Pokhara University
Information Technology (IT) Policy
2023

Pokhara University

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ABBREVIATIONS

CERT	Computer Emergency Response Team
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
HEI	Higher Education Institution
ICT	Information Communication Technology
IT	Information Technology
MIS	Management Information System
PU	Pokhara University

This document is prepared to present and describe the ***Pokhara University Information Technology (IT) Policy 2023*** for digitalization of services at University.

1. BACKGROUND

This section describes a short introduction to the Pokhara University and its growth, role of IT, National ICT Policy 2015 and Need of IT Policy in the University.

1.1 Pokhara University

Nepal adopted the multi-university concept in 1983. The idea of Pokhara University (PU) was conceived in 1986; however, it was established only in 1997 under the Pokhara University Act, 1997. A non-profit autonomous institution, PU is partly funded by the Government of Nepal and partly by revenues from its students and affiliated schools and colleges. Pokhara University has become the nation's second largest university with its 66 schools and colleges (4 Constituent schools, 4 Joint Constituent colleges and 58 affiliated colleges). Currently, PU has offering 64 plus programs under its four faculties (Faculty of Management Studies, Faculty of Science and Technology, Faculty of Health Sciences and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences). Altogether 37645 plus students are studying at levels undergraduate, graduate and PhD.

1.2 University Financing

Pokhara University manages its expenditures mainly from three sources: Nepal Government's grants, revenue from students and affiliated institutions. PU has been gradually reducing its dependence on government coffer in line with Nepal Government's fiscal policy of cost-effective sharing with private sectors. However, it fully depends on government grants for financing the capital expenditure, especially on building infrastructures for academic and administrative purposes. With the local community-endowed land, PU provides spaces for Schools and Research Centers included in the University Plan. PU credits donors and contributors involved in the construction of infrastructures, such as hostel, library, stadium, and auditorium.

1.3 Role of Information Technology

The University has grown rapidly in its size, program and in the number of students. The use of Information Technology (IT) within and beyond the University is felt extremely necessary to achieve the excellency in its academic, management and administration. IT is the technology that can be used in teaching-learning activities to enhance the quality of education. It can be applied for better the administration in the University.

1.4 National ICT Policy 2015

The National ICT policy 2015 has stated that appropriate measures will be taken to facilitate and promote the integration of ICTs within the entire Nepali educational system to support administration, pedagogy, learning and research, with a view to improving the quality of education

and training at all levels and enhancing access to education. The ICT policy 2015 has also stated that a nationwide E-Schools and other related initiatives will be formulated and launched to promote E-learning and E-Education as well as life-long learning. To align with the policy and strategies of National ICT policy 2015 and to fulfill the goal and objective of National ICT policy, Pokhara University has adopted and developed Pokhara University ICT Policy, Strategies and Guidelines for the improvement in service quality and education quality provided by Pokhara University.

1.5 Need of IT Policy, Strategies and Guidelines

To achieve the objectives, mission, vision and goal of Pokhara University, the IT can act as a high potential tool to help for better management and administration with more transparent and efficient services. Moreover, ICT can help to address structural problems in education systems enabling expanded access to education services as well as help to bridge quality gaps in education. As technology continues to play an increasingly important role in academia, it is essential to ensure and secure the use of IT resources at Pokhara University. With the aim to strengthen the digitization and automation, PU has developed this **"Information Technology Policy, Strategies and Guidelines 2023"** to improve its IT services within and beyond the University to better support to achieve its mission, vision and ultimately to provide the better administration and quality education.

2. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE FOR IMPLEMENTING IT POLICY

This section presents the organizational structure that delivers, controls and manage the IT services within and beyond the University. It consists of IT Steering Committee. Their roles and responsibilities are defined as below:

2.1 IT Steering Committee

A central level IT Steering Committee with 4-6 members will be formed as a key IT governance and regulatory team. It is responsible for developing the university's IT policy, strategy and guidelines and also for ensuring/approving that the HEIs' IT policies and guidelines are aligned with university's IT strategy. This committee is responsible for ensuring the IT policies as they are developed, implemented, and enforced in a coordinated and effective manner. Moreover, IT experts can be invited for specific tasks. It should also enable the university to respond quickly to changes in the technology landscape and evolving threats to IT security and data privacy. This committee is responsible for coordination and collaboration with the Gandaki Province government/local governments in relation to IT standards.

2.2. IT Department

The IT Department is centrally located (at university central office) and is directly responsible for overseeing the university's technology policy/strategy and its implementation across faculties.

