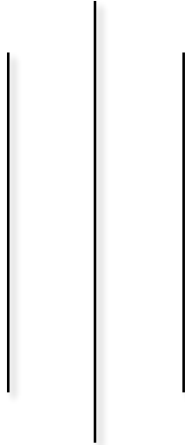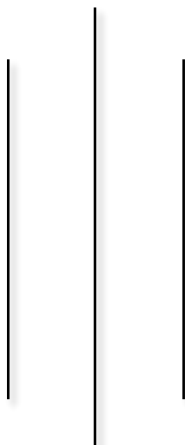# UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

NURTURING EXCELLENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM (NEHEP)

(2021/22 – 2025/26)

Standards, Operational Policies and Guidelines for Faculty Competency Development and Academic Leadership Sensitization

MAY, 2022

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

1. Faculties[1] education/skills and quality of education cannot be separated. Faculty education has direct and lasting impact on the overall quality of higher education. Advanced countries provide significant focus on in-service faculty members training[2]. This is based on the premise that the most direct and effective way of raising educational quality is to modify faculty education and recruitment and improve in-service faculty skills and knowledge including continuous upgrading their skills through in-service professional development. Collectively, faculty training and in-service professional development are key factors in improving student achievement. The Faculty Professional Development (FPD) is effective when it is targeted, evidence-based, collaborative, sustained and evaluated, and continuous.

2. The other side of quality education is leadership of universities/ HEIs. Academic leadership as key agent for policy intervention to shape the higher education system is second to classroom instruction among all school/ higher education-related factors. They also contribute to the development of an appropriate learning environment at schools/ universities and HEIs focusing on what and how students learn. Dynamic and motivated academic leaders are key change agents in higher education to motivate teachers. Therefore, sensitization of academic leaders and their empowerment with the emerging needs in higher education are critical in tandem with faculty upskilling. The foci of this empowerment program should be on knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary in leading and promoting good student experience, quality graduates, and quality staff.

1.2 Country Context on the Competency of Teaching Professionals

3. *The National Education Policy (NEP) 2019 and the National Policy for Science and Technology 2019* have underscored the importance of teachers/ faculty training as one of the most important factors for quality service delivery in education. These are underlined in the objectives, strategy, and operational policies among others as explained below:

Objectives
- To maintain good governance in education by ensuring professional qualification, competence, integrity, commitment, and accountability of the human resources for improved service delivery in education.[3]

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[1] In this document faculties and teachers are used as synonymously.
[2] Training needs for faculty members: Towards achieving quality of University Education in the light of technological innovations
[3] NEP Objective 8.8

- To develop capacity for utilizing traditional and modern technologies for national development by integrating science and technology in the education system and its practices.[4]

Strategy

- Implement competency test and training for prospective teachers in schools, TVET and higher education. Link the teachers' professional competency and performance standards with career development.[5]
- Inculcate scientific approach in studies and practices with increased share of programs in science and technology (S&T).[6]

Operational Policy. Embrace periodic revision of teaching–learning methods, technologies, processes, and curricula of university programs and their delivery with increased use of information technology, which among others would include[7]:

- Maintain striking balance between globalization, internationalization and localization of higher education linking historical, modern and indigenous knowledge in the curricula with provision of periodic revision, greater focus on research based learning, and addressing the national needs.
- New curricula to be developed to produce human resources as per the nation development needs by diversifying the disciplines and subjects of higher education.
- Teaching of higher education to be orientated to creativity, innovation and production by making it project-based, exploratory and research-centred to make the students as self-learner.
- An environment of practical application of research findings to be created through partnership and collaboration between development agencies and universities by developing research and innovation as integral part of higher education.
- Opportunities to be created to promote cooperation, collaboration and partnership between industries, enterprises, and teaching institutes to facilitate learning for students and the industries/enterprise staff to promote lifelong learning. Likewise, the education shall be linked to other sectors of production and services.
- Education programmes to be revised along with the objective of developing global competencies.

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[4] NEP Objective 8.13
[5] NEP Strategy 9.19
[6] NEP Strategy 9.32
[7] NEP Operational Policy 10.15

- National Qualifications Test System to be introduced to appraise the expertise of the persons who are desirous of working as teachers, principals and researchers in higher education.

4.   *The Fifteenth Five-year Plan (2020–2024)*[8] has stressed on the importance of competent faculties in the academic institutions. One of the fourteen strategies in education sector focuses on the promotion competent teaching professionals by reforming university education faculties and training centers. The Plan also focuses on the promotion of knowledge-based economy by promoting science, technology, innovation, entrepreneurship, research and collaboration. It also states to link the grants and facilities provided to the HEIs with their performance.

5.   Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MOEST) works for the overall national policy, planning and coordination of education sector in Nepal. The school sector program is a shared responsibility of the federal, province and local levels in the federal structure. The Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD) under the MOEST is responsible for overall planning and implementation. Prior to the federal structure the National Center for Educational Development (NCED) as one of the central-level agency of the MOEST managed in-service teacher training programs for school teachers centrally and through its twenty-nine education training centers (ETC) throughout the country. This responsibility has now transferred to the province-level (seven provinces with seven training centers at present). Restructuring of the institutions to cope with the demand in the federal structure is in progress.

6.   In higher education, the University Grants Commission (UGC), an advisory body facilitates the Government in developing the higher education policy, plans and programs. The UGC also facilitates implementation of the higher education program at the universities and HEIs levels including monitoring and evaluation. Universities are autonomous to conduct their programs. The health science academies as teaching hospitals also function as autonomous non-affiliating agencies under the Ministry of Health and Population.

7.   Pre-service teacher training program in higher education is solely dependent on the university/ academy/HEIs programs with very lose linkages between the skills needs in the classroom at schools or universities/HEIs and the skills of the university graduates. Practice of market appraisal during curriculum development and revision by the universities is also at the tender stage. In addition to this, the prevalent affiliation system provides little space for

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[8] https://npc.gov.np/images/category/15th_plan_English_Version.pdf

institutions and faculties to be actively involved themselves in the design of university programs also to meet the local and regional markets in the aspirations of the federal structure.

