

Respected Sir/Ma'am

Subject: Letter regarding inability to pay (Unjust and Disproportionate) lump sum semester fee

1. With due respect, this is to bring to your kind attention the enormous economic distress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and extended lockdowns on the families of RGNUL students. The cataclysmic damage caused to the various sectors of Indian Economy are unprecedented. At the micro level, this has hit the financial condition of many households across the country. In this scenario, many parents/guardians find it difficult to pay the fees for the coming semester. It is pointed out that keeping in view the financial hardships faced by citizens in the present times, the latest notification of the University regarding the payment of fee is unjust and unfair and completely uncalled for in these unprecedented times.
2. We wish to bring to your kind notice the series of events that has taken place between students and the university administration regarding fee relief.
 - A letter requesting fee relief as against the unutilized funds for the summer semester, which is annexed as **Annexure-A**, was digitally signed by 726 out of 850 students of University and was sent to the University Administration on 18th May 2020.
 - On 20th June 2020, students were apprised of the decision over the issue indirectly through the minutes of the Finance Committee meeting published over the university website and relief amounting to Rs. 5000 and waiver of Mess Fee was provided. The relevant part of the minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee is annexed as **Annexure-B**.
 - The University on 27th June 2020 released a notification for payment of fee, wherein the students were required to pay a lump-sum amount (INR 1,13,500/-) to the university by 10th July 2020, post which date the late fee will be charged as notified starting from INR 5,000/- and increasing in progression thereafter. The notifications in this regard are annexed as **Annexure-C**, **Annexure-D** and **Annexure-E**.
3. The present requisition made by the university for payment of such a hefty amount of fee (that too at such a short notice) forces parents and students to choose between basic essential commodities required to survive the pandemic versus effectively avail their Right to Uninterrupted Education. Despite having requisite funds to appropriate for the welfare of students, the university is constantly manifesting its unwillingness to provide any adequate relief in these unprecedented hours of crisis. The Finance Committee meeting held on 20th

June, 2020 admitted that a leftover sum amounting to INR 40 lakhs of the summer semester need to be re-appropriated (**Annexure-F**). Furthermore, Fixed Deposits worth INR 48 crores are reported to be lying in the bank account of the University (**Annexure-G**). These are trying times which call for unprecedented measures, thus, the unutilized funds could best be used for the students' welfare i.e. in the form of considerate amount of fee waiver which the present crisis calls for.

4. Further, every university tries to differentiate itself and tries to offer something beyond the classes. A university aims to offer the experience of studying in that particular college, it tries to differentiate itself based on its facilities and what all can be achieved by just being in that college. The whole atmosphere of the campus and of networking and learning from peers beyond the classes is also what a student pays for. Shifting classes online leads to a situation where these opportunities cease to exist, and the student is only able to access a fraction of what he/she was offered initially. It strips the student the access to opportunities that a college had previously made available. Thus, if only a fraction of what was initially offered is available now, then logically, only a fraction of the agreed upon fee should be paid. In this instance as well, one might also argue that the shift to online medium is temporary and there should be no refund of fees. However, the case remains for the particular period the student does not have access to everything the college could potentially offer which we have time and again addressed to the university administration in the earlier letters/representations.
5. We are conscious of the University's liability to remunerate the teaching/non-teaching staff members of RGNUL family and other expenditure which, notwithstanding the closure of campus, are to be duly made. However, it does not seem rational and prudent to charge the fee for entire semester while the routine in-campus activities have been functional for just one and a half months. Certain constituents/particulars of fees including Mess Fees, Moot Court Fees, Campus Development Fund, Health Centre Fees, Gym facility Fees, etc. remain unutilized due to the cutting short of summer semester. Not only this, the university would not have incurred expenditure (as in a normal semester) which is charged under a category of fees including internet, electricity, water, commodities and other utilities. The university has failed to provide any refund of 'balance amount' for the summer semester without any justification and this concern remains unaddressed in the latest notification for payment/relaxation of fee.

