

Best Practices

ADOPTED BY

***KRISHINA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN
UNIVERSITY***



CENTRE FOR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE
(CIQA)

1. Best Practices initiated by University in Governance:

Since its inception, the University has undertaken various initiatives/measures in order to enhance the quality of governance.

The University is guided by the provisions of the Act/Ordinance/Statutes. It is managed by the Board of Management (BoM), which is the highest decision and policy making body. The Academic Council is the principal academic body of the University. The Finance Committee oversees the financial matters of the University. For the formulation of development proposals of the University and for generation of funds from various sources, the University has a Planning and Development Committee. Besides, the University has also constituted other bodies like Schools of Studies, Research Council, Research Advisory Committees and Internal Compliant Committee with specific mandates.

The effectiveness of these Bodies can be derived from their involvement in the affairs of the University and decisions taken resulting in formulation of various policies, rules and regulations. There were as many as 35 meetings of the BoM that were held in the last 5 years (2016-17 to 2020-21) which resulted in some of the most important policy decisions. Similarly, during the same period, the Academic Council met ten times. All these meetings were attended by most of the members of the respective committees who engaged in thorough deliberations.

1.1: Policies:

In addition to the provisions made in the Act/Ordinance/Statutes, the University has adopted and followed various policies for effective and efficient functioning. These policies include Performance Appraisal Policy, Code of Ethics in Academics and Research, Policy on Welfare Measures, Promotion of Research Policy, Internal and External Audit Mechanisms Policy, Consultancy Policy, Credit Transfer Policy, Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy, Publication Policy, Resource Mobilisation Policy and Self Learning Materials Policy. These policies are the results of discussions held in different Bodies of the University.

Moreover, the University has clearly laid down various procedures to ensure effectiveness and efficiency in its functioning. Examples include SOP of examination, online admission procedure, online CMP payment procedure etc.

1.2: Internal and External Audit Mechanisms Policy:

The University's internal and external audits are guided by its **Internal and External Audit**

Mechanisms Policy, whose aim is to ensure that University's funds and resources are used only for the University purposes, and those are utilised effectively and efficiently. Towards this, the Policy urges on developing mechanisms of appropriate financial control so that abuse and/or misuse of the University's funds and resources can be avoided. The policy is applicable to all stakeholders namely, faculty members, employees, learners, coordinators of LSCs, content writers, counselors and all those who have financial interests/responsibilities in the University. This policy acts as a critical defence against all kinds of possible unfair practices, and brings in transparency and accountability to the management and utilisation of the funds of the University.

1.3: The Finance and Accounts Branch:

The Finance and Account Branch, under the overall stewardship of the Finance Officer, functions within the mandate and provisions of the University Act, Statutes and Ordinances. The study centres under the jurisdiction of the University submit Statements of Accounts of their respective centres, duly audited by the appropriate accounting bodies, recognised by ICAI and other regulatory authorities. There are similar regulations in place for vendors/manufactures/authorised dealers/bidders etc. dealing with the University.

1.4: Internal and External Audits:

The University regularly audits its financial accounts in accordance to the rules promulgated by the respective accounting and financial authorities of the University. The University appoints its internal auditor with due approval of the Finance Committee with well-defined scope of work for verification of its accounts.

1.5: E-Office of KKHSOU

i) Complaint Management System/Online Ticket: Queries received through the complaint management system are automatically moved to the concerned department for solving the same. Once the problem is solved, the learner receives SMS and email.

ii) KKHSOU Customized Payment System

The University has developed customised payment service using Bill Desk payment gateway services. Payments like Certificate fees, Re-scrutiny fees etc. can be made through this service.

Web Link: <https://kkhsou.ac.in/eservices/1/>

1.6: Procurement:

All procurements of the University are done in decentralised way through Purchase Committee, Tender Committee, Library Advisory Committee whose decisions get finalised in the Planning and Development Committee, Finance Committee and Board of Management.

2. Best Practices undertaken by University in Academic innovations:

2.1 Schools of Studies: The academic activities are largely decentralized and organised through six Schools. The research programmes of various Schools are conducted through the Research Council and scholar wise Research Advisory Committees. The Academic Council, while deciding on academic matters, takes cognizance of the recommendations, views and decisions of the Schools and the relevant committees. The Schools of Studies design curricula and courses keeping in mind the needs of the target groups identified by the Vision and Mission of the University. Self-learning materials are prepared with the overall guidance of a team of subject experts together with a team of language experts, content editors, technical and professional experts.

2.2 KKHSOU Learners Mentoring System

KKHSOU has provided continuous academic support through digital means in order to ensure undisruptive learning opportunities during the period of COVID-19 pandemic for which various online tools and applications have been used. By adopting the blended mode of learning and by using different online platforms, the University has been trying to redefine the role of counselling and mentoring services that has transformed the entire educational scenario of the University. It has also been observed that the traditional academic counselling system is not sufficient to address the individual learner's specific needs and requirements. Therefore, the e-Mentoring system plays a vital role to provide a more inclusive kind of support services to the ODL learners.