8. In addition to the above said limitations universities in Nepal have since long predominantly practiced faculty training in education stream only. The government has priority of engaging the graduates from Education stream as the teachers for school education. However, in practice, this priority appears insufficient to meet teachers' quality to facilitate student learning in the job-market. Teachers from other streams such as science and technology, management and others are also engaged in teaching both in school level and higher education. While graduates from virtually all faculties are required in the teaching profession at government and private schools, this is more so for the higher education. This is because, in the higher education, teaching professionals are mostly qualified on their specialized streams and rarely qualified on pedagogical skills, while such skill is a critical attribute to make the teaching-learning process more effective and student centered.

9. The responsibility of enhancing the competency of teaching professionals in higher education lies with the UGC and the concerned universities and HEIs. In particular, two of the key responsibilities of the UGC as defined in the *Preamble* of the UGC Act 2050 are (i) to rationally distribute the grants to various universities in the nation, and (ii) to provide quality education by maintaining academic standards of the universities[9]. One of the essential ingredients of providing quality education lies with the competency of in the universities. Therefore, the UGC and universities will focus on the development of such competency. Faculties should help students to define their career trajectory by providing lessons for life. In addition to this institutional arrangement will also be streamlined for sensitization of academic leaders for their proactive support in shaping the universities and HEIs to facilitate improved teaching-learning process.

10. Despite the small-scale initiatives by the universities, many faculties in the universities in Nepal believe that the responsibility to develop competency of a faculty member has relied almost entirely with the faculty member oneself. Universities have done little to develop competency among faculty members. Similarly, academic leadership in Nepali universities is mostly a matter of personal quality or organic development of the faculty members as no systematic orientation is provided by the universities focused on academic leadership. Therefore, faculty competency development and academic leadership sensitization is a new avenue for the UGC to focus in the days ahead in collaboration with MOEST, universities and other stakeholders. Development of such qualities and behavior is a long-term process, but the UGC will immediately focus on establishing these aspects as the formal tools and policy

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[9] University Grants Commission Act, 2050 BS, Nepal

initiatives in the Nepali universities to ensure quality education. The UGC will ensure the implementation of faculty competency development and academic leadership sensitization as best practices in the universities.

11.   Associated with the above-mentioned result area, the UGC will facilitate the universities and HEIs transformation towards establishing a culture of faculty competency development and academic leadership sensitization. This SOPG is the first systemic intervention of the UGC towards that end. This SOPG defines standards and operational policies for faculty training and academic leader sensitization. Through this SOPG, UGC will promote the universities and HEIs in developing or revising the existing policies and rules on faculty competency development and academic leaders' sensitization and their implementation. These are elaborated in the next sections.

2. STANDARDS OF FACULTY COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC LEADER SENSITIZATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

12.   Various documents have been published about the objectives and standards of professional skill training programs for faculty members.[10,11,12] In all of the published literatures the faculty members are expected to teach, engage the learner, absorb new discoveries and rely on different knowledge in the execution of duties. The expectation is also for up-to-date skills for instruction, assessment, and identification of opportunities by faculty members to promote learning. The UGC has identified the following standards for the development of competency among the faculties and for the sensitization of academic leaders in the higher education sector in Nepal.

13.   **Promoting 21st century Skills for quality of higher education**. Faculty members and academic leaders of universities/HEIs play critical roles towards enhancing the higher education in delivering knowledge to the students with the 21st century skills. The faculty members shall be able to impart core academic subject knowledge and understanding among all students as a bedrock component of the Framework for 21st Century. The academic leaders on the other hand shall create conducive policy environment and strategies to facilitate the process and solidify the success of students, not only in universities/HEIs and work, but in life. Within the mastery of the core academic subjects, the 21st century skills outcomes shall also

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[10] 21st Century Professional Skill Training Programs for Faculty Members
[11] Professional Development: A 21st Century Skills Implementation Guide
[12] 21st Century Standards and Curriculum: Current Research and Practice

focus on (i) learning and innovation skills[13]; (ii) information, media & technology skills[14]; and (iii) life and career skills[15].

14.   **Up to date faculties and academic leaders.** The trend of the world is changing and so are the national needs and priorities. New knowledge is being generated in every discipline. New disciplines and ways of doing things (e.g., online teaching) are evolving. Knowledge, skills and practices are constantly changing over time. Their relevancy and priorities are also changing continuously. Faculty members should remain up to date with the latest trends in their field of expertise and in the broader context. On the other hand the academic leaders should remain up to date about the latest trends, priorities and practices in higher education. While these aspects shall be taken into consideration in the universities/HEIs' new faculty members/academic leaders recruitment/ appointment policy framework, system of in-service knowledge updating shall also be an integral part of the policy and strategy.

15.   **Faculty members and academic leaders aligned with the purpose of education.** Higher education should produce quality human resources (human capital) capable of enriching their personal lives, boosting the development and prosperity of the nation, and contributing to make the world a better place to live. Policies and plans at the national level, UGC level, university level and HEI level further highlight the purpose of higher education in Nepal. All the faculty members and academic leaders should be aligned with the purpose of education through programs on faculty competency development and academic leaders' sensitization. The purpose of education also entails ethics, moral values and promotion of nationalism. For this, professional ethics, code of conduct and nationalism shall be integral part of the capacity development and sensitization programs so that the faculties and the leaders can utilize information gained from the events to professional practice and leadership.

16.   **Pedagogy skills for all faculties**. A faculty member, however expert in his/her domain, should be equally competent as a teacher, who is the inspiration for the students as next generation leaders, faculty members of universities/campuses and prospective secondary school teachers. In most of the exiting teaching practices, the faculty members would largely be comfortable to impart core academic subject knowledge and understanding in their subject/stream domains. The universities/ HEIs policy and guiding framework[16] will facilitate partnership among faculty members from the core academic subjects/stream domain with other subject/stream domains to facilitate the delivery of the 21st century skills as an integral part of pedagogical skills. Deans' offices shall also play critical role in such collaboration.

