

IISER Pune's Covid-19 testing centre begins operations

Realising the need for more Covid-19 testing in Pune, a few faculty members came together to set up a testing facility that meets all safety requirements, says IISER Pune director, Prof Jayant Udgaonkar

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After a review of the facility, workflow, safety guidelines, and SOPs by experts from the NIV (National Institute of Virology), and mentor institute, AFMC (Armed Forces Medical College), the ICMR (Indian Council for Medical Research) approved the testing centre. (Rahul Raut/HT REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO)

With the help of volunteers from within the IISER (Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research) Pune community, including students, staff and faculty members; and led by the institute's action committee on Covid-19, IISER Pune's Covid-19 testing centre commenced testing on May 21.

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IISER Pune director, Prof Jayant Udgaonkar, said, “Realising the need for more Covid-19 testing in Pune, a few faculty members came together to set up a testing facility that meets all the in-house and ICMR safety and other procedural requirements. Getting the testing facility ready quickly is a testament to their commitment and effort put in. The advice and help of the NIV and AFMC was invaluable. The testing facility is now being run with volunteers who have been properly trained.”

Prof Anjan Banerjee, nodal officer for the facility, said that the IISER Pune action committee has considered the utmost safety measures and complied with all guidelines, as well as directives suggested by the institute’s bio-safety committee. The team discussed the workflow thoroughly with scientists from NIV and NCCS before, and while, establishing the centre on the campus. The team is working on efficient patient data processing to facilitate reporting.

During the days leading up to the commencement of the centre’s activities, the team has arranged for multiple mock drills and volunteer training sessions with help from NIV officials.

Throat and nasal swab samples are expected to arrive at the centre everyday from government hospitals, which will be tested for the presence of Sars-Cov-2 virus causing Covid-19, using an ICMR approved kit.

“With the setting up of this centre, IISER Pune hopes to contribute to the much-needed expansion of the testing capability in the country for COVID-19,” said Banerjee.