6. The same applies to the upcoming semester (August-December), where a major chunk of the fees being charged will not be utilized due to closure of campuses, which include Amenities Fee, Moot Court Fees, Campus Development Fund, Health Centre Fees, Gym facility Fees, etc. Even the fee being charged for hostel facilities seem unjust, unfair and disproportionate.
7. Right to Education can only have effective meaning if read as a right to continuous and uninterrupted education, the reality remains that many students and parents are supporting their educational endeavors by educational or friendly loans, which further add to the burden. We would like to draw your attention towards the policy of banks which pay for educational loans which in any case be done only with the passing marksheet of the previous semester. Since, the exams of the summer semester could not be conducted, it's very difficult and almost impossible for the students to get the payment from the banks and consequently, pay it to the university. Therefore, the notification for payment of semester fee on such a short notice has created an intense pressure on the minds of students and their family members, consequently, further exacerbating the already existing adverse conditions in the households.
8. COVID-19 has completely disrupted our environment. Everyone is struggling to cope with the challenges the pandemic has brought. Moreover, the relationship between a student and a university has two unique aspects. *First*, universities do not provide a traditional service for profit as defined under commercial laws. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has previously held that education is a distinct constitutional goal and therefore, is a public good. *Second*, students do not have the same bargaining power as a university and thus the college has certain leverage over students. It makes us feel that we're already at the raw end of the deal.
9. Further, taking into account the seriousness of the issue, UGC had earlier released a statement suggesting higher educational institutions to address the grievances regarding fee payment in a considerate manner in the present time of crisis. Also, in a recent judgment delivered by Punjab & Haryana HC on June 30, 2020 in the matter of **Independent School's Association Chandigarh (Regd.) & Ors. v. State of Punjab & Ors.**, CWP No. 7409/2020 regarding fee relief in private educational institutions, it was held that *"The school management of each schools shall work out their actual expenditure incurred under the annual charges for the period the school remained closed and recover only such genuine expenditure incurred by them but shall not recover any charge for this period for any facility towards which no*

expenditure was incurred.” The relevant part from the Judgement of the Hon’ble High Court is annexed as **Annexure-H**.

10. Therefore, it is contended that the university administration has not considered the prevalent issue with the required degree of seriousness and most of the genuine concerns remain unaddressed. It seems to be unreasonable, unjust and irrational on the part of university administration to fail to understand the plight of the students and their family members and not heed to the legitimate concerns of the students. In light of all this, we seek the following relief from the University Administration:

- a. Fee being charged for undue expenditure which will not be incurred by the University for the upcoming semester including but not limited to Amenities Fee, Campus Development Fund, Moot Court Fee, and portion of hostel rent, which remain unutilized, be waived-off and only Tuition Fee be charged to the Students.*
- b. Late Fee for non-payment of Fee within stipulated time be waived-off and appropriate number of instalments, of thus relaxed fee, be accordingly decided.*
- c. A notification for clarity with respect to promotion of students of non-graduating batches be issued by the University for ease of disbursement of upcoming installment amount for students having Education Loans.*
- d. Fees accrued and remaining underutilized by the University for the Summer Semester (Feb-May 2020) should be duly accounted by an ex-ante and ex-post comparison for the period. It is requested that based on the balance amount (hereinafter, ‘Balance’), a proportionate relief be granted to the students. Modalities of passing on such relief can accordingly be decided.*

11. In light of the aforesaid, we request you to understand the plight of students and their families, and give the issue and relief(s) a serious consideration. We understand that you will take an appropriate decision in the best interest of all the students, guided by reason, prudence and compassion. We sincerely expect an urgent intervention and an optimistic response in this regard. **Pending action on the same, the students shall have no other option but to refrain from paying the fee for the upcoming semester (August-December).**

Thank you

Yours sincerely,

Students of RGNUL

(Signatures attached herewith in Annexure-I)

Date: 3rd July, 2020.

