

FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF WEBSITE **(Tentative)**

ABOUT KSHEC

The Kerala State Higher Education Council is an advisory body to the Govt. of Kerala, in higher education. It also acts as a coordinating body of the Universities in Kerala. It came into existence in 2007 by Act 22 of 2007 of the Kerala State Legislative Assembly to bring together and expand the rich array of teaching, research and human resources development. KSHEC is positioned at the crossroads of innovation and scholarship. KSHEC brings together scholars and stakeholders in State's education to materialize its vision to revitalize Kerala Higher Education and foster academic inquiry and research.

The Council shall have the following general responsibilities and functions, namely:-

- (a) to render advice to the Government, Universities and other institutions of higher education in the State;
- (b) to coordinate the roles of the Government, Universities and apex regulatory agencies in higher education within the State;
- (c) to evolve new concepts and programmes in higher education;
- (d) to provide common facilities in higher education without impinging upon the autonomy of other institutions of higher education

To discharge its responsibilities, KSHEC conducts brainstorming sessions, discussions, meetings, workshops, training programmes, funded projects; Make publications, media announcements; Administer schemes of social responsibilities like the Kerala State Higher Education Scholarship Scheme etc.

Current Website

Current website at <http://kshec.kerala.gov.in> is about 9 years old and does not serve well enough in KSHEC's changed roles after nearly a decade.

- The design is outdated and the navigation is clunky;
- The structure is not intuitive, without sub-menus and important pages scattered and buried under unimportant pages;
- Many documents are in the form of *pdf* documents which initiate downloads by itself and difficult to access with modern day browsing habits;
- The site does not make it immediately clear the position KSHEC enjoys in Kerala Higher Education and it is more or less similar to a disorganized showcase
- The search engine is just adequate
- Facility for live interaction is absent. Current feedback page do not provide a feel of live interaction
- It lacks a responsive layout and difficult to browse through in modern day browsing equipments like mobile phones and tablets

Overall, the site lacks clear ways for the visitors to find what they want. Revisions have happened in a piecemeal way, and over time the content has grown increasingly disorganized. The proposed website should be an answer to worries mentioned above and more.

KSHEC's Audience

KSHEC have three primary audiences:

- a. Educational policy-makers and Public Media;
- b. academic peer institutions and scholars, professors and academic professionals;
- c. current & prospective students.

One of the biggest challenges in redesigning the website is to ensure that it speaks to each of these audiences, without alienating the others.

It is noteworthy that these different audiences have different (or even contradictory) needs, and that different esthetics may be more suitable to one audience or another. Currently the website does not reflect the needs and – stylistic preferences of these various audiences well; the website is not scholarly enough for academic audiences, while not informative enough to students. A layout that does not just mix elements appealing to the various audiences, but that, instead, intelligently guides users to where they need to be – with those pages, reflecting their priorities and stylistic preferences is needed. It is to be ensured that the new website provides an interface that allows users from very different ‘audiences’ (with potentially very different perspectives, interests and needs) to experience or navigate easily, which enable users with different profiles to readily access the types of information that interest them most.

These audiences should be able to start following KSHEC on networks like Twitter to increase visibility on social media. This option should be easy, visible and inviting.

In addition to these three audiences, the website is to be readily accessible and appealing to potential funders for the higher education scholarship scheme, who need to get a good overview of the many things that are happening here at a glance. To this audience the academic and societal impact and relevance of KSHEC should be clear. At the same time, the website should not create the impression that KSHEC’s main goal is to influence policy-making. There should be a highly effective ‘**about the KSHEC**’ page that ensures that certain kinds of summary/overview information are easily accessible at a glance, in a visually appealing format that profiles the range of activities in which the KSHEC engages.

New Website – What it should be

Primary objective of the new website is to continue to build a ‘brand’ identity, awareness, and interest in KSHEC and its interventions and innovations in academic sector.

A flexible, informative user-friendly website that is easy to maintain is to be created afresh. A visitor friendly site that can deliver large amounts of constantly changing information to our key audiences is to be developed.

