



National Open University of Nigeria

Policy Title	NOUN Policy on Establishment of Study Centres
Policy No:	NQSA/POL/IGM/014
Owner:	National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN)
Approved By:	The University Senate
Manager/Driver:	Directorate of Learners Support Service
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1.0 Introduction

The National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) is a force to reckon with in Open and Distance Learning in Africa. The University's quest for the provision of functional, accessible, flexible, cost-effective and equitable education has made the evenly establishment and distribution of Study Centres across the length and breadth of the country very paramount.

A Study Centre is a Centre established and maintained by a University for the purpose of rendering academic support to learners. In Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions, support services are provided for the learners at Study Centres. Each Study Centre is headed by a Study Centre Director who is supported by administrative and technical staff, Counsellors and tutorial facilitators. They offer services such as screening of newly admitted students, guiding students on registration of courses & payment of students' fees, distribution of course materials, organizing seminars, facilitation, counselling, matriculation and orientation, teaching practice, practicum, laboratory practicals. Student Industrial Work Experience Scheme (SIWES), Library services, the conduct of examinations and preparation of students for graduation. The Centres also provide advocacy and community services.

Study Centre importance cannot be overemphasized, as it is the direct interface between the student and the University management. NOUN prioritizes her students thus providing a round the clock support for students through the university staff at the study centres. So it is on this premise, that the management has as an oversight of all the activities in the study centre ensuring they function in line with the University's vision and mission as stated below;

Vision

To be regarded as the foremost University providing highly accessible and enhanced quality education anchored by social justice, equity, and national cohesion through a comprehensive reach that transcends all barriers.

Mission

To provide functional, cost-effective, flexible learning which adds life-long value to quality education for all who see knowledge.

2.0 Purpose

NOUN takes its rightful place as the number one driver of equitable, quality and decentralised system of education in Africa. This over the years has been backed by the University's Act. No.6 of 1983 and reaffirmed in Act No. 19, 2018 as the University strive to bolster its dominance in the open and distance learning. This policy is set out to guide management regarding establishment and operation of the study centres, for smooth operational and academic functionalities.

3.0 Scope

The scope of the University as regards to Study Centres covers the thirty-six (36) states of the Federation, with some communities having community study centres answerable to the centres at the state capital. Special study centres for para military over the years has been a success. This has given our military and para military men and women the opportunity to further their education. Furthermore, the regional study centres are located in one of the capital cities of a state in a region.

The scope of this policy covers the University Management, Faculties, Study Centres, Directorate of Learners Support Service, Directorate of Exams and Assessment, SIWES, Academic Registry, Bursary and every other stakeholder responsible for academic and operational function.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 Flexibility:

Indicates enrolment options and rolling admissions that allow learners to start their studies at least twice a year. Learners can progress at their own pace, providing them with the freedom to accelerate or slow down their learning journey based on their capabilities and commitments.

4.2 Open and Distance Learning:

Refers to a flexible and inclusive approach to learning that allows individuals to access education without traditional entry requirements and study remotely from any location.

4.3 Study Centre:

A centre established and recognised by a university for providing advisory, counselling and other services to its student.

4.4 Accessibility:

Refers to creating inclusive learning environments that cater for individuals with diverse learning needs. It involves providing physically accessible facilities, offering appropriate accommodations and assistive technologies, and ensuring that digital resources are compatible with assistive tools. Moreover, diverse learning options are offered to accommodate different circumstances and preferences.

4.5 Facilitation

The action of providing guidance to students on their learning by a facilitator using synchronous and asynchronous learning techniques.

4.6 Learner support

This is the academic, social, psychological, and technical assistance given to students to make their learning achievable within a desired period and to meet specific goal.

5.0 Principles

The following principles are the light which guides this policy;

- 5.1 Study centres are recognised as part of the University body.
- 5.2 The policy is in line with the University's vision and mission, emphasis on accessible and flexible education to all learners.
- 5.3 The policy shall promote efficiency and effectiveness of the University operations.

6.0 Policy Statements

- 6.1 The University Senate shall ascertain the approval and sanctioning of the Nigerian University Commission (NUC) before the establishment of a new Study centre.
- 6.2 A proposed study centre shall meet certain key performance indices after evaluation before it can be considered by the university senate for approval. These key performance indices are; it shall
 - 6.2.1 ascertain its potential ability to provide quality academic and other related services and assistance such as field services, laboratory for experimental work,
 - 6.2.2 provide quality Information and Communication Technology facilities,

