



National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	NOUN Learning Infrastructure and Usage Policy
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/TEL/016
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Learning Content Management System (DLCMS)
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1.0 Introduction

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) has always been at the forefront of innovative educational endeavours in Nigeria. Established with the vision to provide accessible, flexible, and quality education to a diverse and widespread student population, NOUN has consistently sought to leverage technology to amplify its reach and impact.

As the digital landscape has evolved, so too have the opportunities and challenges associated with e-learning. The rapid proliferation of digital devices, the increasing accessibility of the internet, and the changing dynamics of the 21st-century learner have necessitated a fresh approach to how educational content is delivered and consumed. Recognizing this, NOUN embarked on a journey to build a robust and state-of-the-art learning infrastructure, aiming to provide a seamless, interactive, and enriched online learning experience to its students.

The NOUN Learning Infrastructure and Usage Policy is a testament to the university's commitment to harness the potential of digital learning while ensuring the **sustainability**, **security**, and **ethical use** of its e-learning platforms. This policy provides a blueprint for the management and utilization of NOUN's e-learning infrastructure, ensuring that it remains a beacon of excellence in online education, not just in Nigeria but across the African continent.

2.0 Purpose

This policy sets the framework for establishing, maintaining, and utilizing NOUN's learning infrastructure, ensuring it robustly supports teaching, learning, and research endeavours.

3.0 Scope

It encompasses all aspects of NOUN's learning infrastructure, from physical and digital assets to network systems and learning platforms. It addresses their optimal use, security, and ethical considerations, guiding stakeholders in leveraging these resources effectively and responsibly.

4.0 Definitions

Learning Infrastructure: Physical and digital assets, resources, and technologies used to facilitate teaching, learning, and research activities.

5.0 Principles

5.1 Quality and Standards

- i. Excellence in Infrastructure: NOUN is committed to ensuring that its learning infrastructure is of the highest quality, providing reliable, seamless, and state-of-the-art resources for its academic community.
- ii. Adherence to Benchmarks: Beyond internal standards, the infrastructure will align with recognized national and international benchmarks, ensuring that NOUN remains at the forefront of global educational technology standards.

5.2 Accessibility and Inclusivity

- i. Universal Access: Recognizing the diverse needs of its community, NOUN will provide industry standard infrastructure that is accessible to all, ensuring that every student and faculty member can harness its full potential.
- ii. Breaking Barriers: Efforts will be made to eliminate any technological or logistical barriers, ensuring that infrastructure usage is smooth and inclusive, irrespective of physical abilities or geographic locations.

5.3 Sustainability

- i. Future-Ready Decisions: Infrastructure development and enhancement decisions at NOUN will be made with a long-term perspective, ensuring that they remain relevant and effective for years to come.
- ii. Eco-Friendly Initiatives: In line with global sustainability goals, infrastructure decisions will incorporate environmental considerations, minimizing the ecological footprint and promoting green initiatives.

5.4 Security and Privacy

- i. **Robust Protection:** Recognizing the sensitivity of academic data and the privacy concerns of its users, NOUN will implement stringent security protocols to protect against breaches and unauthorized access.
- ii. **User Trust:** Beyond just security measures, NOUN is committed to maintaining the trust of its users. Clear guidelines and measures will be in place to ensure the privacy of personal and academic data, ensuring users can engage with the infrastructure with confidence.

6.0 Policy Statements

- 6.1 NOUN shall be committed to establishing robust, and state-of-the-art infrastructure in delivering an unparalleled educational experience.
- 6.2 NOUN shall ensure that students, faculty, and staff engage with the infrastructure in such a manner that maximises its potential while upholding the institution's standards of integrity and professionalism.
- 6.3 NOUN will ensure adequate safeguard of the integrity, accessibility, and confidentiality of NOUN digital assets and to provide users with a secure environment in which they can learn, teach, and engage.
- 6.4 NOUN shall provide guide for acceptable use policy to ensure the safe, ethical, and effective use of NOUN's digital infrastructure, including but not limited to its learning platforms, network services, and digital devices.

7.0 Policy Implementation

7.1 Establishment and Maintenance

7.1.1 Planning

- i. **Needs Assessment:** Before embarking on any infrastructure-related initiative, NOUN will systematically conduct needs assessments. These evaluations will identify the evolving requirements of students, faculty, and administrative staff, ensuring that infrastructure decisions are rooted in actual needs.