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[13] This shall focus to impart the learners with skills to become critical thinkers and problem solvers, creative and innovative, and good communicators and collaborators
[14] This shall include information literacy, media literacy, ICT literacy
[15] This shall include the skills of flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability and leadership and responsibility
[16] The guiding framework shall also be linked with the curricula design and delivery framework

17.   **Explicit policies of universities on faculty training.** All universities in Nepal should develop policies that have explicit provisions for faculty training. A separate policy should be preferred even though faculty training may form a part of a larger policy document. The policy should elaborate the plans and programs on faculty training. It should also encourage faculties to enhance their competency through all possible training opportunities, not limited to the university.

18.   **Strategic plans of all universities and their schools/faculties/departments/HEIs**. Strategic plan is a powerful tool to guide the universities/HEIs including sensitizing academic leaders. All universities, their schools/faculties/departments and the constituent HEIs shall include faculty members training and academic leaders' sensitization as a departure from the conventional management. Those universities/HEIs which have not developed strategic plans will be encouraged to adopt the culture of strategic planning, while universities/HEIs which have already developed strategic plans will be encouraged to penetrate deep down to their schools/faculties/departments and HEIs with the provision of faculty training and leaders' sensitization.

19.   **Standard training packages and perpetual facility for training**. Universities/HEIs, in coordination with the UGC shall develop standard training packages for their faculty members. The packages may include mandatory training packages and optional training packages. Mandatory trainings should be enforced through the university/HEIs regulations while optional training packages should be encouraged through various motivations and incentives. Universities/HEIs shall have a dedicated division/unit for faculty competency development also with provision of training center linked to this unit. A training center could be a stand-alone facility of an individual university/HEIs or a joint facility developed by multiple universities/HEIs. The unit should also facilitate for continuing education system with self-learning facilities/course modules including available online training modules.

20.   **Exposure opportunity for quality enhancement**. While limited people can achieve remarkable progress irrespective of the circumstances, conferences shall be the vital means to create conducive environment and to collectively move forward the entire community/fraternity. All faculties/disciplines/schools of the universities/HEIs should annually organize national academic conferences as a bare minimum compliance to best practices. All HEIs should be given an opportunity to participate in such conferences with support extended to needy HEIs/faculty members/students. Universities/HEs shall be encouraged for collaborations between other universities/HEIs and stakeholders.

21   **Academic leadership through sensitization and mutual cooperation**. Leadership is less about acquiring knowledge and more about behavior change/internalization. Everybody

has a potential but that needs to be triggered to evolve as a productive kinetic energy. The UGC will support organize academic leadership conference on a regular basis. The conference will showcase best practices on academic leadership in Nepal, recognize the best leaders, arrange for experience sharing from national and international universities and have thematic discussion sessions on problems, challenges, visions and ways forward. Universities will be encouraged for performing similar activities. Case studies of successful universities around the globe[17] will also be disseminated and discussed to facilitate demonstrate that the universities/HEIs must change their management style from traditional administration to strategic management.

22.   **Primacy of merit, competition and performance**. Universities shall consider primacy of meritocracy, competition and performance during new entry, appointment and promotion of both the academic faculties and the academic leaders. Academic leaders should be appointed based on a competitive selection. Performance-based evaluation system shall be introduced. In particular, academic leaders should sign a set of performance indicators during the assumption of the position and should be evaluated annually against the agreed performance indicators. Similarly, completion of trainings shall be integrated to the evaluation system for the career advancement of faculty members.

23.   **Inclusion and equitable opportunity.** UGC, universities and HEIs should follow the principles and practices of inclusion and equitable opportunity while conducting faculty training and sensitization of academic leadership. Marginalized group of faculties may need a) customized training modules, b) more frequent trainings, and c) additional logistics (e.g., special accommodation facilities) for attending trainings in order for them to be mainstreamed.

24.   **Adopting the best practices.** Universities and HEIs in Nepal need to work hard and work smart to promote the culture of faculty competency development and garnishing academic leadership. UGC, universities and HEIs should keenly seek and adopt the best practices on these areas. The policies, including this SOPG, and implementation by the UGC, universities and HEIs shall be updated periodically and/or continually to reflect the state of the art practices.

3.   OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT AND ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP SENSITIZATION

25.   The operational policies and guidelines have been prepared to standardize the work procedure at the UGC and to guide the universities/HEIs for the promotion of faculty competency development and academic leadership sensitization. Specifically, this will focus

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[17] The Road to Academic Excellence. The making of World Class Research Universities

on capacity building of the higher education leadership and faculty members to facilitate shape and deliver the higher education to respond to the labor market needs along with societal and human values. Individual universities and HEIs will be responsible to carry out the leadership sensitization and faculty training within their defined policy, strategy and guiding framework for the purpose.

26.   The UGC has provided a Guiding Frameworks for the universities and HEIs to prepare their policies, strategies and guidelines on leaders' sensitization, faculty members training including for launching the labor market driven programs. These framework are included in *Table 1*, *Table 2*, *Table 3 and Table 4*. Additional information on policy, strategy and guidelines both for universities and HEIs are presented in *Annex 1*.

Policy, Strategy and Guidelines

27.   Universities will prepare their *policies*, *strategy* and *guidelines* for faculty members training and leadership sensitization. The UGC will provide guidance and funding support to prepare these documents. The policy document will be an overall vision document for the university and its constituent and affiliated entities on faculty members training, academic leaders' sensitization including capacity building to respond the contemporary needs of the higher education quality services delivery considering the global, regional and local context. A separate policy document should be preferred even though it may form a part of a larger policy document of the university.

