



UNIVERSITY OF SANTO TOMAS
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

UST: S006-00-ME27
AY 2019-2020

**TO: DEANS, REGENTS, DIRECTORS, PRINCIPALS,
AND HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS**

RE: APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS AND TIMELINES

FROM: OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

DATE: 1 May 2020

For the guidance of the Thomasian community, key Offices in the University have already been tasked to prepare necessary adjustments of existing operational guidelines towards continuing delivery of services for the stakeholders.

Below is a summary of recommendations from the UST Task Force, approved by the Acting Rector, Rev. Fr. Richard G. Ang, O.P.:

I. UST Task Force recommendations (as of 27 April 2020)

A. Timelines for recommended actions to be taken by responsible units

Concerns/Issues	Recommended action(s) to be taken	Responsible unit/ Timeline
List of qualified and wait-listed applicants was already released but reservation, confirmation, and enrolment have not yet been done	1. The University will issue a revised schedule for the processing of qualified, waitlisted, and reconsidered applicants in June, with advice that said schedule is subject to adjustment according to national ECQ guidelines.	OFAD/OSG 1st week of May 2020
	2. OFAD will prepare 3 schedules for the above purpose, in anticipation of possible extensions (again) of ECQ in June, and in July	Enrollment Committee 27 April - 1 May 2020
	3. Academic units requiring interviews shall conduct them online.	Concerned academic units



		<u>*To be conducted and completed prior to the new schedule for confirmation to be released</u>
Reducing the usual inconveniences in admission and enrolment procedure	1. The Freshmen Enrolment Procedure shall be modified to enable the following:	Enrollment Committee
	a. Off-campus access to the Deans' Menu for officials and officially nominated/designated support staff;	STePs/academic units <u>2 weeks prior to the resumption of confirmation and enrolment</u>
	b. Same day confirmation (submission of requirements) and enrolment (payment) of student applicants;	Academic units/Enrollment Committee/ Accounting
	c. Faster tagging of applicants through enrollment by "block section";	STePs/Academic units/Registrar
	d. Student enrolment minus the usual required documents (which are expected to suffer delay in their release by schools) provided students sign a conditional admission contract;	STePs/Academic units/NSTP/PE/ Registrar
	e. Student enrolment under a reduced installment scheme (i.e. from the current 50% downpayment policy ¹);	OVRF / Enrollment Committee
	f. Enrolment despite delayed payment ² (as control exists in terms of non-payment of required fees resulting in	OVRF / Enrollment Committee

¹ Subject to the approval of the OVRF

² With a reminder on the students' portal prior to enrolment, which the students could click as either "I agree or NA"

	the non-release of official documents by the Registrar's Office based on existing University policy)	
	2. Improving the University's available online payment schemes which currently are limited to BPI and Metrobank only	OVRF / STePs To be worked out immediately as to be ready by 1 st week of June 2020
Possible refund of the reservation fees	Information to be included in the announcement to be released on finance-related concerns	OVRF / OSG 27 April - 1 May 2020
JHS and EHS scores not having been processed yet (or transmuted to USTET scores)	OFAD has to come up with its alternative scheme to finish remaining tasks relevant to the JHS and EHS USTET scores of applicants. ³	OFAD / STePs Pending tasks to be completed prior to release of new enrollment schedule
Academic calendar for AY 2020-21	The University will prepare 3 contingency calendars for AY 2020-2021.	OSG/Office of the Registrar 1 st week of May 2020

³ The Task Force emphasized the urgency of the processing of the JHS and EHS USTET scores by OFAD and STePs, to be supported by the following arrangements with the OVRF, as applicable: (a) overnight accommodation in Hotel 1611; (b) transportation for pick-up and drop off at specific locations; provision of a directive to report to the University (to be patterned after the procedures observed by the staff of Faculty of Engineering).

B. Proposed Modification of the Existing Enrollment Procedures

Focus Area: Enrollment		
Concerns / Issues	Recommended action(s) to be taken	Responsible unit/timeline
Need to observe less physical interaction during EQC and post-ECQ periods in compliance with government regulations to reduce health-related risks	<p>The Enrollment Committee shall review the existing enrollment procedures, with the following considerations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Enable the implementation of a fully-online enrollment⁴; b. Ensure that payments for online enrollment are scheduled after usual payday; c. Provide for additional schedule of reservation for qualified applicants who failed to settle reservation fee; d. Prepare a clear process flow/visuals of the said procedures to avoid misinterpretations. 	Enrollment Committee/OSG/OVRF

1. In preparation for the online acceptance of applicants' requirements by the academic official and some designated support staff, the following steps will be undertaken:
 - (a) issuance of a general guideline from the OVRF to allow the support staff to temporarily take home necessary office equipment (laptop, printer) for a work-from-home set-up, in coordination with an academic unit representative and the Security Office;
 - (b) Use of a standard form for the release and acknowledgment of receipt of office equipment;
 - (c) coordination with the HRD for the work-from-home guidelines for concerned support staff.