- ii. Strategic Blueprint: Post assessment, a comprehensive plan will be formulated, detailing the infrastructure roadmap, timelines, and expected outcomes, ensuring alignment with NOUN's overarching strategic objectives.

7.1.2 Investment

- i. Budgetary Commitment: Recognizing the value of top-tier infrastructure, NOUN will earmark for the procurement of such technology dedicated to the sustenance, and enhancement of learning infrastructure.
- ii. Value for Money: While financial commitment is essential, NOUN will also ensure that every investment yields maximum value, selecting infrastructure components that offer durability, functionality, and scalability.

7.1.3 Quality Assurance

- i. Regular Audits: Infrastructure, both digital and physical, will be subjected to regular quality checks and performance audits. This ensures that all components, from servers to software, operate at peak efficiency and meet the stipulated standards (physical and automated checks).
- ii. Feedback Integration: Beyond technical checks, feedback from end-users – students, faculty, and administrators – will be actively sought and integrated, ensuring that the infrastructure serves its primary purpose effectively.

7.1.4 Upgradation

- i. Tech Watch: In the fast-paced world of technology, what is in vogue today might become obsolete tomorrow. NOUN will maintain a dedicated team to monitor global advancements in learning technologies.
- ii. Adaptive Integration: Upon identifying promising technologies, NOUN will swiftly integrate them into its infrastructure framework, ensuring that the institution remains at the cutting edge of digital education.

7.2 Digital Learning Infrastructure

7.2.1 Learning Management System (LMS)

NOUN shall maintain and regularly update an LMS platform, serving as a central hub for course delivery, tracking, and management, ensuring a cohesive learning experience for all stakeholders.

7.2.2 Video Conferencing

NOUN is committed to providing state-of-the-art video conferencing infrastructure, ensuring high-resolution, seamless, and uninterrupted communication capabilities for staff, faculty and students ensuring equitable access irrespective of location or physical ability.

7.2.3 Internet Connectivity and Wide Area Network (WAN)

NOUN shall ensure a robust internet connectivity at both the headquarters and study centres to facilitate efficient academic and administrative operations. A high-bandwidth Wide Area Network shall be established to enhance operational efficiency and provide scalability for growth.

7.2.4 Virtual Private Network (VPN)

For ensuring the security and privacy of data transfers between various locations and remote access, NOUN shall implement a VPN. This will secure communication channels and allow staff, faculty, and students to access resources securely from any location.

7.2.5 Data Centre

NOUN shall implement and maintain a state-of-the-art data centre to support the delivery, storage, and management of its vast digital learning ecosystem, ensuring high availability and efficient access for all stakeholders.

7.2.6 Cloud Storage and Backup Solutions

NOUN shall adopt cloud storage solutions for secure and scalable storage of academic and administrative data. In tandem, backup solutions shall be employed to safeguard against data loss and ensure continuity.

7.2.7 Mobile App for Students

To support the growing digital needs of students, NOUN shall develop and maintain a dedicated mobile app, facilitating real-time communication, course access, and institutional updates.

7.2.8 Tablet with Internet for Every Student

In pursuit of digital equality, NOUN shall endeavor to provide every student with an internet-enabled tablet, ensuring consistent access to learning resources and platforms.

7.2.9 Google Workspace for Student Emails

To streamline communication and provide integrated tools, NOUN shall adopt Google Workspace for student emails, separating them from staff emails and ensuring efficient communication channels.

7.2.10 Laptops for Staff and Faculty Members

To boost productivity and facilitate modern pedagogy, NOUN shall equip all staff and faculty members with individual laptops, ensuring consistent software, security, and user experience.

7.2.11 Thin Clients and Base Servers for e-Exams

NOUN shall upgrade study centre IT infrastructure by implementing thin clients and base servers, and other computing resources ensuring a standardized and efficient e-exam experience for students.

7.2.12 Learning Analytics and Data Visualization

NOUN shall invest in learning analytics and data visualization tools to derive insights from student interactions, enhancing the overall educational experience and facilitating data-driven decision-making.