28.   *Strategic plan*, as the name suggests, should be a strategic tool to move towards the set vision. The strategic plan should be practical and implementable with defined activities with short, medium and long-term milestones. While the universities will prepare overall strategic plan of the university, the individual HEIs will also prepare their strategy in line with the University's policy and strategy. Strategic plan should be developed through a participatory approach. All stakeholders should be actively engaged while preparing it. Once prepared, all stakeholders should take a joint ownership to the plan. As a basic guideline, the plan should be prepared more deterministically for a duration of 5 to 10 years with an indicative vision for an extended duration. Nevertheless, the duration may be as agreed by the stakeholders during preparing the plan. As an embedded activity of the strategic plan, actual progress should be reviewed against the plan on a periodic basis.

29.   Universities and HEIs will also prepare implementation *guidelines* for each of the key activities planned in the Strategic plan. While the university guidelines will be more generic nature to help guide the individual constituent and affiliated agencies. The constituent and affiliated agencies will prepare their guidelines considering the specificity of their program

needs in different streams of studies such as Education, Social Science, Management, S&T, Engineering, Medical Science and others.

30.   The UGC will also provide financial support to the participating universities and HEIs for the task. The UGC funding arrangement is elaborated in *Table 5*.

Table-1: University level Responsibilities on Faculty Members Training and Academic leaders Sensitization
(Guiding Framework for universities)

Policies/ Strategies/ Guidelines	Area of coverage	UGC Role
a. Faculty Members Training		
Universities policy/strategy/guideline on faculty members competency	• The policy will include all key dimensions of the faculty members competency development which among others will include: - different contemporary skills for faculty members on curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment and examinations to respond to the labor market needs - incentives for faculty members for capacity enhancement through various approaches, such as paid/unpaid leaves, higher studies, substitutive work, promotions and so on - Roaster of training courses	Facilitates collaboration among universities and encourages the same in UGC funding as performance-based grants *(Table-5)* and technical support
Establishment of faculty members training division/unit	Divisions/units established with defined Terms of References	Facilitates universities with PBG to establish such division/ unit and also to collaborate among universities for sharing of resources
Conduction of faculty members training as per the strategy and guidelines	Trainings could be conducted at different venues/ campuses/schools/ central department in coordination with the training divisions/unit and deans' offices collaboration wherever applicable	Facilitates universities with PBG as per the quality and coverage assessed by expert peer reviewers
Facilitate Deans' offices and campuses/ schools/ central departments to develop training packages and conduction of training courses	Guiding framework of such courses to bring gradual but transformational changes in the teaching learning process	Facilitates universities with PBG as per the training quality and coverage, which will be assessed by peer reviewers at UGC
Organizing peer learning seminars among university faculty training Division/unit including with business community and publishing	Universities also in association with business sector prepare a guiding framework for such peer learning	Facilitates participating universities divisions/units and encourages with PBG for the coordinating and other universities on annual rotating basis.

Policies/ Strategies/ Guidelines	Area of coverage	UGC Role
annual reports on good practices and peer learning		Also provides support for the experts from private sectors/business community
Monitoring and Evaluation	Universities prepare a Guideline on Periodic monitoring and evaluation arrangement on teacher training. Universities publish monitoring and evaluation reports	UGC will provide PBG against such report based on its quality which will be assessed by peer reviewers
b. Academic Leaders Sensitization		
Universities Guideline for Merit-based competitive appointment of academic leaders prepared	As defined by universities	Facilitates with PBG and technical support
Organize Conferences/ Webinars/visits for academic leaders	The conference/Webinars/visits will bring best practices of university leaders from across the globe. Individual universities in coordination with UGC will prepare a guiding framework/TOR with expected outcomes of the conference/webinars	UGC facilitates the universities with PBG based on the quality of the service delivered, which will be evaluated by peer reviewers against the conference/webinars Guidelines/TOR.
UGC outstanding Academic Leader award	UGC in association with universities launch such award arrangement	UGC will form an independent search committee in UGC and administer this reform initiative

Table-2: HEIs level Responsibilities on Faculty Members Training and Academic leaders Sensitization
(Guiding Framework for HEIs)

Activities	Area of coverage	UGC and Affiliating university role
a. Faculty Members Training		
HEIs level teacher training Strategy/Guideline prepared	The strategy will be in alignment with the affiliating university[18] strategy and will include key dimensions of the faculty members competency development which among others will include: - different contemporary skills for faculty members on curriculum design, pedagogy, assessment and examinations to respond to the labor market needs - incentives for faculty members for capacity enhancement through various approaches, such as paid/unpaid leaves, higher	UGC will encourage collaboration with other HEIs. UGC and the affiliating university will also provide guidance and technical facilitation for preparation of such strategy and collaboration

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[18] In case the affiliating universities delay in endorsing university framework, the campuses/schools/department can also coordinate with UGC for finalization of the campus/school/department level framework

Activities	Area of coverage	UGC and Affiliating university role
	studies, substitutive work, promotions and so on - Roaster of training courses	
Conduction of Faculty Members Training as per the strategy/ Guidelines	Training to be conducted as per the HEIs strategic framework within the affiliating university framework. Trainings could be conducted in collaboration with the deans' offices wherever applicable	UGC and affiliating University will provide guidance
Monitoring and Evaluation (Institute/ School/ Campus/ Department level)	Individual HEIs will conduct Periodic online survey to collect information about the status of EdTech readiness from their implementation practices	UGC and affiliating University will also provide guidance and technical facilitation for the periodic surveys
a. *Academic Leaders Sensitization*		
HEIs level Strategy/Guideline prepared for Merit-based competitive appointment of academic leaders		PBG and Technical support
Organize Conferences/ Webinars/ visits for academic leaders	The conference/Webinars/visit will bring best practices of HEIs leaders from across the country/globe. HEIs are encouraged collaborate to prepare the Guiding framework with expected outcomes of the conference/webinars	PBG and technical support based on the quality of the service delivered, which will be evaluated by peer reviewers against the conference/webinars Guidelines/TOR.