ANNEXURE-A

FEE RELIEF REPRESENTATION (18 MAY 2020)

6/28/2020

Gmail - Fee Relief Request - RGNUL



Students' Voice RGNUL <sb.rgnul@gmail.com>

Fee Relief Request - RGNUL
1 message

Students' Voice RGNUL <sb.rgnul@gmail.com>
To: vc@rgnul.ac.in

18 May 2020 at 16:32

Respected Sir,

Hope you are keeping well!
We, the students of RGNUL, write to you to draw your kind attention to our request for fee relief. The Main Application containing our detailed request is attached along with the signatures of 726 students for your kind perusal.

There has been economic stress caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and extended lockdowns on our families. Further, due to the premature closure of campus and the subsequent declaration of Summer Vacations, a major portion of fees already paid for the semester remains unutilized.

We request you to understand our plight and grant us appropriate relief(s) as detailed in the Main Application attached herewith. We pray that you take an appropriate decision in the best interest of all the students, guided by reason and compassion.

We sincerely await an optimistic response from your end.

Thank you.
Yours Sincerely,
Students of RGNUL
(Signatures attached herewith)



Sender notified by
Mailtrack

2 attachments



RGNUL - Fee Relief Request.pdf
1139K



Signatures - RGNUL Fee Relief Application.xlsx
44K

ANNEXURE-B

DECISION OF RGNUL FINANCE COMMITTEE (20.06.2020)

ITEM (2)

To consider the representation of the Students of RGNUL, Punjab, for granting relief in semester fees due to Economic Crisis during Covid-19 Pandemic.

The Vice-Chancellor read out that 726 Students of the RGNUL, Punjab, have submitted their representation by email dated 25.05.2020 (Annexure-2) and requested for fee relief due to Economic Crisis during Covid-19 Pandemic.

They requested that there has been economic stress caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and extended lockdowns on their families. Further, due to the premature closure of campus and the subsequent declaration of summer vacations, a major portion of fees already paid for the semester remains unutilized.

Their specific requests are :

- i. **Exemption of Annual Increase** in Tuition Fees for the next Academic Session;
- ii. **Rebate in Late Fees** (if any) applicable on payment of fees;
- iii. **Partial Refund** of 'Fees' already paid in lieu of the Balance ('Fees' including but not limited to Amenities Fee, Moot Court Fee, Mess Fee, Campus Development Fund, a portion of Hostel Rent which remains unutilized);
- iv. **Adjustment of the Balance** by appropriate monetary relief in next semester fees.

The matter is placed before the Hon'ble Members of the Finance Committee/Executive Council for consideration and kind approval, please.

Decision:

The Hon'ble Members of the Finance Committee considered the representation of the Students of RGNUL, Punjab, for granting relief in semester fees due to Economic Crisis during Covid-19 Pandemic. After thoughtful consideration and detailed discussion the Hon'ble Members unanimously resolved that the economic crisis is worldwide but the institutional expenditure continues. In view of this all the requests made by the students in their representation cannot be accepted. However, the Hon'ble Members were of the view and resolved that Mess charges be not taken from the students till the Mess starts functioning. It was further resolved that the annual increase of Rs. 5000/- in tuition fee be not charged for this year i.e., Academic Year 2020-21. And further recommended to the Executive Council for its kind approval.

(As accessed from the RGNUL website www.rgnul.ac.in on 28.06.2020)

ANNEXURE-C

NOTIFICATION OF FEE PAYMENT (27.06.2020)



The screenshot shows the user interface of the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab. The header includes the university's name, establishment details, and accreditation. The main content area is titled 'Alerts & Notices' and displays a list of notifications. A red box highlights a notification titled 'University Fee - Fee' with a red arrow pointing to it. A tooltip is visible over the notification, displaying the following text:

University Fee - Fee
Pending
Total pending amount is ₹13500.0 Due Date for payment is 10/07/2020.