3. CURRENT STATUS

Pokhara University has been taking some steps towards digitalization. Currently, it has some of the systems and practices in place including the following: Centralized email system (PU domain); centralized website management system; account management system; exam management system; online results system. It also initiated online classes and exams during the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, it developed a policy guidelines. Likewise, web-conferencing and remote guest sessions are also taking place. Importantly, university MIS is in place. Pokhara University has a good internet connectivity to support the academic and administrative activities of the university. This way, Pokhara University has accomplished some works on policy and taken some basic steps in practice.
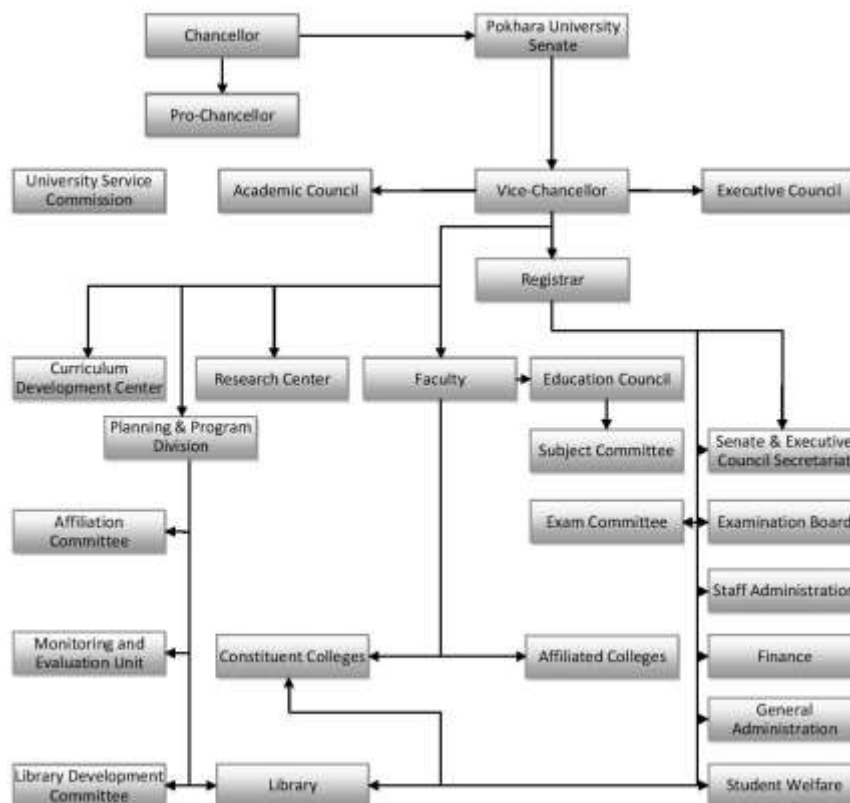

Fig. 1: Organizational Structure of Pokhara University

4. SCOPE

This section first presents the overall organizational structure of Pokhara University and describes the scope of the IT policy for providing its IT services.

4.1 University Organizational Structure

The Prime Minister is the Chancellor of the University and the Minister of Education is the Pro-Chancellor of the University. The Vice Chancellor is the principal administrator of the University and the University Senate is the supreme body of the university. Registrar is the member secretary of senate. Various Councils, Committees and Boards are also in scene with specific task and objectives for better operation of the University and achieving academic goodwill. The detailed University organization is shown in Fig. 1.

4.2 Scope of IT Policy

The scope of this IT Policy includes to physically and/or remotely use all the IT resources of Pokhara University by all the users stated in the organizational structure of Pokhara University (See Fig. 1) and the students enrolled and registered at Pokhara University. The detail description of the scope include:

4.2.1 IT Resources

It is applied to all the IT related resources of University which are physically or remotely located at and are under the management or control of University and its Schools/Colleges. IT related resources include computers, laptops, smart phones, internet connection, Wi-Fi, LAN, software, hardware etc.

4.2.2. IT Services

It is applied to all the services that are provided through the IT resources stated in 4.2.1. These services can be used by the IT users stated in 4.2.3.

4.2.3 IT Users

It is applied to all the IT users that are directly connected with the activities of University and its schools and colleges. The IT Users include students, teaching faculties, non-teaching staff, casual staff, consultants, guests/visitors or anyone who can be directly involved in IT related activities of University.

5. VISION, MISSION, STRATEGY, GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

This section presents the vision, mission, strategy, goal and objectives for developing and implementing the IT Policy at Pokhara University.

5.1 Vision

The vision of this IT policy is "*Quality education, enhanced research and better administration.*".

5.2 Mission

The mission of this IT policy is to "***Find new technology that can help to enhance in teaching-learning process, research activities/opportunities and administrative activities.***".

5.3 Strategy

The strategy to be applied is to "***Use the available IT technologies to assist in teaching-learning process, research activities and administrative works.***".

5.4 Goal

The goal of this IT Policy is to "***Establish a robust and secured IT infrastructure to deliver the IT services to its users so that it will serve to support and enhance the teaching-learning process, research activities and administrative works.***".

5.5 Objectives

The objectives of this IT policy are:

1. To identify IT experts within/outside the University and form a IT expert team.
2. To prioritize the IT Services to deliver so that vision can be achieved.
3. To design, build and adopt the IT infrastructure so that it can deliver its prioritized IT services.
4. To ensure the security of IT resources and secured IT services.
5. To ensure the availability of IT resources and IT services.
6. To promote responsible and ethical use of IT resources and IT services.
7. To ensure compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.
8. To ensure the confidentiality and privacy of IT users and their data.