7.2.13 e-Learning Authoring Tools Software and Training

NOUN shall adopt e-learning authoring tools to assist educators in creating high-quality, interactive digital contents. Training programmes shall be designed and implemented to equip staff with the skills to utilize these tools effectively.

7.2.14 Multi-Purpose Multimedia Conferencing Facility

Study centres shall be equipped with multimedia conferencing facilities to support virtual interactions, including meetings, seminars, and project defences, enhancing flexibility and collaboration.

7.3 Usage

7.3.1 Training and Proficiency

NOUN is committed to providing comprehensive training sessions to users, ensuring they harness the full potential of the infrastructure for optimal learning, teaching, and administrative outcomes.

7.3.2 Etiquette and Ethical Engagement

Users are expected to engage with all infrastructure components, particularly digital platforms, in a manner that reflects respect, professionalism, and adherence to NOUN's ethical standards. Specific guidelines will be provided to ensure clarity.

7.3.3 Reservation and Resource Management

- i. NOUN will implement robust systems for the reservation and allocation of infrastructure resources, ensuring equitable access and safe efficient utilization.
- ii. For external stakeholders, NOUN will implement robust mechanism ensuring safe, and judicious use of the resources in line with NOUN standards.

7.3.4 Feedback and Continuous Improvement

Recognizing the value of user insights, NOUN will establish dedicated channels for users to report challenges and offer feedback. This feedback will be instrumental in driving infrastructure enhancements and ensuring user satisfaction.

7.4 Security and Data Protection

7.4.1 Access Control and Authentication

NOUN will implement and enforce a robust access control mechanism, utilizing secure multifactor authentication methods such as passwords and biometric systems, to ensure that only authorized individuals can access specific pieces of infrastructure.

7.4.2 Proactive Monitoring and Prevention

NOUN will actively monitor infrastructure usage patterns (physically and automatically) to swiftly detect any irregularities or potential misuse such that immediate actions will be taken to rectify any issues and deter future incidents.

7.4.3 Backup, Recovery, and Resilience

NOUN is committed to the longevity and safety of its digital assets. As such, regular backups will be conducted to preserve data. Comprehensive recovery plans will also be established, ensuring rapid restoration of services in the event of any disruptions or emergencies.

7.4.4 Transparency and User Awareness

While security is paramount, NOUN also values the trust of its users. Any monitoring or data collection practices related to infrastructure usage will be transparently communicated to users, ensuring they are aware and informed.

7.5 NOUN Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) Guidelines

7.5.1 General Use

Users shall respect the integrity of the technological infrastructure and shall not intentionally introduce malware, seek unauthorized access, or disrupt the intended use of digital resources.

7.5.2 Ethical Use

NOUN will ensure that all digital resources are used for academic and administrative purposes only. Thus, mechanism to enforce this will be implemented.

7.5.3 Privacy and Data Integrity

- NOUN will ensure that users are prevented from attempting to access, modify, or distribute personal data or information about others without explicit permission.
- NOUN will enforce regulations to prevent unauthorized access to data, files, or the user account of other users.

7.5.4 Intellectual Property

- NOUN will enforce industry regulations guiding the use of intellectual property of a third party.

7.5.5 Inappropriate Content

- NOUN will ensure that users do not use the university's network to access, distribute, or store content that could be considered discriminatory, unethical, offensive, threatening.

7.5.6 Security

- Users will be responsible for the security of their own digital devices, credentials, accounts, and passwords.
- Directly or indirectly affected staff members in any security breaches will report to the appropriate authorities immediately.

7.5.7 Resource Limits

- NOUN will implement mechanism to enforce equitable usage of shared computer.

7.5.8 Consequences of Policy Violation

- NOUN will enforce this policy by means such as suspension of availability of computing resources or privileges, legal proceedings or any other disciplinary action deem fit by NOUN Management.

7.5.9 Review and Updates

- This AUP will be reviewed periodically to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Users are expected to stay informed of any changes.

8.0 Sanctions on Violating this Policy

Any staff that violates this policy may receive written warning, denial of three months' salary, suspension from duty that may last one year, being released from holding administrative position as may be decided by the University Management.

9.0 Policy Alignment

This policy aligns with the following documents:

- 9.1 NOUN Blueprint
- 9.2 Getting to know your university.
- 9.3 NOUN Strategic Plans

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