1. Design should be lighter, more visually stimulating and more inviting to navigate

- Minimum images, rich in text, more visually pleasing; with ample white spaces. Provision for a separate image gallery seems appropriate.
- Homepage consisting of slideshow boxes: *events, what's new, publications, ongoing programs* etc.
- Top bar should show all the different things KSHEC engage in, without people having to click and look at a drop-down menu.
- Responsive and dynamic menus for various categories, which is to be fixed in discussion with KSHEC officials over development timeline.
- Ability to prominently promote multiple things simultaneously;
- Intuitive navigation, concise messaging, compelling visuals.

2. User interface should present comprehensive information in a readily accessible & searchable format

- Good content management system seems appropriate: consolidate all published documents in one documentation center with an advanced and intuitive search function for publications;
- Advanced search function (site-wide);
- Showcase new publications/programmes while also having a user-friendly archive of older publications/programmes;
- Information uploaded on one part of the website should be available and cross-referenced in multiple locations;
- Information about events should be more visible

3. Content management system should facilitate frequent updates of events and cross-postings

- Information uploaded on one part of the website should be available for cross-references in multiple locations
- New web-based tools to deliver timely and relevant answers to audiences' questions;
- Focus on substantive work.

- 4. Homepage should contain invitations for newage communication channels like Facebook, Twitter, Google+ etc.**
- 5. Homepage should generate more traffic , better reaching KSHEC's audiences**
KSHEC shall do homework to ensure that its audiences come back regularly by
 - Promoting involvement through programs and events
 - Providing regular news updates that keep people coming back
 - Strengthen relationships with its stakeholders
 - Open communication channel with student community and the famous higher education scholarship awardees
- 6. Website must be safe and secure using HTTPS and a hardened CMS**
- 7. Website must be audited and a security certificate obtained, following guidelines of the Cert-In**
- 8. Website is to be hosted in the State Data Centre under current domain name**
- 9. Website should work well on mobile devices and tablets using best practices of responsive design**
- 10. Website should comply with accessibility standards and best practices to ensure that people with disabilities can use the website**
- 11. Website should support content in Malayalam in a suitable Unicode font. The front page should contain a language selector at a prominent location.**

HOME PAGE OF THE WEBSITE

The Menu Bar is where visitors find links to the important pages on website. Having the right menu bar design is critical – it affects traffic, conversions and user-friendliness. Everything important in our website must be contained in the site menu bar.

The following is the list of main menu and drop-down menu that has to be there in the Top bar.

1. HOME

2. ABOUT US

2.1 Vision

2.2 Organisation

2.3 Functions

2.4 Acts

2.5 Legal Framework

2.6 Ex-Officio Members

3. PUBLICATIONS

3.1 Council Report

3.2 Committee Report

3.3 News Letter

3.4 Journal

4. ON GOING PROGRAMMES

4.1 Erudite Scheme

4.2 Cluster of Colleges

4.3 Prabudhata

4.4 Capacity Building Programme

4.5. Dhaishanik Pariyavaran

4.6 Academic Volunteer Bank

5. SCHOLARSHIP

6. GALLERY

6.1 Gallery New

6.2 Archives

7. LIBRARY

8. AKSHE PORTAL

- Home Page of the Website must have slide show boxes for
 1. News and Notifications
 2. Events
 3. What's New
- The Home Page must contain the Logo and name of organization, the background of the page must be similar to the logo design.
- In the home page there must be provision for choosing the language, for example English/Malayalam.
- There must be horizontal scrolling announcement below the menu bar which will allow visitors to navigate faster.
- In the home page there must be a search box.
- The Home Page must also have a feedback and queries form.
- In the footer of the home page there must be links for
 1. Careers
 2. Contact us
 3. Social media links

Ongoing Programme Details

4.1 Erudite Scheme

A college login that facilitates applying online for erudite funds.

4.2 Cluster of Colleges

By clicking on the menu 'Cluster of Colleges', two sub menus "ABOUT Cluster of Colleges" and "existing clusters" has to be listed there. In the about sub menu a brief description about the cluster of colleges has to be given and in the existing clusters sub menu the details of the clusters and the list of colleges in each cluster has to be there.

