Proposal

Modified Laptop Policy for improved access to computers

Problem statement

IUEA boasts 'free laptops' to all Bachelor students however records show that only 25 laptops were distributed to students in the last year 2018-2019. This represents less than 2.5% of last year's admitted student population.

The laptops that are issued to students also may not be up to the required specifications to handle the requirements of some of the software used in some courses too.

Finally, the laptop policy needs to complement the existing computer/ICT laboratories of which there are only 36 currently fully operational.

Proposal

IUEA <u>must</u> incorporate a more robust laptop policy for students to access computers. This policy would link computing requirements to programme requirements and subsequent costs would need to be considered. Minimum spec laptops <u>must</u> become mandatory for all students in all programmes. The cost of this policy shall be born out of the existing tuition fee structures either as a cost to the students or incorporated into the existing tuition fees. This policy will have both practical benefits as well as strategic.

Benefits

The policy would:

1. Provide minimum spec computers that can perform to the required performance standards as well as expected industry practical standards
2. Provide improved access for all students to computers and relevant software applications
3. Improve student to computer ratios as required by NCHE (ideal ratio is 1:1)
4. Align to our strategic vision and objectives as the 'technological university of choice'
5. Provide a strategic advantage over our competitors by offering the best computer facilities and services to our students in Uganda

6. Improve long term cost-benefits where the cost shall be born out of the tuition rather than the University needing to invest significantly more on the computer laboratories
7. Improve how IUEA markets our programmes. Computers are not 'free' but are essential tools to succeed in our programme of higher education.
8. Improve quality of education in the classroom – especially for teachers who teach courses that are digital/computer intensive
9. Support digital and integrated modes of delivery (ie: online and distant)

Drawbacks

1. The increased cost to students may be a burden or unattractive. However, if this is a mandatory cost and supported with subsidization by the University then students coming to IUEA will know that it is contributing to a quality education.
2. Laptops can be misused for other things and potentially ruined.
3. Laptops can be sold. A robust code of conduct needs to be enforced.
4. Laptops can be stolen. A robust insurance policy needs to be offered.

Example of minimum spec requirements for different programmes

Programme	Applications	Minimum specs
B.Arch, BSc.CE	Auto CAD/ArchiCAD MatLab Multisim	8 GB RAM i5 Gen-5 processor 2GB dedicated GPU (graphics) Windows 10
All business programmes	Quick Books/Sage (or open source equivalents) Tally SPSS	4 GB RAM i3 Gen-5 processor Windows 10
BSc.CS, BSc.SE, BIT	Anaconda/Python Visual Studio Android Studio Adobe Suite/Photoshop Packet Tracer SPSS DBMS (MySQL) Notepad ++ Ardurino	4GB RAM – 8GB RAM i5 Gen-5 processor Windows 10/Linux

Proposed implementation

Implementation should be rolled out over the coming year as a strategy to improve overall quality of education in our strength areas – Engineering and Computer Science, and tied into our marketing messaging.