



UGC

A Bi-monthly Newsletter of University Grants Commission (UGC), Nepal

Volume 12, Issue 1

Kartik, 2080

2023

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Editorial Board

Patron

Prof. Dev Raj Adhikari, Ph.D.
Chairperson, UGC

Advisor

Prof. Shankar Prasad Bhandari
Secretary, UGC

Editor

Devendra Rawal,
Deputy Director

Asst. Editor

Sita Ram Bhattarai
Assistant Director

Mailing Address

P.O. Box. 10796
E-mail :ugc@ugcnepal.edu.np
Tel:6638548, 6638549, 6638550
Fax : 6638552
website: www.ugcnepal.edu.np

Design

Outline Graphics, Thapagaun, Ktm.
Phone: 01-5244984

Printed

Anytime Printing Press
Ph.: 9851148005

Discussion in the Commission with Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister and Honorable Minister of Science and Technology



A meeting of the University Coordination Committee was held on 2080 Bhadra 17 (September 03, 2023) with the special attendance of Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha and Honorable Minister of Science and Technology Ashok Kumar Rai. The Committee is coordinated by the Chairperson of the Commission Prof.

Dr. Dev Raj Adhikari and has Vice-Chancellors of all the Universities as members. The meeting discussed contemporary issues in Higher Education and the National Academic Calendar for Higher Education recently prepared by the Commission, along with various aspects necessary to implement it effectively.

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Implementation of the National Academic Calendar of Higher Education

The Commission has prepared and implemented a National Higher Education Calendar to address the ineffective implementation of Academic calendars in Universities due to various issues affecting and causing delays in regular activities, including teaching and learning,

conducting examinations, and publishing results. The National Higher Education Calendar aims to ensure that the annual academic activities of the Universities are effective, transparent, and well-organized and that academic activities are completed timely.

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Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha pointed to the need to establish Universities as Zones of Peace. He expressed that it was time to end the non-academic activities within Universities. He stressed the need to build political consensus to end closures, strikes, and locking-up of Universities and appeal to all the stakeholders; failing to do so would necessitate intervention, he added.

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha called for creating a conducive environment in Universities to implement the Higher Education Calendar effectively. He pointed out that the Government needed to take stringent actions if necessary. He assured that the Government would extend support and assistance. He additionally expressed commitment on the part of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Furthermore, he emphasized the need to increase investments in education because people understand the purpose of life only through research-based, people-oriented, education that is accessible to all and because the education sector is the infrastructure of all infrastructures. He said bringing about reforms in the University is only possible if the partisan share of political parties in educational leadership ends.

In the meeting, Honorable Minister of Education, Science, and Technology Ashok Kumar Rai said that anarchy has risen in the University due to lock-up and non-political activities. He further said that the major political parties



should seek consent and should direct their fraternal organizations towards creative endeavors. He said that students, professors, and Trade Unions/employee organizations should discuss this matter; the University administration should convince these organizations, seek support from the law, and be strict, if necessary.

The Honorable Minister Rai said that the proposed calendar is being appreciated by all stakeholders and expressed commitment on the Ministry's part to support its effective implementation. He additionally said that this should be adequately utilized since this is the highest and most appropriate point for improving higher education. Furthermore, he opined that a qualified person should lead the University for which he was making maximum efforts. He pointed to the need to amend the laws and regulations for selecting competent and qualified leadership through open competition. He expressed commitment to take the initiative towards this.

Vice-chancellors of all the 11 universities present in the meeting opined that the Government should take initiatives to end lock-ups and anarchist activities, peace and security should be maintained in the University, and a conducive environment should be prepared for the implementation of the calendar. They also underscored that the Government should take the initiative to declare Universities as Zones of Peace.

The meeting was also attended by the Honorable member of the National Planning Commission Dr. Ramesh Chandra Paudel, the Secretary of the Ministry of Home Affairs Mr. Dinesh Bhattarai, and the Secretary of the Ministry of Education Science and Technology Mr. Suresh Adhikari. Chairman of the Commission Prof. Dr. Dev Raj Adhikari presided over the meeting while Prof. Shankar Prasad Bhandari, the Secretary of the Commission informed the meeting about the Higher Education Calendar along with other policy reforms by the Commission.

