Working Paper # 1
Policy – Establishing a Student-Centric Digital Governance System – Sponsored by S3C

Purpose

1. To seek in-principle approval for establishing S3C as the university's centralised student service platform, powered by S3C Digital Governance System (SDGS) and governed by Service Metrics.

Background

2. The Student Support Services Centre (S3C) has been established as a one-window student facilitation and coordination platform under Pro-Rector (Academics), with the objective to reduce fragmentation in student-facing services and improve the overall student experience through a coordinated physical / digital support ecosystem.

3. During the initial groundwork for S3C, extensive interactions were carried out with students, concerned Directorates, Schools, and existing service channels, to identify recurring areas where students face delays, confusion, repeated office visits, lack of visibility, and absence of defined escalation in routine service processing. On the basis of this survey, consultation, case review, and departmental input, a comprehensive service matrix was prepared to document student pain points, map them to the concerned owning offices, identify the responsible Point of Contact (POC), and define service timelines, and escalation routes to address the issues.

4. At present, students often navigate multiple offices without a clearly visible service route, defined turnaround time (TAT), or structured escalation mechanism. In the absence of an approved service framework, institutional coordination remains person-dependent and cannot be translated into a transparent digital workflow. Therefore, approval of the present framework is essential not only for standardisation of students support processes, but also for the development of the S3C Digital Platform by ICT Directorate. The Digital Platform is being built around this same service architecture so that requests are digitally lodged, routed to concerned office, tracked against SLA, escalated where required, and monitored through Dashboards at Rector, Pro Rectors / CF&BD, S3C, Directorates, and institutional levels.

Institutional Relevance

5. The proposed framework is important for the University for following reasons:

a. Formalizes the basis on which S3C has been conceived as a student-first, one-window support mechanism.

b. Introduces measurable service metrics and accountability into the student-service environment.

c. Provides the institutional backbone required for digital transformation of student support processes.

d. Creates a structured basis for future review, quality assurance, and service improvement.

e. Without this framework, the S3C Digital Platform cannot be operationalised, and service delivery will remain ad-hoc.

Alignment with International Best Practices

6. The proposed S3C framework aligns with global standards of student support services as promoted by **NASPA - National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.** NASPA is the leading association for student support professionals worldwide, with over 15,000 members and adoption of NASPA competencies and standards. Engagement with NASPA will enable NUST with:

a. **Global Benchmarking:** Access to validated framework for one-window student support, service metrics, and escalation best practices.

b. **Professional Development:** Training and certification for S3C staff and POCs to build capacity in student-centred service delivery.

c. **Knowledge Sharing:** Participation in global research, toolkits, and case studies on digital student support platforms and service quality improvement.

d. **Institutional Credibility:** Demonstrates NUST's commitment to international standards in student experience.

Digital Governance and Service Assurance

7. This framework is not intended to curtail the functional authority of the concerned Directorates. Functional processing and decision-making will continue to remain with the respective offices. S3C will acknowledge, route, monitor, facilitate, and escalate cases through the digital platform and one-window mechanism.

8. The proposed working paper does not require creation of any new recurring administrative burden beyond what is already being undertaken under the S3C initiative. Rather, approval of the framework will rationalise and organise existing processes. Its main administrative value lies in standardisation, visibility, and digital

readiness. The digital platform being developed by ICT Dte will use this approved service metrics as the operational baseline.

9. The governance and service assurance details are as follows:

a. **Principle of Unified Intake and Clear Ownership:** S3C shall serve as the University's single, unified intake, triage, tracking, coordination, and service-assurance platform for student services. S3C does not supersede the statutory, policy, or academic authority of Schools, Directorates, and other competent offices. The operationalisation, monitoring, and assurance of this principle shall be enabled exclusively through the S3C Digital Governance System (SDGS). SDGS shall serve as a single digital platform for intake, tracking, SLA management and reporting, while integrating with existing university system. For every service mapped, a designated **Service Owner** shall be accountable for service definition, eligibility criteria, decision-making, resolution quality, SLA adherence, and corrective action.

b. **Governance Architecture:** To ensure oversight without duplication of decision-making, a three-tier governance structure is instituted:

i **Tier 1: Operational Review**

- **Frequency:** Weekly
- **Members:** S3C Team, designated POCs / Escalation Desks (if needed), ICT Application Representative
- **Mandate:** Review pending cases, routing accuracy, duplicate handling, and immediate bottlenecks.