(Web Link: http://kkhsou.in/web_new/pdf/learners/lmentoring.pdf)

In the *Mentoring system* each faculty member is allotted a maximum 250 learners and they provide online assistance to the learners in solving their academic and other problems.

2.3: Publication of Learners Charter

The University has published a Learners Charter highlighting the Rights and Responsibilities of the Learners. (Web link: http://www.kkhsou.in/web_new/lcharter.php)

2.4: Android Mobile Application

The Mobile Application of KKHSOU helps the University learners to connect 24x7 to the University web portal.

2.5: Assignment Management System: Using this system, the faculty members of the University can directly upload/edit assignment of various programmes/ departments using the credentials provided to them. Assignments uploaded in the portal are available in the University website as well as in the mobile App of the University.

2.6: Community Radio Service: Jnan Taranga (90.0 MHz) of KKHSOU is also a platform to broadcast several educational programmes that include debates, discussions, and talks. Links: <http://jnantaranga.kkhsou.in/index.php>

2.7: Ekalavya: A half-an-hour special educational programme namely *Ekalavya* had been aired weekly from the year 2011 to 2020 through All India Radio, Guwahati and Dibrugarh. Another weekly live phone-in programme was aired from 2008 to 2020 through All India Radio, Guwahati.

2.8: Audio-Visual Lectures: Video classes and academic discussions are produced and uploaded in YouTube. Weblink: <https://www.youtube.com/user/kkhsou>

2.9: eBidya: The University has introduced a Learning Management System (LMS) using open source MOODLE which can be accessed via <https://ebidya.kkhsou.ac.in/>. The LMS consists of audio visual materials, discussion forum, and online chat along with e-learning materials.

2.10: KKHSOU in Social Media: KKHSOU has incorporated social media sites like Facebook pages, Whatsapp group, Twitter Account (<https://twitter.com/KKHSOU1?s=09>) that enables sharing and interaction with the learners' community. Official Facebook Group of KKHSOU can be reached at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/272636986264210/>

2.11: Digital Library at KKHSOU: The Central Library of KKHSOU has started the Digital Library initiative. Links: <http://dlkkhsou.inflibnet.ac.in>

2.12: Audio CDs for Visually Impaired Learners: The visually impaired learners are provided with free audio SLMs in CDs to overcome their difficulties of learning. The University has installed Braille printers for this category of special learners in the University SLM branch.

2.13: Academic Transparency:

i) All academic decisions and activities of the University are discussed in the Meetings of Schools of Studies and meetings of the Academic Council, proceedings of which are made available in the website.

ii) All relevant details and credentials of academic programmes of the University are made available in the website.

- iii) Learning materials are open sourced under the Creative Commons licensing (CC BY-NC-SA) and the study materials are uploaded in the website.
- iv) Audio-Visual learning materials are uploaded in the University website and are also kept open for scrutiny by all stakeholders and the general public.
- v) Faculty members of the University also provide counselling support to the learners through Facebook live, audio-video contents in YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/kkhsou>) of the University or in Facebook page of the University (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/272636986264210/>).

2.14: Free Education: Free education is provided to jail inmates and differently abled learners and concessions to women, police and defence personnel.

2.15: Regional Language as Medium of Instruction: The SLMs are provided in Assamese language besides English.

2.16: Lateral Entry: In order to make the academic programme more inclusive by bringing more flexibility, the University has introduced lateral entry for learners who couldn't complete education in the conventional system.

3. Best Practices undertaken by University in Teaching innovations:

3.1: Learning Management System (LMS):

- i) The University has introduced a Learning Management System (LMS) using open source MOODLE. The LMS consists of audio visual materials, discussion forum, and online chat along with e-learning materials.
- ii) *ePragya* is another Learning Management System (LMS) of KKHSOU developed under the collaborative Project of KKHSOU and Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia (CEMCA) for “Designing ICT-based Intervention Programmes for School Teachers: An initiative by KKHSOU for Quality School Education”.

3.2: Centralized Counselling Mechanism: From 2020-2021 academic sessions, the University has introduced *the system of centralised counselling mechanism* for the benefits of the learners. Here, the faculty members of various disciplines provide online counselling to the learners through various online platforms. For this purpose, various groups for learners have been created either through WhatsApp or Telegram App.

- i) **Online Counselling:** The faculty members of the University conduct regular counselling classes through different online platform like Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco Webex and Facebook etc.
- ii) **Walk-in Counselling:** The University makes a provision of Walk-in Counselling in its City Campus for the learners.
- iii) **Face-to-face Counselling:** The University organises face-to-face counselling on Sundays or on week days for the learners of its specially maintained city Learner Support Centre located at the city campus.