Honorable Minister of State for Education, Science and Technology's visit to the Commission

Honorable Minister of State for Education, Science, and Technology, Pramila Kumari, made an inspection visit to the University Grants Commission and sought information on the Commission's activities. Chairman of the Commission, Prof. Dr Dev Raj Adhikari, and Secretary of the Commission, Prof. Shankar Prasad Bhandari, welcomed the Honorable Minister of State.

In the program organized to welcome the Honorable Minister of State, the Secretary of the Commission informed about the Commission's various programs and activities for developing, managing, and improving higher education. He also shed light on the overall state of Higher Education in Nepal. He talked about the current issues and challenges in the higher education sector along with the existing problems of the Commission.

In the program, the Chairman of the Commission underscored the importance of the Honorable Minister of State's visit to the Commission. He expressed happiness at the opportunity to inform about various issues in the field of higher education, along



with the programmatic and policy work the Commission is carrying out for the development of Higher Education in Nepal. The Chairman stated that the Commission is constantly discussing and communicating with relevant stakeholders to address the current challenges and problems in higher education and coordinating with the Ministry for solutions.

The Honorable Minister of State commended the Commission's work for the development of higher education and emphasized the proper utilization of the grants provided by the Commission to Universities and Higher Educational Institutions. She said that grants should not be provided to Universities that have been opened without proper study

and potential, stressed the effective management of existing universities instead of establishing new universities, and drew attention to expanding access to the backward regions and communities for higher education.

The Honorable Minister of State said that the Universities should be autonomous and free from political pressure. She added that Higher Educational Institutions have an essential role in the country's economic and social development as well as independence, good governance, equity, and human resource development. Furthermore, the Honorable Minister of State praised the Commission's preparation for conducting a national eligibility test for teachers entering higher education.

Outstanding Campuses Awarded

On the recommendation of the University Grants Commission, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology presented three campuses with National Education Awards. These Awards, including cash prizes, were bestowed on National Education Day on Asoj 2, 2080. The Commission had selected Pulchowk Campus, Pulchowk, among the constituent campuses, Lumbini Commerce Campus, Butwal, among the community campuses, and Kathmandu Model College, Bagbazar, among the private campuses, and it recommended the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology for the awards.

The Commission had evaluated campuses based on six indicators and recommended to the Ministry: a. physical facilities, b. student pass rate, c. innovative work, d. research, publication, and qualification, e. administrative and financial management, and f. enrollment. These indicators were provisioned in section 16 of *Nepal Vidya Bhushan*, *Nepal Pravidhik Vidya Bhushan*, *Nepal Chhatraa Vidyapadak*, and National Education Award, 2077.

The awarded campuses were presented with certificates and cash prizes of NRs 2,50,000 each in a ceremony organized on 2080 Asoj 2.

The Commission's meeting on 2080/04/32 approved the "Report on the National Academic Calendar of Higher Education, 2080", prepared by the High-level Committee under the coordination of the Chairman of the Commission. Additionally, a Ministerial decision of the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology dated 2080.05.29 approved the implementation of the Calendar in accordance with clauses (d), (e), and (f) of subsection (1) of section 6 of the University Grants Commission Act, 2050 and carrying out the needful on other matters in accordance with the "Emergency Service Operation Act, 2014". The Commission has issued a circular to Universities and the Institutes of Health Sciences to conduct educational programs according to the National Academic Calendar for Higher Education. The Commission has also formed a committee to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Calendar.

Objectives of implementing the National Academic Calendar

The primary purpose of the National Academic Calendar is to ensure that the educational activities of the Universities and Institutes are completed on time. The other objectives are as follows:

1. To conduct academic activities of the University like student admissions, examinations, and publication of results timely.