Table 3: University level responsibility for LMDP design and implementation
(Guiding Framework for universities on LMDP design and implementation)

Activities	Area of coverage	UGC Role
Universities policy/ strategy/ guideline on LMDP	The policy/strategy/guidelines will include all key characteristics for the LMDP, which among others, will include: - meeting global, national, and regional/local labor market needs - ensuring market relevance in the federal context to meet province and local needs ensuring a sufficient degree of autonomy in design (in the case of academic autonomy) and delivery - undertaking 2-3 years cycles for program revision based on market appraisals - incorporation of industrial/ entrepreneurial representation in the curriculum development process - Provision of labor market feedback system involving key stakeholders,	Facilitates collaboration among universities business and other key stakeholders and funding supports as performance-based financing (Table-5)

Activities	Area of coverage	UGC Role
	including modules on climate change issues as per the national program - Addressing skill gaps to meet the market needs also focuses on students' technical and socio-emotional skills, including communicational skills - Sustainability of the LMDP	
Designing/ approving/ facilitation LMDP as per the policy/ strategy	LMDP curriculum development and implementations are based on a national program that includes climate change.	
Prepare peer learning Guide/ framework, organize peer learning seminars, and publish an annual report	University faculty training division/ unit, the business community, and other stakeholders will be an integral part of the peer groups both in preparation of the guide/framework and its implementation	Facilitates universities faculty training divisions/ units, business community and other stakeholders for peer learning with PBG (universities) and technical supports
Monitoring and Evaluation	Universities prepare a Guideline for periodic monitoring and evaluation arrangement on teacher training; Universities publish M&E report	UGC will provide PBG against such report based on its quality which will be assessed by peer reviewers

Table 4: HEIs level responsibility for LMDP design and implementation
(Guiding Framework for HEIs on LMDP design and implementation)

Activities	Area of coverage	UGC Role
HEIs strategy/ guideline on LMDP	The strategy/guidelines will include all key characteristics for the LMDP within the broader framework of the affiliating university. The HEI teacher training strategy/guidelines, among others, will include: - meeting global, national, and regional/local labor market needs; - ensuring market relevance in the federal context to meet province and local needs ensuring a sufficient degree of autonomy in design (in the case of academic autonomy) and delivery - undertaking 2-3 years cycles for program revision based on market appraisals (in the case of academic autonomy) - incorporation of industrial/ entrepreneurial representation in the curriculum development process - Provision of labor market feedback system involving key stakeholders - including modules on climate change issues as per the national program (in the case of academic autonomy) - Addressing skill gaps to meet the market needs also focusing on	Facilitates collaboration among HEIs business and other key stakeholders and funding supports as performance-based financing

Activities	Area of coverage	UGC Role
	students' technical and socio-emotional skills, including communicational skills - Sustainability of the LMDP.	
Faculty training division/ units established at the HEIs	Divisions/units established with defined Terms of References	
Conduction of faculty members training as per the strategy and guidelines	Trainings could be conducted in coordination with the training divisions/unit and dean's office	Facilitates with PBG as per the quality and coverage assessed by expert peer reviewers
Prepare peer learning guide/framework, organize peer learning seminars, and publish annual report	HEIs faculty training division/ unit, business community and other stakeholders will be integral part of the peer groups both in preparation of the guide/framework and its implementation	Facilitates universities faculty training divisions/ units, business community and other stakeholders for peer learning with PBG (HEIs) and technical supports
Monitoring and Evaluation	HEIs prepare a guideline on periodic monitoring and evaluation arrangement on teacher training. Universities publish monitoring and evaluation Report	UGC will provide PBG against such report based on its quality which will be assessed by peer reviewers

Table 5: Grants for faculty competency development and academic leaders' sensitization

SN	Indicator	Activities	Grants Amount[19]
1	Development of policy, strategic plan and guidelines for faculty competency and administrative staff training[20]	**University Level** (i) Stakeholder consultation and preparation of policy, strategic plan, and guidelines adhering to the provisions in this SOPG. **(ii)** Approval of all three documents-policy, strategic plan, and guideline by respective authorized bodies of the universities *(Note: Individual universities submit report on both tasks satisfactory to UGC for grant against these results)*	*Documents for Universities:* • Policy and ancillary documents called by the policy • Strategic plan in alignment with the policy • Guidelines *Funding Arrangement* *NPR 300,000 per university*

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[19] Grant allocated against each of the tasks will be released by the UGC subject to satisfactory achievement of the defined results upon the review and recommendation by a technical team constituted by the UGC.

[20] Individual universities may wish to combine the policies, strategic plans and guidelines for faculty training and academic leaders' sensitization (item # 1 and 7) in one document with different sections.

SN	Indicator	Activities	Grants Amount[19]
2	Establishment of a faculty training division/ unit:	**University Level** • Reforming an existing division/unit or developing a new division/unit by amending the existing organization structure and human resource management (release of 50% of the allocation) • Infrastructure and facility (release of remaining 50% of the allocation	*Funding Arrangement* *NPR 500,000 per university* First 50% will be released upon fulfilling the first condition and the remaining 50% will be released upon after completion of the second condition.
3	Development of training courses/packages	**University Level** *(Deans' offices/constituent campuses/* schools/ central departments[21]*)* The training content among others shall include curriculum design, pedagogy including digital pedagogy, assessment and examination. The guiding framework **(Table 1 to Table 4)** will be used as reference in designing the training content	**Universities/ Deans' offices/ constituent campuses/ schools/ central departments** NPR 500,000 per course *Note: The university will define the roles and responsibilities of the Dean's office, constituents campuses and other divisions and accordingly the proportionate expenses as per the responsibilities will be released to these divisions by the university as per the university guidelines*
4	Training conduction as per the strategy and guidelines a) Faculty Training b) Administrative Staff Training	**University Level** *(Deans' offices/constituent campuses/* schools/ central departments*)* Universities/ Deans' offices/ constituent campuses/ schools/ central departments as per the guidelines will conduct the training	**Universities, Deans' offices / constituent campuses/ schools/ central departments[22]** a) NPR 100,000 per trained faculty members b) NPR 50,000 per trained admin staff 20% of the total estimated funding will be released upon approval of the program and remaining 80% will be released upon successful completion and submission of progress report. *Note: The university will define the roles and responsibilities of the Dean's*

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[21] Community and private campuses may adapt these courses developed by the universities in close involvement of respective Deans' offices and constituent campuses. They may send their faculties to university training centers through proper arrangement.
[22] Community campuses may send their faculty members to the university's faculty training centers and claim for this grant.