6. DIGITALIZATION IT POLICY

This section presents the IT policies which the University intends to apply for digitalization of its services to achieve its vision.

6.1. Connectivity

The University will establish high speed and secured LAN and connect IT resources. It will use high speed wired and Wi-Fi for connection. The University will also establish intranet within the University, its constituent schools and/or joint constituent and affiliated schools/colleges.

6.2. Digital Infrastructure Development

The University will develop secured and reliable digital infrastructure to deliver its IT services with a local data center within the University.

6.3. Digital Learning Platform

The University will optimally use the available software applications or platforms for digital teaching-learning management and virtual learning.

6.4. Strengthening web based EMIS

The University will use the web-based EMIS to support the teaching-learning activities, research activities and administrative activities.

6.5. Digital resource development and dissemination

The University will establish E-library to provide the access of eMaterials like ebooks. The University will establish a central Digital Studio needed to create and develop eLearning Materials (audio, video, animations etc.) and also for publication of ebooks.

6.6. Human Resource Development

The University will enhance the human resource capacity of its employees through the use of IT services for training from national and/or international trainers, professors etc. The University will optimally use the IT services for skill development, knowledge sharing with national/international community for the professional growth of its employees.

6.7. University and its campus office automation

The University along with its constituent, joint constituents and affiliated schools/colleges will use the IT for its automation that can be applied in teaching-learning activities, research activities and administrative activities. The university will intend to connect its all constituent, joint constituents and affiliated schools/colleges in a single unit through the use of IT services.

6.8. University Intellectual Property Security and Privacy

The University will ensure the security and privacy of intellectual property of individual and University itself. It will do so using plagiarism system, copyright laws and conducting surveillance operations within legal and ethical boundaries.

6.9. University Data Protection, Back up and Disaster Recovery

The University will establish a secured IT system for its data protection with a reliable data backup and recovery system.

6.10. IT system Security, safety, avoidance and prevention from attack

The University will establish a highly secured and reliable IT infrastructure with robust security system that ensures avoiding and preventing potential cyber-attacks, threats and vulnerabilities.

6.11. Centralize HEIs Data management

The University will establish a centralized data management system for the efficient and secured access of its data.

6.12. Online/Open/Blended Examination

The University will enhance the online examination ensuring the intended examinee is involved in the examination without any unwanted work that violets the rules of examination. Similarly, the University will introduce the open and blended examination that preserves all the rules of a fair examination.

6.13. Hardware Resources Standards

The University will follow and use the standard hardware and software resources to establish and maintain the IT infrastructure to provide the secured and reliable IT services.

6.14. Email System

The University already has the official email system using its own domain. The University will intend to enhance the email system to make it more secure and reliable.

6.15. Digital resource access

The University will provide the secure and authorized access of all IT resources and IT services to its targeted users.

6.16. Website uniformity and accessibility

The University will enhance its website to be more user friendly and will intend to maintain uniformity and accessibility with all of the websites of its schools/colleges.

6.17. Cloud Infrastructure

The University will intend to optimally use the various services including Software (SaaS), Platforms (PaaS) and Infrastructures (IaaS) from cloud-service providers for cost-efficiency, scalability etc.

7. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT

This section describes the institutional arrangements at the University for Implementation of the University IT policy.

7.1 Alignment of University Vision and IT Policy

The University's IT policy will be aligned with the Pokhara University's overall vision and mission, and will be regularly reviewed.

7.2 Formulation of IT Steering Committee

The university will formulate an IT Steering Committee as a governance and oversight body to ensure that IT policies and strategies are developed and implemented in a coordinated and effective manner. Moreover, other sub-committees and working groups can be formed as and when needed, in recommendation of the ICT Steering Committee

8. PROCUREMENT

The University will follow the nation's latest Public Procurement Rules and Regulations and the University's own Procurement Policy for buying, acquiring and subscribing any IT resources or services- software, hardware, platform and infrastructure.

9. LEGAL AND REGULATORY ARRANGEMENT

The University's **IT Steering Committee** will act as a central legal and regulatory body for implementing and maintaining IT services at University and at its schools and colleges. To assist the administrative activities, the University will formulate a subcommittee **e-Governance Committee** under the IT Steering Committee to support e-Governance within the University and its schools and colleges

10. IT ENABLED MONITORING & EVALUATIONS

The daily IT services that are delivered at University and its Schools/Colleges will be regularly monitored and evaluated using IT enabled monitoring system for better performance and automation. The IT Team will be directly responsible for these IT enabled monitoring and evaluation tasks.

11. POLICY UPDATE AND DISSIMILATION

The University's IT policy will be regularly reviewed and updated at least in every two years to ensure that it remain relevant and effective in a rapidly changing IT landscape. The IT Steering Committee will be responsible for regular review and update of the IT policy. The final IT Policy after every review and update will be available publicly in the University's website.