

Best Practices Successfully Implemented by the University

Best Practice 1

Title of the Practice

Ease of access to learning resources and social outreach through education

Objectives of the Practice

- 1: Providing ease of access to learning resources
- 2: Offering a digital gateway to information and knowledge to the students
- 3: Increasing social outreach through education
- 4: Capacity building and skill enhancement in the area by offering learning opportunities

The Context

The University and the campuses are located in hilly region, at times extreme weather conditions makes it difficult to access the learning resources physically by visiting the library. COVID-19 lockdown restrictions also increased the reliance on accessing knowledge resources digitally. The University was already progressing in the same direction even before the pandemic. The reverse migration that the state witnessed also left many learners in the middle of their learning journey wherein the University stepped in to fill the gap and launched its own social outreach skill enhancement online program SAMPARK to offer learning opportunity to interested candidate from outside the University too.

The Practice

University enhanced the infrastructure required for digitalization of learning resources and worked in the direction of improving ease of access to the digital resources to the students. The University's central library has subscribed to around e- journals provided by SHODH GANGA. Digitalization of University publications like Annual Reports, Magazines and Newsletters is initialized by the central library Subscription of Web of Science citation database along with Emerging science index, Conference proceeding index-Science, Conference proceeding index-Social Science and book citation index has been initiated. There is a provision of digitization of doctoral theses, institutional repository for the intellectual outputs and availability of online resource materials by ensuring the

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free access to E-resources through Inflibnet. The Central Library and Campus Libraries are largely digitalized. The library has organized several awareness programmes for students in each semester on effective use of e-library resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic and the preventive lockdown had an impact on various spheres of an individual's life. Reverse migration appeared as a major challenge during the pandemic, Uttarakhand also witnessed a huge number of state's residents returning back to their villages and home towns. The state government and administration handled the situation efficiently and all efforts are being made to convert this challenge into an opportunity. In contribution to state's efforts the University envisioned a social outreach initiative, SAMPARK, an online capacity building and skill enhancement program wherein the motivated faculty members utilized their summer vacation duration by sharing their intellectual capital to enhance the skill set of the participants and improve their skills to enhance their employability. The course was offered free of cost to all the registered participants.

Evidence of Success

Variety of short-term courses were offered in the first phase of this pilot project. The course duration varied from 2, 3, 5 and 7 days. The first phase received a great response and based on the feedback, the university is planning to extend the initiative and enter into a second phase with enhanced rigour and extensive collaboration with the industry experts in the required discipline to focus comprehensively on skill enhancement and developing opportunities for employment. The program was launched on 7th June 2020 and within a span of almost a month, more than 9,300 participants registered for various courses offered by more than 23 departments across all the campuses in the University. The initiative was driven by the faculty members of various departments of all the three campuses of Kumaun University. 90 faculty members conducted around 70 online courses and received total registrations of 9304 interested participants, out of which 6868 participants successfully completed their respective courses. A good 74% of total registered participants attended and completed the full courses. Considering the time available for planning and executing the initiative, the above numbers are promising and will lead us to increase the depth and span of the future courses. The faculty members of Kumaun University collectively offered 285 days and 407 hours of cumulative training for skill enhancement and capacity building to 6868 participants. All the participants who successfully completed the course were given a digital certificate of participation and successful completion of the course

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Problems Encountered and Resources Required

The students were not familiar with accessing of digital resources available with the Central Library, infrastructure required for digitalization was upgraded to avoid the challenges posed by limited infrastructure. Awareness for using the resources was required which was addressed by conducting seminar/workshops dedicated for the same.

Best Practice 2

Title of the Practice

Use of ICT for E-Governance and efficient administration

Objectives of the Practice

- 1 Making admission process online for improved efficiency and transparency
- 2 Providing exam related information online to the students
- 3 Offering a platform to cater to information need of prospective, existing and passed out students of the University
- 4 Offering online fee payment option for various requirements.

The Context

The admission process needs to be made convenient and transparent for offering ease of use and improving organizational efficiency. Related functional aspect starting from admission till registering for convocation for receiving final degree were also made online. Provision to cater most of the needs of prospective, existing and passed out students were also catered through the interactive website of the University.

The Practice

For effective and efficient execution of various administrative functions at the University, the University adopted the practice of using ICT enabled services for various student related activities that starts from admission to the final graduation of the students from their respective courses. Since the year 2016, the admission process and the examination system of Kumaun University has been gradually automated. The process of online admissions was introduced in 2016 and has been operating smoothly since then. The examination system also turned online gradually by introducing

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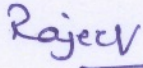
the online examination forms. The date sheet, admit cards and results are available on the website of the University. The information regarding the entrance examinations for various courses, admission process for the same is largely automated. The University continuously updates its interactive website to offer prospective and existing students along with the alumni an engaging, informative and functional platform that can cater to most of the requirements online. This offers a fast and efficient redressal of their queries.


Evidence of Success

The automation and use of ICT has contributed immensely towards increasing efficiency and transparency in the examination system. The results are available on the website immediately after the evaluation process and declaration of results and the students can apply for revaluation/rechecking online. Fee for most of the activities of the university can be deposited online, offering the students a convenient, fast, reliable and efficient platform. This is applicable not only for various university teaching departments, but also for various affiliated colleges and institutes. The University has developed a well-established process for the conduct of semester examinations, declaration of results and award of degrees and diplomas facilitated by the examination center of the University which is largely automated. Application for provisional certificate and degree has also been made online to make the process efficient which resulted in a

Problems Encountered and Resources Required

Initial resistance to the online admission process was witnessed as is evident with any kind of change. The transition process was handled so as to offer an experience to the students which could fulfil the objective of the process. The required procedures and protocols to adopt the online automated process were also developed and adopted to maintain the sanctity of the entire process in the automated online version too.


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