SN	Indicator	Activities	Grants Amount[19]
			office and other divisions/ campuses and accordingly the proportionate expenses as per the responsibilities will be released to these divisions/ campuses by the university as per the university guidelines
5	Organizing peer-learning seminars	**University Level** *(Deans' offices/constituent campuses/ schools/ central departments)* Organizing peer learning seminars among universities faculty training divisions/ units including with private sector and business community and publishing annual reports on good practices and peer learning	**Universities** NPR 1,000,000 per joint seminar *Note: UGC will encourage the universities to participate selected constituent and affiliated (community and private) HEIs*
7	Development of policy, strategic plan and guidelines for university/ HEIs leadership sensitization	**University Level** *(including Deans' offices/constituent campuses/ schools/ central departments)* (i) Stakeholder consultation and preparation of policy, strategic plan, and guidelines adhering to the provisions in this SOPG. (ii) Approval of all three documents- policy, strategic plan, and guideline by respective authorized bodies of the universities *(Note: Individual universities submit report on both tasks satisfactory to UGC for grant against these results.*	*Documents for Universities:* • Policy and ancillary documents called by the policy • Strategic plan in alignment with the policy • Guidelines including for competitive and merit-based appointment of academic leaders *Funding Arrangement* *NPR 500,000 per university*
8	Organizing conference/ webinars/ visits for academic leaders	Universities organize as per the university guidelines on leadership sensitization agreed with UGC	**Universities** NPR 1,000,000.00 per university per event
9	Administer UGC outstanding academic leader award	UGC prepares a guiding framework for such award in consultation with GON, universities and stakeholders, and administers the award as per the framework annually	NPR 500,000 per award

SN	Indicator	Activities	Grants Amount[19]
10	HEI level faculty member training strategy, guidelines prepared	**HEIs (Community campuses)**	• Strategic plan in alignment with the university policy and UGC guidance • Guidelines including for competitive and merit-based appointment of campus level academic leaders NPR 300,000 per campus on a competitive basis
11	HEI level faculty member and administrative staff training/strategy, guidelines prepared and training conducted	**HEIs (Community campuses)** Conduction of training as per the policy, strategy and guideline	(i) NPR 70,000 per faculty member trained as per the policy, strategy and guideline (ii) NPR 35,000 per admin staff trained 20% of the total estimated funding will be released upon approval of the program and remaining 80% will be released upon successful completion and submission of progress report.
12	Development of guidelines for campus level leadership sensitization	**Community campuses** (i) Stakeholder consultation and preparation of strategic plan, and guidelines adhering to the provisions in this SOPG. (ii) Approval of the document by authorized body of the campus. *(Note: Individual universities submit report on both tasks satisfactory to UGC for grant against these results.*	*Document prepared and* • Guidelines including for competitive and merit-based appointment of academic leaders *Funding Arrangement* *NPR 50,000 per campus*
13	Organizing collaborative conference/ webinars/visits for campus level academic leaders	Community campuses jointly organize events as per the guidelines on leadership sensitization agreed with UGC	**Campuses** NPR 150,000.00 per event

ANNEX 1: Framework for policy, strategy and guidelines related activities
(Additional information for universities/HEIs)

Policy, Strategic Plan and Guideline

- Universities/ HEIs shall prepare policies for faculty members training and leadership sensitization and capacity building and HEIs will be encouraged to adopt policy and strategic planning by extending performance-based incentive.

- Incentive will be provided in two categories, namely, universities with constituent schools/campuses/departments and affiliated community campuses.

- Strategic planning, as the name suggests, should be a strategic tool to move towards the set vision. It should be prepared not for the sake of document preparation but as a tool that is implementable. Therefore, the strategic plan should be realistic rather than idealistic. However, it should be visionary.

- Strategic plan should be developed through a participatory approach. All stakeholders should be actively engaged while preparing it.

- Once prepared, all stakeholders should take a joint ownership of the strategic plan. All stakeholders should have the responsibility, on their part, to successfully implement the plan.

- As a basic guideline, the strategic plan should be prepared/revised more deterministically for a duration of 5 to 10 years with an indicative vision for an extended duration. Nevertheless, the duration may be as agreed by the stakeholders during preparing the plan.

- As an embedded activity of the strategic plan, actual progress should be reviewed against the plan on a periodic basis.

Policy on Faculty Competency

- Universities/ HEIs should develop policies to incorporate provisions for faculty competency development including training and incentives. A separate policy should be preferred even though faculty competency may form a part of a larger policy document. The policy should elaborate the plans and programs on faculty training and incentives towards competency development.

- Universities/HEIs should revise their policies related to the promotion of faculty members in order to incorporate a certain weightage in the marking for the successful completion of trainings. The policy for faculty training should develop an outline for the marks possible for different types of trainings.

- It should also encourage faculties to enhance their competency through all possible training opportunities, not limited to the university/HEI.

- The policy should ensure that faculties willing to enhance their competency through any trainings (national or international) are encouraged. The encouragements may include paid

leave, unpaid leave, substitutive work opportunity, fee payment and substitution of time and duty to release for the duration of the training.

- As guided by the policy, a roster of training course should be prepared by the universities/ HEIs. It should include various standard training courses within and outside the nation. The courses in the roster should be listed with possible marks obtained towards the promotion of faculty members/or for various competitive grants and benefits in the university/HEI.