2. To maintain uniformity in conducting essential educational activities like student admissions, examinations, and publication of examination results among all Universities and Higher Educational Institutions.
3. To synchronize the academic calendar of Universities and Higher Educational Institutions in Nepal and other countries, as far as possible.
4. To create an efficient monitoring system and ensure its effective implementation to achieve the above-mentioned objectives.
5. To encourage Universities to effectively implement the calendar by adding an indicator of calendar implementation to the performance grants availed by the Commission.

Framework of the Calendar

The calendar has been prepared in accordance with international practices to solve the problems of ineffective implementation of the calendars that Universities in Nepal have due to various reasons causing delays in teaching-learning, conduct of examinations, and publication of results. The work schedule has been proposed based on the time up to the end of Shrawan when the results of class 12 are published since the admissions in undergraduate programs have to rely on the results of class 12 published by the National Examinations Board.

Framework of the Calendar

| S.N. | Activities | Undergraduate level | | Post-Graduate level | |
|------|----------------------------------|--|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| | | First semester | Second semester | First semester | Second semester |
| 1 | Student admission application | Within Bhadra | -- | By the end of Mangsir | -- |
| 2 | Entrance examinations | Within Asoj | -- | Within the second week of Paus | -- |
| 3 | Beginning of admissions | Within the second week of Kartik | -- | Within the third week of Paus | -- |
| 4 | Beginning of teaching-learning | Latest by the first week of Mangsir | Within the second week of Baishakh | Within the first week of Magh | Within the second week of Shrawan |
| 5 | Last date for student admissions | Within the first week of Mangsir | -- | Within the first week of Magh | -- |
| 6 | Internal evaluations | According to the decisions of the Universities or HEIs | | | |
| 7 | Closure of teaching-learning | By the end of Falgun | By the end of Shrawan | By the end of Jeth | Within the second week of Paus |
| 8 | Final examinations | By the end of Chaitra | By the end of Bhadra | By the first week of Asar | By the end of Paus |
| 9 | Publication of results | By the end of Jeth | By the end of Kartik | By the month of Asar | Within the second week of Magh |

Note:

1. In the case of undergraduate programs, if any of the students admitted within the second week of Kartik do not attend the classes and the available seat/quota remains vacant, the University may enroll students in the vacant seat/quota within the first week of Mangsir.
2. The results of the entrance examination conducted by the Medical Education Commission for this academic session 2080/81 should be completed by the end of Kartik and the student admissions and class management process should be started as soon as possible. Beginning next year, the Medical Education Commission should plan its activities within the calendar format given in Table 3 above.
3. The University Grants Commission can adjust this calendar by considering the impact of emergencies and extended public holidays declared by the Government in the effective implementation of the calendar.

Guide to the implementation of the calendar

1. Consider the period between Mangsir 1 to Shrawan end (mid-November to mid-August) as one academic year for undergraduate programs.
2. Concerning the examinations of the programs conducted in the annual system, the universities should publish the calendar so that the time specified for graduation is not extended. The plan should include publication of the final examination results within the same period. In other words, the results of the final examination of the four-year program should be published within four years.
3. The final examination for each semester for all levels under the semester system should be completed within five months of the classes' commencement date.
4. The prescribed syllabus should generally be completed within 90 working days from the day of commencement of classes. Universities and Higher Education Institutions should adjust these working days according to the credit load.
5. The third-semester classes should begin in the second week of Kartik, and the same calendar shall be implemented in other semesters too.
6. In the semester system, for a course load of 3 credit hours, 48 hours of teaching-learning (teaching-learning within the classroom, homework, presentation) and additional laboratory work for science-related courses should be allocated.
7. The results should be published within two months from the date of completion of the semester examination. In any case, the make-up examination of a semester should

be conducted before the examination of the following semester. However, the final semester's class load should be adjusted in advance in the calendar, and the final semester's exam results should be published within the same semester period.

