



School of Arts & Aesthetics
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY
New Delhi- 110 067, India

To
The Vice Chancellor,
JNU

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11 January 2018

Dear Prof. Kumar,

I am writing to you with reference to two recent circulars received by us, regarding Skype vivas and mandatory attendance. We discussed both of these matters at length during our faculty meeting held today.

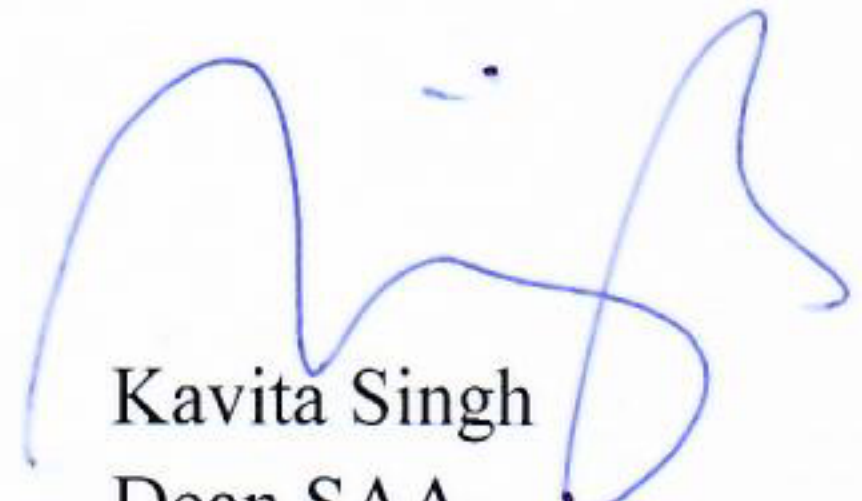
The faculty took the position that Skype vivas for M Phil and PhD should only be held in exceptional circumstances. The physical presence of external examiners is a golden opportunity for a student to engage with a discipline specialist, providing what is, veritably, a first thorough peer review of their work. Virtual presence permits only a brief examination which is subject to technological interruptions. Further, we are concerned that many examiners, particularly of a certain age and living in smaller towns, may not have the access to technology and network and the imposition of Skype vivas will discriminate against them.

The faculty also extensively discussed the guidelines circulated regarding mandatory attendance. The faculty deplored the fact that the guidelines have been drafted peremptorily and without consultation with the Schools and Centres of the University. The decision to impose mandatory attendance was not discussed or approved by the Academic Council as has been claimed by the Administration. We deplore the bypassing of all the institutional procedures which are necessary for any significant change in University functioning.

We would also like to point out a uniform system of attendance cannot be applicable to a large University like JNU, with different disciplines and diverse academic requirements. This University has produced cutting-edge and highly rated research and the excellence of its students from all levels of programmes have been recognized by institutions all over the world and the University has received the highest grade from accrediting authorities such as NAAC. This should indicate that the University's pre-existing academic policies have been conducive to the fulfillment of the mandate of a research university. For these reasons, and the circumstances in which these guidelines have been imposed, the faculty of the School of Arts and Aesthetics was unanimous in its refusal to accept these. We urge the Administration to consult the University community for this and all such future policy changes.

I convey this to you on behalf of all faculty of the School of Arts and Aesthetics.

Cc: Rector I, JNU
All faculty, SAA


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