⁴ Initially proposed procedure (Annex A) to be fine-tuned further by the Enrollment Committee during its own meeting

C. Financial-related Concerns

As regards financial concerns and issues, the following clarifications were provided by the Vice Rector for Finance, Fr. Rolando Castro:

Concerns	Clarifications
Release of the 30 percent of the 13 th month pay of the outsourced custodial staff	Aside from this initial support, financial assistance amounting to P/400.00 per day was added to their daily wage, whether they were able to report for work or not. Those who were able to report, however, will be given a top-off again for the services they rendered.
Refund of laboratory fees and other fees	<p>The OVRF needs to consult with each academic unit to determine used and unused other fees for the 2nd term. For clearly unused fees such as retreats, or field trips, 100% refund will be allowed. Other fees may be refunded also to as high as 50%, as applicable.</p> <p>Considering the complexity of the work to be done in computing refunds, the OVRF recommends that whatever amount is to be refunded be credited instead for the next term, except in the case of graduating students and those who will make a direct request for cash refund due to financial necessity.</p>
Installment payments of enrolled students for 2 nd term, AY 2019-20	<p>In support of students' participation in their online learning, the University encourages students to focus their attention to their studies and prioritize their preparation for final assessments. They shall be allowed to take the final assessment even if dues are not yet settled.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those students who may not be able settle installment dues for the 2nd Term, AY 2019-2020, may be allowed to enroll for the 1st Term AY 2020-2021. Once the fund is available, it should be used to settle unpaid balance. • Installment payments for 2nd term AY 2019-20 may be extended up to the first term AY 2020-2021. • The OVRF will devise a friendly payment scheme for students who will enroll in AY 2020-21, allowing staggered payment until December 2020.

Emergency loans and retirement fund loans for faculty	To be considered on a case-to-case basis. Faculty members who are in need of emergency loan or retirement fund loans may be advised to approach their respective Deans for endorsement to the OVRF.
No tuition fee increase for incoming first year students	There will be no tuition fee increase for AY 2020-2021. Tuition and other fees for AY 2020-2021 will be overhauled in consideration of the “new normal” and/or possibility of continued implementation of online learning for the 1 st term next AY.
Scholarships	Scholarships that were granted to students for the 2 nd term AY 2019-20 shall be extended to December 2020.

D. Scholarships and Faculty Concerns:

Focus Area: Scholarships		
Concern/ Issue	Recommended action(s) to be taken	Responsible Unit / Timeline
Qualified students applying for Santo Tomas Scholarship (i.e. Valedictorians, Salutatorians) are still advised to first pay tuition and other fees and refund later	In relation to the new normal, the Scholarship Committee shall review their policies, relative to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The provision of a simultaneous processing of scholarship and enrollment to avoid initial cash-out on the part of students; b. Waiving of the reservation fee of P/5,000.00 similar to the case of athletes and children of support staff and faculty members, for them to enjoy their book allowance; c. Provision of an online system for processing of scholarship applications 	Scholarship Committee / OSA Prior to the release of new enrollment schedule

Focus Area: Faculty		
Issue	Recommendation(s)	Responsible Unit / Timeline
Faculty members, who in spite of reminders from the concerned Deans/Directors, have failed to participate in the online learning implemented this 2 nd term, AY 2019-20	For OVRAA to come up with policy guidelines, for implementation by the Deans' Offices	OVRAA/ Academic units

ANNEX A: FULLY ONLINE ENROLLMENT PROCEDURE

1. Qualified applicants pay the reservation fee of P5,000.00 online

Notes:

 - Treasury Department accepts payment;
 - OFAD/Deans use the Deans Menu to check for the number of reserved students.
2. Academic units conduct college and program orientations online. In order for qualified applicants to click confirmation form, prompts requiring them to view video, read and understand reminders, and agree with program policies and guidelines will first appear and must be clicked in order to proceed with confirmation procedure.
3. Qualified applicant:
 - downloads confirmation of enrollment form, including conditional admission contract, as applicable;
 - accomplishes the said forms, together with other requirements stated in the confirmation of enrollment form;
 - submits scanned copy of requirements to the Academic Unit's official email.
4. Upon receipt of scanned requirements, Academic Unit advises course offerings to the applicants (treated as "block section").
5. Office of the Registrar tags the students in the enrollment system.
6. PE and NSTP assigns applicable courses;
7. Accounting Office assesses tuition and other fees.
8. Qualified applicant is prompted to pay online on a specified date to be issued by the Academic Unit, based on the schedule released by the Office of the Registrar.