8. The concerned University can determine the method, process, and time of internal evaluation of students.
9. The calendar should be determined accordingly if a University has a three-month semester. Nevertheless, the final examination results cannot be published after the prescribed time limit.
10. The admission of undergraduate students cannot be started without the publication of the results of class 12 by the National Examination Board. However, conditional/provisional admission can be made for students who have appeared for the class 12 examination. However, conditional admission will not apply to the related programs if any Nepalese law prohibits such acts.
11. Admission of students who have passed examinations from educational bodies and institutions other than the National Examination Board, including the CTEVT, A Level, and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE) shall not be impacted or hindered by the date of publication of the results of the National Examination Board.
12. By implementing the National Academic Calendar and ensuring high credibility, the University can conduct teaching-learning and examinations by deducting public and currently announced holidays and arranging online classes even during public holidays.
13. The university should complete the admissions for the undergraduate level within 60 days from the date of publication of the results of class 12, considering festivals and other public holidays within the given timeframe.
14. Based on the number of students applying for the entrance exam, it is found that studying Medicine is the priority of the students, followed by Core Science and Information Technology. Hence, the entrance examination for medical education affects other disciplines as well. Therefore, the results of the entrance examination taken by the Medical Education Commission for the admission of students in Medical education should be completed by the end of Kartik for this academic session 2080/81, and student admissions and commencement of classes should be

managed as soon as possible. From the next academic year, the Medical Education Commission should plan its programs within the framework of the calendar given in Table 3.

15. If the procedures and regulations of Universities and Institutes, including the Medical Education Commission, affect the implementation of the proposed National Academic Calendar, it seems appropriate to make necessary amendments to the legal provisions, including the procedures and regulations from the relevant bodies.
16. Teaching-learning related activities conducted in the annual system should start latest by Mangsir 1 and be completed by Bhadra 15, and the examination should be completed by Asoj 15.
17. The notice of student admission from Universities and Higher Educational Institutions should accompany complete information on the academic programs and the calendar containing the overall educational activities. Such information should be made public for everyone concerned through the University's website and publications.
18. Student admission, operation of classes, conducting examinations, and publication of the final examination results for post-graduate programs should be completed within two years, and the proposed calendar should be published at the beginning of the academic session.
19. Post-graduate admission application and entrance examination should be completed within a month and a half from the publication date of undergraduate results.
20. The University should form and mobilize an agile mechanism to monitor and ensure activities within their academic programs are completed timely and to promptly solve the problems encountered during the implementation of the programs.

Universities and Higher Educational Institutions can prepare and implement their own academic calendars based on the guidelines for calendar implementation and the deadlines set in the calendar framework presented above.

Measures to reduce the impact of various factors on the calendar

1. Making a timetable for conducting the examinations and publishing the results.
2. Prescribing a timeframe for examining the answer sheets to the faculties involved, encouraging them to complete their work within the prescribed

time, establishing measures for Departmental action for delays in work done, and ensuring strict implementation of measures.

3. Taking prompt action as per the laws, rules, and prevailing laws of the University in case of confirmation of delays in work done and damage to the University's reputation due to the negligence of teachers, employees, and officials on ultra-sensitive issues like conducting of examinations and publication of results, both of which are related to the future of students.
4. Making arrangements to examine the answer sheets in the same province or a nearby province where the exam is held to address the delays in publishing results. This arrangement can address delays in publishing results notably reported in the programs conducted under the annual system due to the problems in managing examinations of answer sheets.
5. Universities issuing citizens charters for academic good governance in the context of implementing citizens charters for the public bodies to ensure that services provided by the public bodies are accountable and credible and to make the service providers more responsible and accountable.
6. Coordinating with stakeholders using the necessary mechanisms and methods to end non-academic activities within the University, like strikes and lock-ups, immediately.
7. Making arrangements so that students can get information related to examination results and apply for transcripts online. It would be appropriate to include the prescribed fee for the transcripts at the time of enrollment of the last semester and arrange for the University to ensure the income.
8. Arranging for the issuance of transcripts from the provincial campuses of the University to create an environment where students can get their transcripts easily.
9. A clear policy seems necessary to regulate and monitor that Universities in Nepal operate according to the National Academic Calendar prepared by the Commission and colleges affiliated to foreign Universities also operate on a prescribed timeframe.
10. Requesting the Nepal Government and political parties to ensure the commitment of Professors, teachers, employees, and political parties to end political activities since they significantly affect the implementation of an academic calendar.