Establishment of a Faculty Training Division/Unit

- Universities/HEIs should, either through reform or through new development, establish a dedicated unit for faculty competency development. The university unit will be the focal point to administer/coordinate all faculty competency development programs within the university and its constituent or affiliated HEIs.
- The University division/unit should develop and maintain at least one faculty training center, preferably in the same premises of the division/unit. Additional faculty training centers may also be established to suffice the training needs including online delivery.
- Faculty training centers may be developed as a stand-alone facility of an individual university/HEI or as a joint facility developed by multiple universities/ HEIs.
- Existing facilities in the public or private sector may be utilized as faculty training centers by having agreement/memorandum of understanding with such facilities. For example, a hospital, an industry, an agricultural farm or a school may be utilized for training faculty members in medicine, engineering, agriculture, and education streams, respectively.

Development of Training Courses/Packages

- Universities/HEIs, through the Training Division/Unit should develop curriculum and contents (courses/packages) for training. They will include pedagogy training for all, optional or other mandated trainings such as online teaching, and discipline-specific trainings.
- The Division/Unit should have a provision of continuing education system. For this, the Division/Unit should develop self-learning facilities/course modules to the faculties.
- The Division/Unit should add new courses/packages as per the need felt by the Division/Unit, its faculties, university/HEI leaders and the UGC.
- The courses/packages will be revised by utilizing the feedback from the trainees, which will be collected by developing a standard *feedback form*.

Training requirement and conduction

- As guided by the policy and strategic plan on faculty training, universities/HEIs should have a mandatory training to all faculty members on pedagogy. Existing faculty members of the universities should be comprehensively trained for pedagogy skills. Newly joining

faculty members should get the training within one year of entry into the universities/ HEIs.

- All faculties of the universities/HEIs should get refresher training of the evolving teaching learning practices and best faculty practices for research and education on a frequent basis not exceeding five years. The refresher training should include both a generic update to the comprehensive training and a set of specific new courses (such as digital education, collaborative research, entrepreneurship development and so on).

- Trainees will earn marks, as stipulated in the faculty training policy, for the successful completion of the comprehensive training on curricula design/ revision, pedagogy including digital pedagogy skills, and evaluation (assessment and examination) for the refresher trainings and for the discipline-specific trainings. The marks will be counted for the promotion of faculty members as integrated to the evaluation system.

- Trainings should be conducted on a regular basis as guided by the policy and strategic plan. Universities/ HEIs are encouraged for publishing and maintaining a training calendar with estimation of the number of trainees.

- Faculty members should be chosen for training through a fair system. Universities/ HEIs should consider equity, balance, distribution, need, relevance and inclusion while selecting the intakes for training sessions.

- Trainings should be conducted by experts in the respective fields. Universities/HEIs should aim to maximize the input of experts, within and outside the universities/HEIs.

Performance linked incentive (PLI)

- Universities/ HEIs should implement a university/ HEI-wide system to annually evaluate all fulltime faculty members of the university. The provision should be detailed in the Policy document and strategic plan. A comprehensive and objective assessment criterion should be developed and implemented.

- Universities should provide performance linked incentive to a selected percentage of top performing regular faculty members every year. They may wish do carry out this in coordination with UGC including for possible funding support also to promote this for affiliated HEIs.

- Universities should prepare an objective guideline for awarding the performance linked incentive. Competency of the faculty in teaching, research and academic leadership should be the basis of evaluation among others. Selection should be made on intra-faculty/stream/school basis. Universities will also promote this for affiliated HEIs in coordination with and possible funding support from UGC.

- Up to 15% of regular faculty members can be awarded per year with no restriction for a top-performing faculty to be awarded every year. Universities may develop two or three tiers of awardee faculties as outstanding, excellent and good (e.g., 5%, 5% and 5%).

- The PLI for the three tiers may be provided up to 6 months', 4 months' and 2 months' basic salary for a year.
- Considering UGC's support as transient, universities should plan to permanently continue the system of PLI through their own budgetary system. UGC will extend its support to the universities in securing budget (including advocacy to the government) for maintaining the system of providing PLI towards enhancing quality in higher education. Universities may also establish a resource generation unit with dedicated official to explore possibility of mobilizing funding support. Successful universities on this front and the manager shall also be rewarded by the university and UGC.

Merit-based competitive appointment of academic leadership
- Universities will be incentivized to reform its policies for introducing a system of merit-based competitive appointment of academic leadership.
- The policy reform should ensure that the top leadership of universities (vice-chancellor, registrar, rector and deans) will be appointed by following an open competition.
- The appointment of the top leadership including the vice-chancellor will be made by the appropriate governing body of the university.
- Merit based appoint shall also implemented for HEI level academic leaders.
- Universities/HEIs will be work out performance criteria for merit-based appointment of academic leaders from among the candidates within the universities/ HEIs.
- A system should be introduced such that a leader with an outstanding performance when compared to the agreed indicators should be rewarded. On the other hand, unreasonably weaker performance compared to the agreed indicators should be the basis to terminate the appointment after providing an ample opportunity to make up the performance.

Academic conferences for exposure and sharing
- All faculties/schools of the universities should annually organize academic conferences. While universities/HEIs are encouraged to organize international conferences as well, the focus of this SOPG is a national level academic conference that is widely accessible to the Nepali HEIs.
- The faculty competency development policy of the universities/HEIs should cover the aspect of conference organization. Accordingly, universities should prepare/update a conference plan annually. The plan should have a calendar for annual conferences with proposed themes for the year. Universities may delegate the planning and organization of conference to the respective faculties/schools, with proper accountability.
- The conferences should have a national coverage with participation of several HEIs.
- The conferences should be performed regularly and indexed with a standard name of the conference series.

- Similar faculties from different universities may jointly organize such conferences.
- Relevant public organizations may also participate and/or become co-organizers, as envisaged by the annual conference plan.
- Faculty members and students should be given ample and affordable[23] opportunity to participate in the conferences.
- Universities/HEIs should regard the conference as an important academic function of them.