ii **Tier 2: Service Performance**

- **Frequency:** Monthly
- **Members:** Director S3C, Service Owners, ICT Application Representative
- **Mandate:** Review KPI scorecard, SLA compliance, systemic failures, and approve corrective/preventive actions.
- **Reporting:** Reports to be shared with Senior Management

iii **Tier 3: Strategic Oversight**

- **Frequency:** Quarterly / Bi-Annual
- **Members:** Pro-Rector Academics (Chair), Director S3C, CTO, Senior Service Owners

- **Mandate:** Evaluate framework effectiveness, approve policy refinements, and address inter-departmental dependencies.
- **Reporting:** Reports to be shared with Senior Management

c. **Validation and Request Management:** To ensure quality and efficiency, all student requests, other than already identified in pain-points, shall undergo standardized controls at S3C Desk:

i **Guidance:** Service requirements, eligibility, documents, and define timelines.

ii **Validation:** Verification of identity, eligibility, completeness, jurisdiction, and duplication.

iii **Filtering and Consolidation:** Duplicate or related requests to be merged; non-actionable requests to be returned with reason.

iv **SLA Commencement:** The SLA clock shall commence only upon receipt of complete information. Time spent on "hold" for student or external input shall be recorded separately.

v **Escalation Protocol:** Escalation shall be triggered only on defined parameters: i.e., SLA breach. Automated reminders shall precede escalation.

d. **Performance Monitoring and KPIs:** Performance shall be measured through Core KPIs as follows:

i Access & Adoption, First Response Time, SLA Compliance, End-to-End Resolution Time, First-Contact Resolution, Routing Accuracy, Reopen Rate, Student Satisfaction, Duplicate Rate, and Systemic Improvement Rate.

ii All KPIs and reporting shall auto-generated for SDGS.

e. **Integration with Existing Channels:** Current helpdesks and service channels shall be rationalized under four categories:

i **Integrated Intake:** Channel remains active and feeds into the common S3C ticket system.

ii **Escalation Desk:** Internal channel used by the Service Owner for case resolution.

iii **Statutory/Specialized Channel:** Retained separately due to legal or confidentiality requirements. S3C to receive only status metadata.

iv **Phased Implementation:** The rollout of SDGS shall be phased to ensure adoption and stability.

S3C Digital Governance System

10. SDGS shall comprise of Student Service Portal, Mobile App, unified ticketing & workflow engine, service owner, dashboard, analytical reporting / feedback, and integration layer connecting Qalam, LMS, TMS, ERP, and Finance applications through single sing-on. The proposed framework has the following salient features:

a. **Student-Centric One-Window Model:** Provides a single physical and digital entry point for student services while preserving the functional authority of the concerned Directorates and Institutions.

b. **Digital Governance:** Enables end-to-end digital submission, automated routing, SLA monitoring, escalation, notifications, confidentiality and management dashboards for improved visibility and accountability.

c. **Performance-Driven / Data Governance:** Introduces measurable KPIs, periodic governance reviews, and performance dashboards to support continuous service improvement and informed decision-making.

d. **Intelligent Request Management:** Incorporates request validation, duplicate detection, and manual review of selected categories to minimise non-actionable or premature requests before they enter the formal workflow.

e. **AI-Enabled Student Support:** Integrates an AI-powered chatbot to provide 24/7 policy guidance, frequently asked questions, and self-service support, reducing routine enquiries and improving student experience.

f. **Inclusive and Scalable Framework:** Supports all categories of students, including international students and students with disabilities, and is designed to evolve as services, policies, and institutional requirements change.

g. **Global Benchmarking:** Aligns with international student support practices and provides a foundation for future benchmarking, staff development, and continuous improvement through engagement with NASPA and other recognised professional bodies.

Recommendations

11. ACM is requested to accord in-principle approval for S3C Digital Governance System (SDGS) as the centralised platform for the delivery of student services, operating under the digital service metrics framework to ensure timelines, transparency, and accountability.

Annex A

Attachments / Enclosures

S3C Student Pain-Points (actual student issues identified across university) & SLA Matrix (clear timeline & visibility)