The admin has to communicate with the Principals of the colleges under each cluster so a provision to send text messages to the registered mobile numbers and email to the registered email id has to be made. The admin must have a provision to add or delete a cluster or college in the future.

4.3 Prabudhata

This is an ambitious project of KSHEC, here we must be able to showcase all the activities under Prabudhata for example reports, seminars etc

4.4 Capacity Building Programme

KSHEC conducts workshops for college professors in various subjects, a teacher login facility for applying online for workshop programs.

4.5 Dhaishanik Pariyavaran

4.6 Academic Volunteer Bank

The main focus of Academic Volunteer Bank is to have a database of academicians who are keralites and work outside, so that KSHEC can use their potential in higher education. The academicians must be able to register online and upload their CV.

LIBRARY

A library management system based on any library software has to be designed. The main purpose is to showcase the list of publications and books available with KSHEC to the academic world. The librarian has to add/modify the publication details. The user must be able to search the books or publication based on the title or publishers name. This search mechanism must be faster and easy for the user to get the desired information. A provision for booking facility is also required.

New Website Development Guidelines/Suggestions

- An easy-to-use and secure content management system (CMS);
- Easily updatable;
- Intuitive navigation;
 - Information should be grouped and presented in a logical manner and require no more than three levels of ‚drill down‘ for the user to find the desired information.
- Clean and focused design with strategic use of images, common theme;
- **Current color scheme is based on logo, which may have to be changed to project a more innovative feel;**
- *All* applicable content should be imported from current site
 - **Loss of data would be a major problem, since the website is currently a live documentation storage.**
- Optimized with SEO best practices;
- Specific SEO for the document center that searches through pdf’s;
- Social media integration (share buttons, follow buttons, etc.);
- Web site must not require plug-ins as a default;
- Fast Loading Pages;
 - The web site must be designed with a balance of text and graphics such that each page loads in 4 seconds or less on the average computer.

- Email update sign-up form;
- Contact Form;
- Academic Volunteers Registration Form
- Analytics
 - Gather e-mail, areas of interest and demographic information from visitors in a format that permits the KSHEC to maintain a single database of users and e-mail each according to their area of interest and profile.

Other General Conditions

- Provide training and all necessary support to permit easy use by a selected KSHEC staff member.
- Project Management
 - An assigned project manager shall be made available to present information and coordinate with KSHEC staff, he/she will hold a reasonable number of meetings to present design and development solutions to the Vice-Chairman and/or his authorized representative.
 - Once the web site has been completed and accepted by the KSHEC, the website design and all of its contents, software and architecture become property of the KSHEC
 - Testing of website on all applicable platforms is to be carried out to ensure that web site works as intended.

Suggested Contents in a Proposal for New Website for KSHEC

An open and competitive process shall be followed for selecting the developers of new website.

If the execution of work to be performed by the contractor requires the hiring of sub-contractors it must be clearly stated in the proposal. Sub-contractors must be identified and the work they will perform must be defined. The KSHEC shall negotiate contract terms upon selection.

Proposal response from prospective bidder shall contain

- Overview of how they will meet the stated objectives and more
- Explanation of the proposed platform/CMS
- Outline of the website design & development strategy
- Proposed website timeline from project kickoff to launch of website

(The time frame for completion of the project is to be evaluated. In addition, time frames shall be part of the contractual agreement; therefore, a realistic time frame for completion shall be requested from the bidder.)

Details about development team

- Describe the bidders' experience in producing websites for non-profit and/or academic institutions.
- Organizational capacity to take on this project
- What type of team will be assigned, what will each person's role be?

Recent design & development examples

- List of at least five web sites the bidder has produced that best reflect the work and relevancy to this project. The URL should be submitted. (Only sites that are live during evaluation shall be taken care of)
- Description of testing and support plan
- Pricing with optional elements line-itemed
- Terms and conditions

Maximum length of the proposal including title page, cover letter, proposal, qualifications and budget should not exceed 25 pages.

Cover Letter should be signed by the person or persons authorized to sign on behalf of the state agency/company (1-2 pages)/registered firm.