Conference for academic leadership
- UGC will annually organize an academic leadership conference with a focus to sensitize university authorities for academic leadership.
- The conference should showcase best practices on academic leadership in Nepal.
- It should arrange for experience sharing of academic leaders from national and international universities.
- UGC will implement a system of awarding outstanding academic leaders annually during the conference with the *UGC Outstanding Academic Leader Award*. A template of the framework for nominating and awarding the leaders is presented in *Annex 2*. As part of the conference ceremony, a predefined number of academic leaders should be nominated as outstanding performers. They should be requested for making a timed presentation about their leadership achievement. A group of judges (as provisioned in the framework in *Annex 2*) should evaluate the nominees and should decide top 3 leaders for the year. They should be awarded during the conference.
- The conference should have thematic discussion sessions on problems, challenges, bottlenecks, vision and ways forward.
- The conference will be an important annual function of the UGC. High level delegates from the government, policy institutions, think tanks and renowned authorities involved in academic sector should be invited. UGC will aim to invite foreign academic leaders.
- Each conference should declare a resolution that will form a guiding document for the update and revision of the policies, guidelines and action items of UGC and universities. This SOPG will also be revised based on the feedback from the conference and its resolution.
- The conference proceedings should be published regularly and made publicly available at the UGC website and relevant archive libraries.

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[23] If not free for a designated quota for various HEIs, only nominal fees are permitted for the students.

ANNEX 2: Framework for nominating and awarding UGC Outstanding Academic Leader Award

1. UGC will nominate a predefined number of (10) academic leaders per year for *UGC Academic Leadership Award* and award 3 winners among them.

Nomination:

2. A search committee will be formed each year to nominate 10 leaders from among all the universities (including top leaders) and HEIs in Nepal (public or private). The committee will comprise two professors of outstanding competency at the global level nominated by the UGC board (one being the chair of the committee), one ex-VC of a university, one academician from Nepal Academy of Science and Technology and an executive or first-class officer from the UGC as a member secretary.

3. The search committee will nominate the leaders based on the following procedure:

1. Call for nominations

- UGC (the search committee) will call for nominations of the prospective outstanding academic leaders. Any university/HEI/campus in Nepal may send one nomination. A nominee shall be proposed by one fulltime faculty and shall be supported by another fulltime faculty. Candidates cannot nominate themselves. The nomination shall be submitted with a recommendation letter from the HEI/campus endorsing it as the single nomination from the university/HEI/campus for the year.

- The nomination must include the reason (not exceeding 1000 words in total) why the nominee should be awarded the UGC Outstanding Academic Leader. It should enlist all major strengths and accomplishments of the nominee.

- A nominee shall have served a minimum of four years at the university/HEI/campus as a fulltime faculty or academic leader.

- A nominee must have at least a PhD degree.

- A nominee must have supervised at least 5 master's level research or at least one PhD level research or have taught at least 1000 students in undergraduate level as a fulltime faculty or published at least 5 articles in SCI Indexed journals after joining the HEI/campus. If the nominee is a top leader, s/he should have demonstrated leadership as evaluated against the performance indicators.

2. *Evaluation criteria*

- The search committee will first agree an evaluation criteria matrix. The criteria should evaluate the aspects including teaching performance; research performance; leadership/management performance; ethics and integrity; interpersonal skills; authority in the field; publication and media impact; patents and innovation; mentoring qualities; service to the society and disadvantaged region or communities; collaboration and national/international exposure; and awards and recognitions. Evaluation should be made out of 100 marks and each criterion shall be as objective as possible. No individual criterion shall receive more than 10 marks.

- An agreed criteria matrix can be adopted as is or taken just as a reference during agreeing the criteria by a new committee in successive years. Nevertheless, the criteria matrix shall be agreed each year prior to beginning the evaluation of the nominations.

3. *Evaluation*

- The nominations shall first be short-listed for compliance with the minimum eligibility criteria.

- A list of the short-listed nominees shall be published in the UGC website and indicated by a notice in a national media for filing any complaints to the short-listed nominees. In particular, public can file complaints on false information or issues of ethical breach and moral compromises.

- The search committee shall prepare a revised short-listing after reviewing the complaints. The committee may remove the nominees if found to have conducted any ethical breach or moral compromises that is supported by evidence.

- The committee then evaluates all the nominees from the revised short-list based on the previously agreed evaluation criteria matrix.

4. *Nomination of candidates for award*

- The committee shall nominate a predefined number of candidates for award (10). The nominees shall be selected based on the merit of the score. However, at least one nominee shall be a female leader (the best scorer female leader will be included in the selection if more than 9 contenders are male) in the first selection and the female share should be increased thereafter.

- The nomination will be submitted to the UGC, and UGC will make it public. The nominees will be informed for the presentation.

Presentation, Evaluation and Final Selection of the Awardees

- UGC board will form a panel of judges for selecting the top 3 academic leaders from among the 10 nominations.

- The judges shall attend the awarding ceremony of the conference and shall evaluate a timed presentation by the nominees. They should mark all the presenters out of 100 marks. The marking shall be as objective as possible and shall cover multiple aspects of academic leadership. The judges may jointly devise and agree a marking criteria before judging the presenters.

- Three judges will provide their marks independently of each other and the marks will be averaged to obtain the decisive marks.

- The presentation shall be made in front of the conference attendees at the plenary session. The time for presentation will be a maximum of 15 minutes. Non-abidance to the time limit may be a cause of mark deduction.

Awarding

- Based on the decisive marks, the winners of the UGC Academic Leader Award will be announced during the conference and awarded there.

- The winners will be awarded with a certificate and a cash prize to the individual. A certificate of recognition will be provided to the representing HEI/campus too.

- The amount of cash prize will be decided by the UGC by taking the reference of this SOPG.

- The nominated leaders apart from the winners will also be awarded with a certificate of recognition.