECOM Meeting dated December 15, 2020 at the College of Education Library