Subject/Item	Topic/Remarks	Date(Upload-Due)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University Fee - Fee	Total pending amount is ₹13500.0 Due Date for	
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice for All Students	The process of selecting the next Managing Editors for	25/06/2020-25/06/2020
<input type="checkbox"/> Centre for Alternative C	Resolution, Rajiv	24/07/2020-24/06/2020
<input type="checkbox"/> Notice for 8th	not submitted th	30/07/2020-24/06/2020
<input type="checkbox"/> NOTICE FOR	REGARDING ONLINE EXAMINATIONS JULY 2020	29/07/2020-29/06/2020

(As accessed from the RGNUL ERP on 28.06.2020)

ANNEXURE-D


NOTIFICATION OF FEE PAYMENT (27.06.2020)

RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAW, PUNJAB
(Established under Punjab Act No. 12 of 2006)
(ACCREDITED WITH 'A' GRADE BY NAAC)
SIDHUWAL, BHADSON ROAD, PATIALA (PUNJAB)
Tel.: 0175-2391600, 601, 602, 603 Fax: 0175-2391690

Subject: Requisition for Seventh installment of Fee, B.A., LL.B (Hons.) Five Year Integrated Course for joining 7th Semester Classes at RGNUL.

The detail of fee is as under:

S. No.	Funds	Amount	Payable Fee
(1)	Tuition Fee	55,000/-	1,13,500/-
(2)	Hostel Rent and Other Charges (Single Occupancy)	17,500/-	
(3)	Allied Fee	41,000/-	



(As received from the Accounts Department on 02.07.2020)

ANNEXURE-E

FEE PAYABLE BY UNDER-GRADUATE STUDENTS - B.A. LL.B. (Hons.)

	Fee Detail	Annual Fee	First Half (At time of Admission)	Second Half (Before 10 th of Jan)
1.	Admission Fee	Rs. 5000*	Rs. 5000*	-
2.	Tuition Fee	Rs. 110000 US \$ 6000 or equivalent in INR for the Foreign Nationals (US \$ 3000 in case of SAARC candidates)	Rs. 55000	Rs. 55000
3.	Amenities Fee	Rs. 23000	Rs. 41000	
4.	Campus Development Fund	Rs. 10000		
5.	Moot Court Fees	Rs. 3000		
6.	Examination Fee	Rs. 3000		
7.	Library Fee	Rs. 2000		
8.	Hostel Rent (Double occupancy) and Other Charges	Rs. 30000***	Rs. 15000***	Rs. 15000***
9.	Refundable Security	Rs. 20000*	Rs. 20000*	-
10.	Total Fee	Rs. 206000	Rs. 136000	Rs.70000
11.	Advance Mess Bill adjustable against actual bill	Rs. 34000**	Rs. 17000**	Rs. 17000**

Note:

- a. The advanced mess fee for the session July to December 2020 shall be deposited upon the physical joining of the students to their respective classes.
- b. The annual increase of Rs. 5000/- in the Tuition Fee is not being added for the current Academic Year 2020-2021.

Fee Schedule for 3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th Semester of B.A.LL.B. (Hons.)

Last date for depositing fee (without late fee)	10 th July
Last date for depositing fee with late fee of Rs. 1000/-	17 th July
Last date for depositing fee with late fee of Rs. 2500/-	24 th July
Last date for depositing fee with late fee of Rs. 5000/-	31 st July
Last date for depositing fee with late fee of Rs. 10,000/-	31 st August
(with the permission of Vice-Chancellor)	

(As accessed from the RGNUL website www.rgnul.ac.in on 28.06.2020)

ANNEXURE-F

AMOUNT OF RS 40.00 LAKHS UNSPENT BY THE COLLEGE

ITEM (4) To consider the proposal for re-appropriation of work-wise allocation of funds in respect of Capital Grant for the Financial Year 2020-21 of the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab.

The Vice-Chancellor read out that the budget under Capital Grant in respect of various development works at RGNUL Campus, Sidhuwal, Patiala, was prepared with a provision of Rs. 2382.50 Lakhs for the year 2020-21.

The RGNUL is needed to re-appropriate of work-wise allocation of funds within budgetary provision due to non-clearance of liabilities/bills pertaining to year 2019-20, which could not be cleared during the financial year 2019-20, as the University was closed due to National Lock down during COVID-19 Pandemic. The schedule for clearing these liabilities/closing of accounts was targeted within financial year 2019-20. Therefore, the provision of funds for those works was not made in the proposed budget estimate for the financial year 2020-21.

