



CONGREGATIO
DE INSTITUTIONE CATHOLICA
(DE STUDIORUM INSTITUTIS)

Vatican City, 15 June 2020

Prot. N. 271/2020

Congregation for Catholic Education

**Norms of Application of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*
for the Coming Academic Year**

To the Chancellors,
Rectors, Presidents and Deans
of Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties,
and to the Moderators and Directors of other Ecclesiastical institutions of higher
education,
and, for their information,
to the Presidents of Catholic Universities
and the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences

First of all, the Congregation for Catholic Education wishes to thank most sincerely all academic authorities, teachers, officials and administrative personnel who, with great dedication and expertise, are assisting the students to continue their ecclesiastical studies appropriately, often in difficult circumstances.

In the *Transitional Norms for the Application of the Apostolic Constitution Veritatis Gaudium in the public health emergency arising from the COVID-19 epidemic*, issued on 6 May 2020 by the Congregation for Catholic Education, it was remarked that, "With a view to moving beyond the current epidemiological emergency, Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are to plan the next academic year with all indications and means necessary to be able to teach in the ordinary way, with the lectures held in the presence of students and teachers, in accordance with the Norms of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*. [...] Therefore,

distance learning is no alternative to this methodology, and can be used only in part, and for particular situations, and always with the previous authorization of the Congregation for Catholic Education (cf. *Norms of Application* of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, art. 33 § 2). This Congregation will take care to communicate, in case of real need and urgency, further regulations should these be necessary due to the possible protraction of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects" (B. Guiding Principles for the Next Academic Year).

In consideration of the evolving worldwide social and medical situation, and to provide for the correct application of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* (q.v. article 10), the Congregation for Catholic Education hereby issues the following Norms of Application for the coming academic year:

1. In line with the aforementioned *Transitional Norms*, it is emphasized that, during the coming academic year, Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties are called to ensure their regular schedule of academic activity. Unavoidably, that will require work to plan and design all relative activities.

2. It is asked that, during the coming academic year, Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties ensure that the teaching be delivered primarily and preferentially in the ordinary way (in accordance with the *Norms of Application* of the Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium*, articles 32 and 33 § 2), with the system of lectures, exercises and seminars held in the presence of students and teachers, on the basis of the institution's academic calendar and normal timetable. Such teaching, and any other academic activity that takes places within the university, must be organized in accordance with the indications and instructions issued by the competent local authorities, both governmental and medical, with respect to the safety of persons and environments.

3. Taking into account what was already stated in the *Transitional Norms*, viz., that although distance learning cannot be considered as an alternative to teaching in the physical presence of students, it can "be used only in part, and for particular situations ... due to the possible protraction of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects", Ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties can, during the coming academic year, continue their use of distance teaching, their procedures for on-line discussion of theses, and to hold on-line exams for all those who demonstrably cannot be present on the university campus. In fact, the emergency situation requires preserving the possibility of distance teaching and/or mixed forms of teaching (presence learning and distance learning), in view of the already noticeable delay in the issuing of visas (thus impeding teachers and students from

reaching the universities), of the norms of physical distancing in the lecture-halls and in the academic buildings, of the requirements for quarantine, etc.

4. Each individual institution has the duty of examining and establishing the practical ways in which the teaching of the courses will take place, giving adequate information ahead of time to all concerned. They are to do so taking into account the Universities' and Faculties' autonomy, the principle of subsidiarity, and applying the criteria of *flexibility* (in an emergency situation that is truly exceptional), of *clarity* (to avoid ambiguity and misunderstandings in interpreting the rules) and of *evenhandedness* (that is, parity of conditions for all concerned).

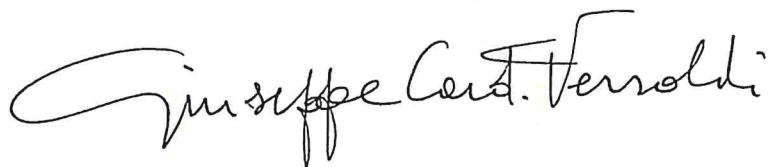
5. Therefore, the part of the *Transitional Norms* (A. 1-7), issued on 6 May 2020 by the Congregation for Catholic Education, is hereby extended to cover the coming academic year.

6. Before the end of the next academic year, each Ecclesiastical University and Faculty is to inform the Congregation for Catholic Education, via the Chancellor, on how its academic activity is being carried out with regard to the application of the regulations contained in these Norms.

7. These Norms are promulgated on the web-site of the Congregation for Catholic Education (www.educatio.va) and, subsequently, will be circulated in printed format. They are to take effect at the start of the coming academic year and will remain in force until its conclusion, substituting the Note of 6 May 2020 of this Dicastery.

At your service for any clarifications you may seek, we thank you for your invaluable cooperation and, united in prayer, we remain

Yours most devotedly in Our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Giuseppe Card. Versaldi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Giuseppe Cardinal VERSALDI (Prefect)

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ A. Vincenzo Zani". The signature is cursive and includes a plus sign at the beginning.

Archbishop A. Vincenzo ZANI (Secretary)