

VISION

on the conduct of the courses of studies at Plovdiv Medical University during the winter semester of the 2020-2021 academic year.

1. **This document has been drawn up as a response to the following needs of:**
 - 1.1. Methodical Guide on the organization of the educational process
 - 1.2. Planning of the university resources
 - 1.3. Providing answers to student inquiries

2. **Characteristics of the situation:**
 - 2.1. With the current dissemination of CoVID-19, there is a high probability that 2 to 4% of students and faculty members will become infected. It can be assumed that multiple students, even whole groups, will be quarantined due to contact with infected persons or getting infected themselves. There will also be faculty members and patients who will have contact with infected persons.
 - 2.2. Should the epidemic situation become exacerbated, free movement may be limited and courses of studies may be switched to distance learning.

3. **Organizational principles of educational activities:**
 - 3.1. The MU must provide practical clinical training according to the Unified State Requirements (there are no part-time courses in medicine, dentistry, nursing, midwifery, rehabilitation, and many other majors taught at MU).
 - 3.2. Reducing students' contact with patients during practicals to the necessary minimum.
 - 3.3. Use of personal protective equipment (PPE) by students, faculty, and patients.
 - 3.4. Quarantining of contacts if the contact person has not been wearing PPE or there has been a long-term contact (cohabitation, prolonged joint activities).
 - 3.5. Providing students with the option to continue the course of studies and curriculum by means of remote learning in case of quarantine or infection.

4. **Measures taken:**
 - 4.1. **Course of studies organization:**
 - 4.1.1. Lectures
 - 4.1.1.1. All lectures at MU Plovdiv will be conducted in an **electronic environment**.
 - 4.1.1.2. Separate stream curriculums are recommended that allow lectures to be grouped and attended electronically/remotely without the students having to attend the university or the clinical base. Recommended lectures schedule:
 - 4.1.1.2.1. In the morning starting at 07:30 AM or 09:00 AM or only in the afternoon starting 02:30 PM or 04:00 PM for the respective day and stream. This schedule is suitable for the Dental Medicine Faculty and other clinical majors, where practical seminars must be attended in person.
 - 4.1.1.2.2. Concentrating lectures in one day for each year of studies or stream, e.g., Monday –first-year students; Tuesday – second-year students; Wednesday – third-year students, etc. This schedule is suitable for first-year and second-year students, where most of the practical seminars can be conducted remotely.
 - 4.1.1.2.3. The proposed lecture schedule is recommended and depends on the possibility of individual departments to adjust the curriculums already prepared properly. A mitigating condition for entirely remote lectures is the lack of necessity for lecture halls.

4.1.2. Practicals

4.1.2.1. The practicals at MU Plovdiv must be conducted mostly in person.

4.1.2.2. Part of the practicals are determined, in which the topic and the nature of the studied material allows electronic synchronous learning without compromising on quality.

4.1.2.3. The seminars (e.g., For the first-year, second-year, and some third-year students), as well as the theoretical substantiation of the clinical exercises (for the third-year, fourth-year, and fifth-year students), must be conducted electronically.

4.1.2.4. Depending on the need to develop practical skills in students, it is recommended that:

4.1.2.4.1. In the main clinical subjects, the relative share of electronic synchronous practical exercises must be up to 30% of the total number.

4.1.2.4.2. In basic and preclinical subjects – up to 50%.

4.1.2.5. Organizational measures must be introduced to minimize the contact time with patients. Examples of measures are:

4.1.2.5.1. Dividing into subgroups as each group must have contact with only one patient. The patient's examination will be documented through photo-video images, sharing and discussing this information with the rest of the group.

4.1.2.5.2. Taking patients of interest to the topic of the relevant practical to another room.

4.1.2.5.3. Conducting discussions outside the hospital rooms (treatment clinic rooms).

4.1.2.5.4. Maximum use of electronic visual learning resources. The taking of a medical history, palpation, percussion, and auscultation training will remain by means of direct contact with patients.

4.1.2.5.5. Maximum use of the Simulation Center by medical students, dental medicine students, nursing students, and midwifery students.

4.1.2.6. The students' e-learning and recording of clinical data requires the elaboration and signing of a declaration for non-dissemination of patients' medical information and personal data, which have been received during training at MU in social media or elsewhere.

4.1.2.7. The following recommendations are made for the FDM practicals:

4.1.2.7.1. Special clinical subjects must be attended in person.

4.1.2.7.2. Medical subjects – up to 50% electronically.

4.1.2.8. Heads of departments must determine by September 4th which practicals in the subjects studied at the department will be conducted in an electronic environment.

4.1.2.9. Dean's boards must establish the necessary organization and develop curricula by September 8th.

4.1.3. Internships must be conducted and attended entirely in person.

4.2. Protective equipment and other technical means ensuring safe attendance and conduct of lectures and practical exercises

4.2.1. The use of masks and hand disinfection before and after contact with patients and when entering and leaving a university building or clinical base is mandatory.

4.2.2. Individual departments may introduce additional protective equipment depending on the nature of their activities.

4.2.3. Provision of Personal Protective Equipment/ PPE/ for students and faculty members by MU Plovdiv based on needs and possibilities.

4.2.3.1. The Procurement Department will provide each student with an initial package containing 50 disposable masks, 2 reusable masks, and 400 ml disinfectant.

4.2.3.2. Disposable gloves may be provided at discretion.

4.2.3.3. Faculty members will also receive a helmet.

- 4.2.4. The distribution of the students' individual packages will be done against a signature and with the help of the Student Council.
- 4.2.5. Strict hygiene and disinfection of work premises every 3 hours on the schedule.
- 4.2.6. Purchase of bactericidal lamps, if possible, for the FDM clinical rooms and for other premises, where many presumably healthy persons gather for training purposes.

4.3. Action and control measures in case of quarantined and infected students and faculty members

- 4.3.1. A register of quarantined students must be established by each individual Academic Department. The Department of Epidemiology and the Vice-Rector of University-Hospital Coordination must indicate the statutory regulated conditions/criteria and the quarantine term.
- 4.3.2. Each department course of studies and practicals in the respective subjects must be established so that the quarantined and infected students do not fall behind with the material.
- 4.3.3. Trust and confidence among students and faculty members must be maintained in assurance that the current anti-epidemic measures are a necessary compromise for the implementation of sufficient practical training in the context of a long-lasting epidemic. We strongly rely on conscientiousness on the part of students in declaring their epidemiological status and adhering to anti-epidemic measures.
- 4.3.4. The OHS Department and the Department of Epidemiology must regularly update the information regarding CoVID19, intended for students.

5. Departments' tasks:

- 5.1. Create training materials for all curriculum lectures and practical exercises, which must be provided in advance in Sharepoint on MS Office 365.
- 5.2. Determine which practical exercises can be conducted only remotely.
- 5.3. Students must be instructed on OHS through the information in item 4.3.4.
- 5.4. Create a mechanism for control of PPE use on the part of students and faculty members.
- 5.5. Ensure quality presence and participation of intern doctors in internships. Establish mechanisms to control the conduct of internships.

6. Training and anti-epidemic measures quality control of by the CMC Department and the FQC:

- 6.1. Maintaining a regime of regular communication with the departments' quality supervisors or with the heads of the departments by means of MS Teams for the purpose of timely informing and solving of current problems as such arise.
- 6.2. It is recommended that the virtual meetings be held once a week during the first month of the beginning of the academic year, and then once or twice a month.

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