4. Best Practices applied by University in Administrative innovations:

4.1: Bottom up approach: The University adopts a Bottom up approach in decision making to ensure participation of all stakeholders. The Statutory bodies of the University viz. Board of Management, Academic Councils, Finance Committee, Schools of Studies, Planning and Development Committee and Selection Committees provide space for relevant stakeholders and decisions are taken through wide consultation and minutes are placed in the University's website. Besides the statutory bodies, the University constitutes committees to enable decentralised and participatory decision making regarding matters related to its functioning and management.

4.2: Administrative Transparency

- The key rules, policies and regulations governing the University administration are notified as well as uploaded in the University website.
- The composition of the statutory bodies and their proceedings are available in the University website.
- The recruitment policy, placement and increments are well defined and notified to all the staff members. All recruitments of the University are done through open advertisement and transparent process.
- All the official documents, notices etc. are made available in e-office for better transparency. The leave management is also administered through e-office.
- The University has formulated Grievance Redressal mechanism (both online and offline), Grievance Redressal Committee and Internal Complain Committee (ICC)

4.3: Model Study Centre and formation of Sikshartha Mitra:

From 2020, in the University City Campus located at Khanapara, a model study centre has been

started for the learners where assisting them has been prioritised. In order to reach out to the learners who visit the University City Centre for information and admission and provide them with better technical support, a few employees of the university have been engaged as Sikshartha Mitra.

4.4: Admission Alert System:

It is a web based system where the visitors of our website can submit their contact details to subscribe and get alert messages when admission for a new session starts.

4.5: SMS and e-mail Alert Facility: The University has initiated an SMS and e-mail alert facility for the learners regarding any news, events and learner-related information of the University.

4.6: Contact with Dropouts

It has been found that a large number of learners fail to continue their study and successfully complete the course. The margin of dropouts is reasonably high in the 2nd Semester and 3rd Semester of Bachelor Degree Programme. Therefore, KKHSOU has taken the initiative to contact those learners over telephone so that we may render help to them in the best possible way to complete their study.

4.7: The KKHSOU website (www.kkhsou.in): It is one of the most important IT facilities as well as learner support service provided by the University. The website has a dedicated Learners' Corner (http://kkhsou.in/web_new/learner_corner.php) that contains wide range of information and links to useful resources which is accessible to the vast learner population.

4.8: Employee Profile Management: Employees can update their personal and professional details in the e-office portal of the University, which will be reflected in the University web portal after approval by the administrator.

4.9: Circular Management System: University circulars that are meant for the University employees are uploaded via e-Office portal. All circulars are archived and reading is automatically tracked. There is a facility to add priority in the circulars by the administrators.

4.10: MIS: All kinds of reports required for University authorities are uploaded or generated which may be required for UGC/NAAC /MHRD/KKHSOU etc.

4.11: Online Leave Management System: The University has introduced leave management system for all the employees of the University through e-office portal.

4.12: Finance Management System (Customized Tally System)

The Finance department of the University uses Customized Tally Software for the management of various finance related tasks. Location: in Premise (Finance Department)

5. Best Practices applied by University in conduct of Examination

5.1: Network of Study Centres

The University has made special efforts to reach the unreached areas through a network of study centres catering to the requirement of the learners. Nearly half of the study centre scatter to the needs of these areas—study centres in hills (2%), tea garden (11%), border (7%) and riverine (char) areas (27%). Efforts are also made to equip these centres by providing computers and audio-visual aids to make learning more accessible to the learners. The university has been successful in incorporating learners (56% of the total enrollment) from various disadvantaged groups such as ST/SC/OBC/Tea Tribe. Besides, 40% of the total enrolment is women, which is an important fact to be considered in the context of whole North East India where KKHSOU is the first and only state open university.

5.2: Transparent Examination System

The University adopts a transparent examination system. Learners are provided with photocopies of the answer-scripts along with the marks and also scope for re-evaluation if desired. The University develops an Examination Data Processing System (EDPS) with Intelligent Character Reader for efficient conduct of examination.

5.3: Examination Supervisory Officer/Monitoring Officers:

The University appoints Supervisory Officers (SO) in the examinations centres of KKHSOU. They must be an independent expert from the academia/ industry/ society and have the integrity for the said purpose. The University also deputes Examination Monitoring Officers (EMO) directly from the University who may visit any examination centre during the examination and monitor the examination process.

Besides these SO and EMO, the University also appoints Flying Squad (comprising officers and faculty members) from time to time. They make sudden visit to the examination centres to check whether the examination process runs smoothly.