Policy Dialogue Programs

The Commission has organized various policy dialogue workshops on contemporary issues in higher education under the policy dialogue series. It organized a policy dialogue program on **"Provincial University Establishment, Coordination and Management"** on Wednesday, 2080/03/20. Honorable Minister of Education, Science, and Technology Ashok Kumar Rai graced the program as the Chief Guest. Other guests present in the program included Honorable member of the National Planning Commission Dr. Ramesh Chandra Paudel, Vice-Chairperson of Medical Education Commission Prof. Dr. Shree Krishna Giri, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Mr. Ramakrishna Subedi, Vice-Chancellors of Universities, Vice-Chairmen of Provincial Planning Commission, former Vice-Chancellors, Registrars, members of the Commission, distinguished officials of the Ministry, and experts.

Honorable Minister of Education, Science, and Technology Ashok Kumar Rai said in the program that the current problems and anomalies in the Universities are a reflection of national politics. Therefore, to begin with, the country's political waters must be made clear. He emphasized that if politics is brought to a stable and proper place, the non-political activities seen in the universities will end. He pointed out the need for coordination between the State Universities and the Center and a clear policy on this matter. He also emphasized that the Commission should not merely be considered a grant-giving organization but a body that develops, maintains quality, regulates, and controls higher education.

In the program, outgoing Vice-Chancellor of the Lumbini Buddhist University and expert Prof. Dr. Hridaya Ratna Bajracharya presented the concept of 'Regional University Establishment Coordination and Management.' Through

the presentation, Prof. Bajracharya shed light on the policy arrangements for mergers, international practices, the current situation of campuses, the need and challenges of campus mergers, and highlighted crucial aspects of mergers.

A policy dialogue program on **"National Academic Calendar of Higher Education"** was organized on Wednesday, 2080/03/19. The guests that attended the program included Honorable Member of National Planning Commission Dr. Ramesh Chandra Paudel, Vice-Chairman of Medical Education Commission Prof. Dr. Shree Krishna Giri, Secretary of



the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology Mr. Ramakrishna Subedi, Vice Chancellors, former Vice Chancellors, Registrars, members of the Commission, and experts.

Secretary of the Commission Prof. Shankar Prasad Bhandari offered the welcome speech and highlighted the purpose and justification of organizing the policy dialogue program. The Dean of the Faculty of Education at Tribhuvan University, Prof. Dr. Chitra Bahadur Budhathoki, presented the concept of the "National Academic Calendar of Higher Education."

Both policy dialogue programs were presided by the Chairman of the Commission Prof. Dr. Dev Raj Adhikari.

A policy dialogue workshop on **"The Need, Challenges and Possibilities of Campus Merger"** was organized on Sunday, 2079/03/26. Member of the commission Prof. Dr. Govinda Nepal presented a concept paper on 'need,

challenges and possibilities of campus merger" in the workshop. Through the presentation, Prof. Nepal highlighted the extant policy arrangements for mergers, international practices, the current situation of campuses, the needs and challenges of campus mergers, and essential aspects required for mergers.

A policy dialogue workshop on **"Student Enrollment in Higher Education"** was held on Wednesday, 2080/01/13. Registrar of Kathmandu University Prof. Dr. Achyut Wagle presented a concept paper on student enrollment in Higher Education and

its various dimensions. Prof. Wagle analyzed various aspects, including the state of student admissions in Universities, the state of examination results of classes 10 and 12, and data on students from Nepal and other countries who leave their countries to study abroad.

Chairman of the Commission Prof. Dr. Dev Raj Adhikari chaired both of these policy dialogue programs. Secretary of the Commission Prof. Shankar Prasad Bhandari welcomed the attendees and highlighted the purpose and justification of organizing the policy dialogue program. Multiple stakeholders, including experts, attended the programs.