- 6.2.3 provide quality infrastructure for the operations of the Study Centre and interaction for teaching/ learning in a cost-effective and sustainable way.
- 6.3 In line with the objectives, vision and mission of the National Open University, Study centres will be set up in all capital of the thirty-six states of the Federation.
- 6.4 Assessment of the prospective study centre will include market survey, to determine the size of the pool of prospective student, and the viability of the centre.
- 6.5 The number of both academic and operational staff to be deployed to each study centre will be determined by the number of students, and programmes carried out in this centre.
- 6.6 For establishment of centres, the University shall be guided by the following:
- 6.6.1 **State Study Centre**
As a model for other Study Centres, they shall possess all the required facilities needed for a standard University study centre to operate.
- 6.6.2 **Community Study Centre**
These centres shall mimic the state centres, particularly in terms of infrastructure. Community wanting a study centre must provide necessary facilities for the commencement. the Certificate of Occupancy or deed of conveyance or transfer of ownership must be handed over to the University within the first three months of the commissioning of the Community Study Centre. Community study centres will not be located less than 30 kilometres away from nearest NOUN study centre.
- 6.6.3 **Regional(Zonal) Study Centre**
Zonal Study Centres shall be created from one of the Study Centres in the State capital in each of the six geo-political zones. It is not open to any zone to apply or request for. Facilities, equipment and infrastructure at the Zonal Study Centre shall be slightly enhanced above what is available at the centre in the State capital.
- 6.6.4 **Study Centres for the Military and Para-Military**
In providing Study Centres for the military and para-military formations, the organisations are expected to; provide appropriate building with prescribed number of rooms/offices, furnish the building; and equip the building in terms of technological requirements e.g. computers etc. and if possible, internet connectivity.
- 6.7 Individuals shall not have the right to run or establish NOUN study centre. On no account shall a NOUN Study Centre be named after any individual except by the resolution of the Governing Council of the University.
- 6.8 The University shall hold the right to rationalize any Study Centre found not, among other reasons, to be viable/cost effective, or no longer serving the purpose for which it was established, ab initio.

- 6.9 Study Centres, especially Community Study Centres, though meant to serve the Community, shall not be seen as promoting any religion, ethnicity or political interest.
- 6.10 Students of NOUN shall not belong to any Union nor form any Association with political intentions. Study Centres shall therefore not recognize nor deal with any group of students by any union names or affiliations, any associations pushing political jingoism or any such groups for purposes of intimidating, harassing or threatening the University to submission for one demand or the other.
- 6.11 As provided in the Amended NOUN Act 2018, the host Communities of Community Study Centres shall be required to provide 80% of both the infrastructural and instructional material needs, while the University shall provide manpower and the remaining 20% of both needs.
- 6.12 In the case of Special Study Centre, the organisation requesting for the Study Centre shall provide 100 percent facilities in terms of buildings, roads and other infrastructure.
- 6.13 The University shall provide appropriate reimbursable imprest for the smooth running of the Centre.
- 6.14 The University shall provide funds for the maintenance of public utilities and minor repairs of buildings at the Centres.

7.0 Policy Implementation

- 7.1 Application for the establishment of Study Centre and its processes shall commence from the University Management to Senate and thence to the Governing Council for approval following which the University shall apply to the National Universities Commission for final approval.
- 7.2 All study centres will interact directly with the Directorate of Learners Support Service (DLSS) who will relate all issues from study centres to management.
- 7.3 Academic records of the Centres will be overseen by the various faculties and kept by the Academic Registry.
- 7.4 Student payment systems shall be handled by centres accountants who in turn reports to the Bursary office of the University.
- 7.5 The Key Performance Indices evaluation required for establishment of new study centre shall be carried out by the Directorate of Quality Assurance(DQA) who will submit the report to the University Management.

- 7.6 The Study Centres shall have proportionately distributed staff based on the population of students and in line with the NUC approved guidelines on Tutor: Learner ratio for facilitation.
- 7.7 A critical mass of adequately qualified academics should be readily available for engagement as from other universities within a reasonable distance from the study centre.
- 7.8 An ideal Study Centre shall have a minimum of twenty-five (25) staff members in the following categories:
- i. One Study Centre Director;
 - ii. Student Academic Advisers/Counsellors (number determined by student numbers and programmes).
 - iii. Administrative Officers (one per Faculty)
 - iv. One Librarian;
 - v. One Account Officer;
 - vi. One Secretary;
 - vii. One Knowledge Management Technologist;
 - viii. One Stores Officer;
 - ix. One Computer Operator/Technical Officer;
 - x. One Plant Operator;
 - xi. Ten Clerical Officers;
 - xii. Six Cleaners;
 - xiii. Four Gardeners;
 - xiv. Six Security Guards;
 - xv. One Laboratory attendance in each of the Science laboratory; and
 - xvi. One Artisan (Driving).

8.0 Sanctions of Violating this Policy

- 8.1 A staff who violates any part of this policy may receive a warning letter in the first instance if the violation do not seriously affect the university, denial of three months' salary, suspension from duty that may last one year, being release from holding administrative position as may be decided by the University Management and Governing Council.

9.0 Policy Alignment

- 9.1 Report on the Council Committee on the Establishment of Study Centres
- 9.2 NOUN Learning and Infrastructure Policy
- 9.3 Policy on Learners with Special Needs
- 9.4 Policy for Managing Facilitations, Authentic Assessment, and Other Academic Services including payments.
- 9.5 Open Distance and eLearning Policy

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