Grand Asian University, Sialkot

Paperless Office Policy

(2026)

ALIGNED WITH UNITED NATIONS
Sustainable Development Goals 2030

SDG 11
SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

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1. PREAMBLE

Grand Asian University Sialkot (GAUS), in pursuance of its commitment to sustainable institutional operations and administrative efficiency, hereby establishes this Paperless Office Policy. The University recognizes that excessive reliance on paper-based processes contributes to environmental degradation, administrative delays, and operational inefficiency. In alignment with the Higher Education Commission's (HEC) digitization agenda under the Higher Education Development Project (HEDP) and Pakistan's Digital Nation Pakistan Act 2024, GAUS commits to the systematic transition of its administrative and academic functions to digital platforms.

2. OBJECTIVES

This Policy aims to:

- Minimize paper consumption across all departments, offices, and administrative units of the University.
- Promote the use of digital tools for communication, documentation, record-keeping, and workflow management.
- Support GAUS's sustainability commitments and contribution to national environmental goals.
- Improve administrative efficiency, transparency, and traceability through digital systems.
- Align GAUS operations with HEC's paperless and digitization directives.

3. SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to all:

- Administrative offices, departments, and units of GAUS.
- Academic departments, faculties, and schools.
- Employees, including faculty, administrative staff, and contractual personnel.
- Students, in matters of academic documentation, forms, and correspondence with the University.

It covers all internal communications, official correspondence, record-keeping, approvals, reporting, and academic documentation processes, to the extent technically and operationally feasible.

4. POLICY PROVISIONS

4.1 Internal Communication

- All internal communications, including circulars, notices, memos, and routine correspondence, shall be issued and distributed electronically via the University's official email system or designated digital communication channels.
- Printed copies of internal communications shall not be produced unless specifically required for official records or as directed by competent authority.
- Departmental notices and announcements shall be posted on the GAUS official website, Learning Management System (LMS), or official notice boards in digital display format where available.

4.2 Administrative Forms and Processes

- All administrative forms — including leave applications, reimbursement requests, procurement requisitions, and HR-related documentation — shall be processed through the University Management System (UMS) or approved digital forms.
- Paper-based submission of such forms shall be progressively phased out as digital alternatives are deployed and made accessible to all relevant staff.
- Approvals, endorsements, and sign-offs shall be carried out through the UMS or via authenticated e-correspondence where digital signature infrastructure is not yet in place.

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4.3 Academic Documentation

- Student admission forms, enrolment records, academic transcripts, and result notifications shall be maintained and issued digitally through the UMS.
- Examination-related documentation, including date sheets, roll number slips, and result cards, shall be made available to students through the UMS student portal.
- Thesis submissions, project reports, and final year reports shall be submitted electronically to the concerned department and maintained in a digital repository.
- Physical copies of academic documents shall be issued only upon the specific request of students or where required by external regulatory bodies.

4.4 Official Records and Filing

- All official documents shall be maintained in a structured digital filing system with appropriate access controls, version management, and backup protocols.
- Existing paper-based records shall be progressively digitized in order of priority, with critical institutional records addressed first.
- Digitized records shall be stored in secure, backed-up digital repositories, with originals retained as prescribed by applicable law and HEC requirements.
- No duplicate printing of already-digitally-available documents shall be undertaken without approval from the Head of the concerned Office.

4.5 Meetings and Committees

- Agendas, meeting papers, minutes, and resolutions for all committees — including the Board of Faculty (BOF), Academic Council, and departmental meetings — shall be circulated and distributed electronically.
- Meeting presentations shall be conducted using digital display equipment; printed handouts shall not be produced unless specifically requested by the presiding officer.
- Minutes and action items shall be recorded and shared digitally within five (5) working days of the meeting.

4.6 Finance and Procurement

- Purchase requests, vendor quotations, comparative statements, and procurement approvals shall be processed digitally to the extent permitted by applicable financial rules.
- Invoices, payment vouchers, and audit-related documents shall be maintained in digital form while physical originals are retained only as required by law or the University's financial regulations.

4.7 Responsible Paper Use

Where paper use is unavoidable, the following principles shall apply:

- Double-sided (duplex) printing shall be the default setting on all institutional printers.
- Draft documents shall not be printed unless it is operationally necessary.
- Recycled or sustainably sourced paper shall be preferred for all printing needs.
- Each department shall designate a focal person responsible for monitoring and reducing paper consumption within its unit.

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4.8 Exemptions

The following categories are exempt from the paperless requirement and may continue to use paper-based formats:

- Legal instruments, notarial documents, and contracts requiring original physical signatures under applicable law.
- Documents required in physical form by external regulators, accreditation bodies, or government agencies (e.g., HEC, PEC, PMDC).
- Degree certificates, transcripts, and academic awards issued for official use by the student.
- Any document specifically designated as an exception by the Vice Chancellor upon written justification.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsible Party	Responsibilities
Vice Chancellor	Overall approval and enforcement authority for this Policy; championing the digital transformation agenda at the institutional level.
Pro Vice Chancellor	Oversight of policy implementation across academic and administrative functions; reviewing progress reports.
Registrar's Office	Lead coordination of policy implementation; maintaining a centralised digital records management framework; tracking departmental compliance; issuing guidance on exemptions.
Heads of Departments / Directors	Ensuring implementation within their respective units; designating a departmental focal person; reporting paper reduction progress to the Registrar's Office.
IT Department / UMS Administrator	Maintaining and upgrading the UMS and associated digital infrastructure; providing technical support and training; ensuring system security and data backup.
All Employees	Adopting paperless practices in day-to-day work; refraining from unnecessary printing; reporting technical impediments to digital workflows to their HoD or the IT Department.
Students	Using the student portal for all administrative interactions; submitting academic work in prescribed digital formats.

6. MONITORING AND COMPLIANCE

- The Registrar's Office shall collect bi-annual reports from all departments on paper consumption and digital workflow adoption.
- An annual compliance review shall be conducted by the Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) or a designated committee, the findings of which shall be presented to the Vice Chancellor.
- Departments demonstrating significant reduction in paper use shall be recognized in the University's annual sustainability report.
- Non-compliance without justification shall be flagged to the respective Head of Department and may be referenced in performance evaluations.

7. DATA SECURITY AND RECORD INTEGRITY

- All digital records shall be stored in password-protected, access-controlled systems with regular automated backups.
- The IT Department shall ensure that digital records are protected against unauthorized access, loss, or tampering.

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- Data retention periods for digital records shall conform to HEC requirements, the University's record management policy, and applicable statutory obligations.
- Digital records shall carry the same legal standing as their paper equivalents for all internal institutional purposes.

8. POLICY REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

This Policy shall be reviewed every two (2) years or earlier if required by changes in technology, regulatory requirements, or institutional need. Amendments shall be processed through the Academic Council and notified by the Registrar's Office upon approval by the Vice Chancellor.

9. GOVERNING AUTHORITY AND EFFECTIVE DATE

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Vice Chancellor, Grand Asian University Sialkot, and shall come into effect from the date of its official notification by the Registrar's Office.

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