The Commission has continuously been conducting policy dialogue programs on contemporary issues in Higher Education and seeking suggestions from stakeholders, including experts to facilitate the formulation of Higher Education Policy.

Guidelines for Conducting National Eligibility Test Prepared

The Commission has approved the "National Eligibility Test Operation Guideline, 2079" prepared for conducting the National Eligibility Test for the personnel entering the teaching profession in higher education. The Guideline prepared by the committee chaired by a former member of the Commission Prof. Dr. Sangita Singh has been approved by the Commission and sent to the Ministry of Finance for approval through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology. The Commission will conduct the trial work from this financial year once the Ministry of Finance approves it. Prior to this, the study committee formed under the coordination of the Dean of Kathmandu University Prof. Dr. Bala Chandra Luitel submitted the "Report of the Task Force formed to give necessary suggestions for conducting the National Eligibility Test of Human Resource that wants to enter the Teaching Profession in Higher Education, 2079". The report recommended conducting the test after preparing a guideline and provided suggestions for the same.

The government has entrusted the Commission—through a clear policy—to conduct the National Eligibility Test program for the workforce entering the teaching profession of higher education prioritized in the current fifteenth periodic plan, National Education Policy, 2076, and the government's annual budget and program. The budget has been allocated for conducting the Test through the budget and program of the current financial year.

The Test aims to enhance the educational level of higher education by testing the competence of the human resources involved in teaching and instruction in higher education. It aims to achieve excellent results in teaching and instruction, research, innovation, and academic governance through good academic governance by ensuring professional qualifications, competence, honesty, commitment, and accountability of human resources involved in teaching-learning in higher education. It additionally aims to ensure that human resources involved in service delivery through the teaching profession in higher education demonstrate excellent results and to develop higher education as a place that produces creative, skilled, competitive, productive, and innovative human resources through quality education.

The Guideline has made arrangements, including an examination committee chaired by the chairman of the Commission, examination pattern, qualification of candidates, outline of the curriculum, and structural arrangements.

Implementation of the Skilled Technical Manpower Development Program on a Cost-Sharing Basis

Since technical subjects are expanding in public schools as per the Nepal Government's policy of expanding access to technical and vocational education at all local levels, the Technical Education Expansion Program has been operated in a cost-sharing model to help such public schools and constituent technical schools under the Center for Technical Education and Vocational Training address their need for required human resources by adding quota in technical programs in Higher Education Institutions, initiating new programs and expanding subjects. Skilled Technical Manpower Development Program Implementation Guidelines, 2080, has been issued on a cost-sharing basis for the implementation of this program. The Nepal Government will bear living expenses of Rs. 6000 per student (for 10 months in a year) and the fees. The Guidelines have provision to deploy human resources produced for a two-year National Technical Service to public schools, technical education, vocational training centers, and test schools offering technical education.

The Commission's Strategic Plan Prepared

The strategic plan of the University Grants Commission has been prepared. According to the Commission's decision dated 2079/05/12, a five-member team prepared and submitted the strategic plan to the Chairman of the Commission. Member of the Commission Prof. Dr. Govinda Nepal coordinated the committee. Other members of the committee were Prof. Dr. Ganga Ram Gautam, Tribhuvan University, Mr. Sagun Chitrakar, Tribhuvan University, Mr. Shree Prasad Bhattarai, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Mr. Kedar Prasad Acharya, Director of the Commission.

The University Grants Commission has been operating various programs for the overall management and development of higher education in Nepal. There is a need for the Commission to prepare a unified key strategic plan to address the objectives and strategies set by the Periodic Plans of the Nepal Government, National Education Policy, and Higher Education Development Program for the development of the higher education sector and incorporate programs and plans that the Commission conceptualized earlier. The preparation of the strategic plan progressed in the context that the Office of the Auditor General, in their evaluation report of work done by the Commission, suggested that the Commission should prepare a strategic plan. Furthermore, the budget and program for the fiscal year 2079/80, approved by the Commission's meeting on 2079/05/06, included a budget for preparing the Commission's strategic plan in point No. 13.