An Expenditure of Rs. 313.33 Lakhs was incurred against provision of Rs. 528.00 lakhs, thus leaving a balance of Rs. 214.67 Lakhs as unspent. There is need for re-appropriation of funds amounting to Rs. 40.00 Lakhs for which provision was not made in the budget estimate for financial year 2020-21.

The statement in this regard has been prepared in view of present requirement to re-appropriate work-wise funds for the year 2020-21 within the budgetary amount of Rs. 2382.50 Lakhs, for approval (Annexure-3).

Decision:

The Hon'ble Members of the Finance Committee considered the proposal for re-appropriation of work-wise allocation of funds in respect of Capital Grant for the Financial Year 2020-21 of the Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab. After thoughtful consideration and detailed discussion the Hon'ble Members unanimously resolved to approve the same and further recommended to the Executive Council for its kind approval.

3

(As accessed from the RGNUL website www.rgnul.ac.in on 28.06.2020)

ANNEXURE-G

FIXED DEPOSITS WORTH RS. 48 CRORES LYING WITH RGNUL

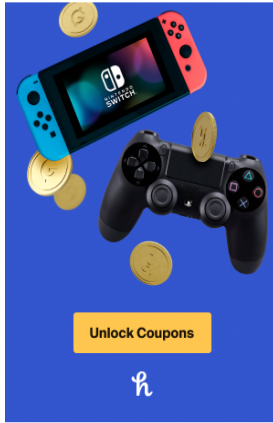
ht india cities coronavirus #WFHLife opinion world cricket entertainment education trending videos tech podcasts health ...

the Punjab government has handed the university the sum of Rs 220 crore, and it has every right to ask how the money was spent ... whether the rules were followed or not. CAG has left out several areas which need proper investigation. The university took grants from the state government, but didn't supply a single audit report to the education department," said a higher education department official.

He said that while other universities are starving for funds, RGNUL spends lavishly. "For only 1,000 students, they were taking Rs 15 crore from the Punjab government, while other universities get between Rs 35 crore and Rs 70 crore each for catering to students ranging between 2.5 lakh to 4 lakh. There must be some accountability," said the official.

"While the Punjabi University has slipped into a debt of Rs 130 crore in the past one decade, RGNUL made fixed deposits of Rs 48 crore. Why they concealed these facts from the Punjab government?" he asked.

Higher education minister Tript Rajinder Bajwa said the Punjab government has the right to know how taxpayers' money is utilised by the university. "We have sought explanation from the university on various issues. Further action will be taken after we receive its reply," he said.



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Domicile to outsiders in unconstitutional: Panthe party

(As accessed from the Hindustan Times Article website https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/law-varsity-under-punjab-government-scanner-after-cag-finds-irregularities-in-its-functioning/story_Rp7qZnc6h0zP5cKxLqso2J.html on 28.06.2020)

ANNEXURE-H

JUDGEMENT OF PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT (30.06.2020)

CWP No.7409-2020 and other connected cases

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that education is not adversely impacted due to the present or future lockdowns imposed due to COVID-19.

- (c) The school management of each schools shall work out their actual expenditure incurred under the annual charges for the period the school remained closed and recover only such genuine expenditure incurred by them including actual transport charges and actual building charges but shall not recover any charge for this period for any activity or facility towards which no expenditure was incurred. However, the annual charges for the remaining period shall be recovered as already fixed by the school;
- (d) The schools shall restrain themselves for the reasons, as mentioned above, from increasing the fee for the year 2020-21 and adopt the same fee structure as of 2019- 20.
- (e) Any parent not able to pay the school fee in the above terms may file their application alongwith necessary proof about their financial status, which shall be looked into by the school- authority and, after looking into it sympathetically, give concession or exempt the entire fee, as the case may be. In case the parent is still aggrieved, in any manner, with an adverse decision by the school on his application, he may approach the Regulatory Body, so constituted under Section 7 of the Punjab Regulation

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