II. *UST Task Force recommendations on Academic-related Issues as Raised in Previous Meetings (as of 29 April 2020)*

Focus Area: Academic Matters		
Concerns/Issues	Recommended action(s) to be taken	Responsible unit/ Timeline
1. Implementation of the maximum 3 gradable assessments across academic units, given the request of 5 units, namely: Medicine, Nursing, CRS, Architecture, and SHS for exemption	<p>Maintain the earlier approved recommendation, i.e. to keep the maximum 3 gradable assessments per course, given the following justifications:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While some units contend that the cap came rather late, in as much as their assessments had been pre-planned, the context by which the Task Force made the recommendation must be weighed in, i.e. while benchmarking with the response of other universities, the University still maintained that it cannot give in to students' demand for mass promotion or even a grade of "Passed." The cap on the number of gradable assessments is the most we can offer to respond to the students' repeated call for consideration, if not compassion, in view of our continued academic demands despite their clear and expressed problems/difficulties on internet connectivity. 2. It must not be taken for granted that the covid19 crisis brought everyone into an "extraordinary" time and situation; hence there is also a need to adjust what is "ordinarily" expected from students as deliverables. 3. OBE principles uphold that the assessment of learning outcomes is not based on the quantity, but the quality, of learning assessments. Hence, the view that "more learning outcomes means more gradable assessments" does not apply. 4. The board examinations cannot be used by concerned units as ground for the exemption. After all, the aspiration to maintain the programs' 	<p>OVRAA/ Academic units</p> <p>Effective immediately</p>

	<p>good board performance ratings applies to all board programs. This may be addressed, however, through audit classes (as stated in the ICP), which can be conducted after the term or as soon as conditions permit. It must be noted that 3.5/4 AYs or 4.5/5 AYs had already been delivered to the graduating students. Their board performance, therefore, should not be determined by their last semester alone.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. It can be expected that even PRC will adjust its schedule of examinations; hence, graduates will eventually be allowed time to catch up and prepare. 6. Finally, aside from causing inter-unit comparisons by students, any exemption granted to some units automatically opens the floodgates to similar requests, the end-result being that no cap will be observed eventually. Hence, a student with 8-9 courses enrolled this semester goes back to complying with more than 24 (8 x 3) or more than 27 (9 x 3) gradable assessments within a 3-week period of study. 	
<p>2. Regular meetings of OVRAA with CSC and SC Central Board, aside from the student leaders' meetings with the Dean's offices of their respective colleges/faculties</p>	<p>Meetings with student leaders shall be conducted and maintained by the Deans of their respective colleges/faculties. This should enable the immediate and contextualized addressing of their concerns and needs. It can also allow students the use of the 3-hour meeting time every Saturday for academic requirements. It is only when matters can not be addressed at the local level that they are elevated to OVRAA.</p>	<p>OVRAA/ Academic units</p> <p>Effective immediately</p>
<p>3. Recommendation for an OVRAA communication on possible delay in the release of the Tentative Teaching Load (TTL)</p>	<p>Withdraw the TF recommendation given that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Relevant CBA provisions allow ample time for academic units to prepare and release TTL; 2. It is to the advantage of both administration and faculty that the TTL be prepared at the earliest 	<p>Task Force</p> <p>Effective immediately</p>

	<p>possible time, given the following considerations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Necessary training for faculty; b. Planning for team-teaching to ensure OL competence in delivering a course; c. Needed assistance/ preparation of course sites; d. Advance notice for non-tenured faculty who might not be renewed and might thus need to look for jobs; e. Adequate time for OFED to process documents, including review of credentials and preparation of appointment papers. <p>3. There is a CBA provision allowing reduction of load; hence, TTL may be based initially on usual course offerings as indicated in the curriculum and adjusted later, as necessary.</p>	
<p>4. Faculty members without MA/MS but with industry practice/expertise</p>	<p>Apply the existing approved guidelines on the appointment of adjunct faculty.</p>	<p>OVRAA/ OFED/ Academic units</p>
<p>5. Special Term 2020</p>	<p>All Special Term offerings shall be delivered as online learning.</p> <p>Special Term offerings may be considered in the case of the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Part of regular course offerings under the curriculum; 2. Petitioned by graduating students; 3. Petitioned by those with deficiencies who need them as pre-requisites for the 1st term; 4. Graduate level courses. <p>It is the responsibility of an academic unit to review and decide on the feasibility of offering alternative requirements for their Laboratory Courses.</p>	<p>OVRAA/ Academic units/ Office of the Registrar</p>

	In the case of Internship as a regular offering under the Special Term, the options as presented by OVRAA, are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to delay the internship to a later term, if applicable; 2. to wait for further announcements or recommendations from CHED. 	
5. Special Term teaching load	Given the fully online delivery of courses under Special Term 2020, non-tenured faculty, who are well-equipped to deliver online teaching, may be assigned despite the additional administrative work that it may entail from OFED. Tenured faculty members, however, are still given the right of first refusal due to CBA provisions.	OVRAA/ OFED/ Academic units
6. Required MS/MA degree for those teaching GE and Professional courses	For further discussion by OVRAA and the academic units, given that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Most CMOs governing BS programs are due for full compliance in AY 2020-2021; 2. There are faculty members who are due to complete their degrees this second term but completion was delayed due to the current situation; 3. There might be a way to devise possible internal schemes while ensuring compliance with CHED requirements. 	OVRAA/ Academic units

The concerned units are encouraged to creatively engage themselves into a productive discussion and act accordingly to achieve the aforementioned recommendations.

Your usual support and cooperation are highly appreciated. Thank you.

Sincerely,


Rev. Fr. Jesus M. Miranda, Jr., O.P.
Secretary-General