5.4: Examination for the Differently Able:

A differently able learner, including blind person, may use an amanuensis to write the answers on his/her behalf. However, the amanuensis should have less qualification than the learner.

5.5: Standard Operating Procedures employed for continuous (internal) assessment followed by the KKHSOU

KKHSOU conducts continuous assessment through home assignment as per the guidelines laid down in the Rules, Regulations and Standard Operating Procedure of the Examination branch (http://kkhsou.in/web_new/ugc-info-2018/SOP%201-32.pdf).

5.6: Electronic Data Processing System (EDPS) for Examination

Branch: KKHSOU has EDPS system for processing the records of learners from enrolment numbers generation to final certificate printing after the declaration of examination results. It also includes various report generation. Admit card printing/Online publishing, examination routine generation, results processing etc. are available in the EDPS system. This system is located in the examination branch and Visual Basic with SQL Server, Windows Server are used.

5.7: Home Assignment Portal Management System: The Study centres can submit home assignment marks for their learners either via CSV or online form which is then uploaded to the EDPS of the examination department for further processing. Web Link: <http://digitalkkhsou.in/ha/>

6. Best Practices applied by University in Student Welfare / Grievance Redressal

6.1: Grievance Redressal Cell: This cell is responsible to look after the grievances/complaints from learners and other public. The cell receives grievances through e-mails, telephone calls, sms, social media, or by personal visit. The cell resolves the grievances received from the learner within maximum of 5 working days.

Learners use to send applications, e-mails to address their issues related to examinations like re-evaluation of answer scripts, withheld results, correction of mark sheet/certificates, issue of mark sheets/certificates etc. to the Controller of Examinations. The decision or information after resolving such kinds of grievances is intimated immediately to the learners.

In order to maintain transparency, the learners can apply for photo copy of their answer script/s, re-scrutiny and re-evaluation of theory papers by filling up prescribed form and paying requisite fee within one month from the date of issue of mark sheet. Withheld results are cleared within 30 days from the date of issue of mark sheet.

6.2: Complaint Management System/Online Ticket: Queries received through the complaint management system are automatically moved to the concerned department for solving the same. Once the problem is solved, the learner receives SMS and email.

6.3: Grievance Redressal for sexual harassment

The University has also put in place both off-line and online grievance redressal mechanisms for effective handling of internal complaints including those related to sexual harassments. The university has Internal Complaint Committee on Sexual harassment at work place since 2015. And the committee organises different awareness programmes to sensitise its employees in gender issues.

7. Best Practices applied by University in Any other field/ area:

7.1: Library Automation

The process of library automation in Central Library, KKHSOU began in 2011 with SOUL 2.0 ILMS (Integrated Library Management System). To give pace the circulation system and theft detection, Central Library of KKHSOU has integrated RFID (Radio-Frequency Identification) Technology from 2014. In 2020, Central Library decided to migrate from SOUL 2.0 to Koha an Open source ILMS. By February, 2021 the whole migration process has been completed and Central Library, KKHSOU has been automated with Koha ILMS.

7.2: Extension Activities:

- i) **Village Adoption:** Five economically and socially backward villages have been adopted and several initiatives like creating financial awareness, environmental awareness, organising health camps and programmes on women empowerment, mother counselling, etc. have been taken.
- ii) **Relief Activities:** The University has extended relief to flood victims, victims of terrorism and the poor and underprivileged sections of the society. During the Covid 19 Lockdown, the University fraternity has extended help to as many as two hundred twenty-nine families from its adopted villages by providing 'basic ration and hygiene kits'.
- iii) **Livelihood Skills:** The University organises various training programmes and workshops in

the adopted villages with an aim to cater to the means and processes of providing basic skills and thereby setting a decent standard of life aiming to train young aspirants to develop basic skills like computer, electrical wiring, etc.

- iv) **Socio-cultural initiatives:** The University has undertaken various steps like information dissemination regarding gender equality and other social issues, given platforms to discuss the problem of flood in Assam, preservation of the works of Assamese cultural icons, produced documentaries highlighting the plight of victims suffering from fluoride contaminated water.
- v) **Inter-Study Centre Music Competition:** Inter-study centre music competition is organised to promote peer culture and feeling of solidarity and cooperation besides giving the opportunity to celebrate the compositions of some of the great cultural icons of the State like Jyotiprasad Agarwalla, Bhupen Hazarika.
- vi) **Formation of Welfare Mission:** The University has formed two Welfare Funds, namely, Mother Teresa Welfare Mission and APJ Abdul Kalam Mission for providing relief, and scholarships to economically disadvantaged but meritorious students respectively.
- vii) **Feedback Management System (Via Google Form)**

The University regularly conducts feedback surveys among learners, employees and other stakeholders to elicit responses regarding extent of satisfaction and different aspects of the functioning of the University.



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