



17-September-2023

## **Next-Tech Lab Regulations**

In the document below:

- Faculty advisor means faculty advisor and co-advisor of the Next-Tech Lab, appointed by the university.
- NTL means the next tech lab.
- Lab means one of the five ‘sub-labs’ of NTL

### **1. Introduction**

Next-Tech Lab (NTL) is a student-run multidisciplinary research and development lab at SRM University AP. NTL has won the QS Reimagine Education 2018 award for their work in pioneering the student-led innovation lab model in India. Since its establishment in 2017, NTL has boasted various awards in hackathons as well as representation in conferences both in India and abroad.

The NTL focuses on research and development on cutting edge technologies focusing on student-led innovation. It provides access to state-of-the-art resources to its members along with guidance from 50+ advisors spanning various disciplines. Members work on collaborative projects 24/7. More than 20 students from the lab have been invited to attend fully sponsored prestigious conferences and programs worldwide.

The NTL is divided into five “sub-labs” (referred to as ‘labs’ hereafter) based on the fields of research and development as shown in the table below:

Sr. No.	Lab Name	Research carried out
1	McCarthy Lab	Artificial Intelligence/ Machine Learning, Computer Vision, Natural Language Processing
2	Pausch Lab	Game Development, AR / VR / XR
3	Satoshi Lab	Blockchain and Distributed Ledgers, Cyber-Security
4	Tesla Lab	Internet of Things (IoT), Hardware and Embedded Systems, Robotics
5	Norman Lab	Design and HCI, Web Development, App Development



All these labs collaborate with each other and work on projects or topics of research which require knowledge from different disciplines. The rules for the students to be a part of NRL and participate in one of these labs at different positions are mentioned in Section 2 and Section 3 of the document.

## 2. **Positional Hierarchy**

- a) **Associates:** Once a student joins NTL, he/she is assigned the role of an associate. An associate can start as part of any lab of their choice under NTL. They can explore and shift labs based on change in interests in consultation with the respective lab coordinators. The task for a lab change assigned to an associate is usually on a lenient side. Associates are provided with ample guidance in terms of resources by both members as well as the executive committee (defined below). An associate can stay and work in the lab if and only if at least one member is present in the lab.
- b) **Members:** After a few check-ins (defined in Section 3b), if the executive committee finds the progress of an associate worthy, the associate is promoted to the position of a member. A member has the right to sit in the lab on their own. The members are also allowed to change their labs if there is a change of interest in consultation with the respective lab coordinators. The lab-change task for a member is of a higher difficulty as compared to associates. If a member fails to show progress in subsequent check-ins, a member can be demoted back to the role of an associate. The progress of the members is monitored by respective lab coordinators.
- c) **The executive committee:** The executive committee of NTL is a group of ‘members’ selected by the faculty advisors and previous executive committee members for the overall functioning and representation of the lab. The appointment of the executive committee is typically for one academic year. The students' association with and contribution to different lab activities are also taken into consideration by the faculty advisors while appointing them as executive committee members. The new executive committee positions can be created by the faculty advisors if required during the operation. The executive committee members can be replaced by the faculty advisors based on the poor performance or behavior of the executive committee members.

The executive committee consists of the following positions.

- **The convenor and the co-convenor(s):** Convenors and co-convenors are members, who are the point of contact of NLT. They are also the main representatives of the NTL for any activities planned in the university or outside the university. Any communications or collaborations with the university or any third party are handled by them.



- Convenors shall provide a detailed event calendar to the faculty advisor for the academic year after communicating with other executive committee members. Any event planned without approval of the faculty advisor will not be supported by the university.
  - It is the responsibility of the convenor to get all the required approvals.
  - They are responsible for managing the internal working, resources, events, and discipline of the overall NTL.
  - They can assign the tasks to NTL members or associates for the advertisement, website maintenance, and any other activities as required in consultation with the faculty advisors.
  - The co-convenors shall take charge of all the activities assigned to the convenor in the absence of the convenor.
- **The Treasurer(s):** He/She is/are responsible for keeping track of all the financial needs, assets, and resources of the lab along with the convenors and co-convenors.
  - The treasurer shall make the annual financial budget of the NTL and submit it to the university as per suggestions from the faculty advisors.
  - Before the event, the treasurer (along with all other executive committee members) is responsible for seeking sponsorships for the event.
  - After any event, the treasurer shall provide details (a closure report) of all the expenditure inclusive of all the funding received from the sponsorship to the faculty advisor(s).
- **Student Coordinators:** Each lab has its student coordinator. The student coordinators are responsible for taking care of the needs of their respective labs.
  - If some associate wants to change the lab, the coordinators of both labs should talk to the student and council based on his/her interest.
  - Coordinators shall monitor the progress of the members and take a decision to demote or remove a member as per their performance.
  - The coordinator shall support the student convenors to plan and execute the event. The coordinators are responsible for planning and monitoring the projects in their respective labs.
  - A bi-monthly progress report shall be sent by these coordinators for their respective labs to the student convenor and the faculty advisors of NTL.
  - They shall coordinate with the treasurer to ensure their financial requirements are considered in the budget.
  - They shall report any kind of malpractice or indiscipline in their labs to the convenor and to the faculty advisors at the earliest possible.



3. **Rules and Regulations:** Admission procedure, exit criteria, other guidelines, and credit system are given below. The regulations governing the NTL may be subject to revision by faculty advisors and/or the university as deemed necessary to enhance its operations.

a) **Admission Procedure:** Every year during the odd semester, NTL organizes an “Expo” for showcasing their current projects. The posters for recruitment are posted during the Expo, and registration starts from that day itself.

- (i) Students from any degree, course, or year can register through the form provided in the mail or from scanning the QR code on the posters circulated.
- (ii) The executive committee then shortlists the responses from the forms based on their answers and interests as well as passion shown.
- (iii) The selected students are called for the interview rounds.
- (iv) When the student comes to the NTL for their assigned date, a executive committee member takes their interview and assigns them one of the three tags:
  - (1) YES: The student has an excellent record of knowledge and projects for their level and is directly recruited.
  - (2) TASK: The student has an average level of knowledge and projects but has a great passion for learning and improving their skills. If the student belongs to the first or second year, the level of interest and passion is given more priority than their current understanding.
  - (3) NO: In a rare case where the student has a poor level of knowledge and projects and lacks the necessary drive to improve, they are informed of their rejection, and guided to apply the following year. A detailed guideline and roadmap is also provided to help them improve their profile.
- (v) The students assigned the tag TASK are given an assignment to complete during a given number of days. The task difficulty and deadline depend on:
  - (1) The lab for which the student has applied.
  - (2) The year of the student
  - (3) Their current understanding level of the student
- (vi) Once the deadline is reached, the student revisits the lab to show their progress on the assignment. If the task is completed and explained properly, the student will be selected for the Lab.
- (vii) Extraordinary performers from coding club and smart-tech club may be considered for direct entry to one of the NTL labs after interaction with lab coordinators and convenor.
- (viii) The extraordinary performers are to be recommended by coordinators of respective clubs for entry in the NTL.



- b) **Exit Criteria:** The NTL has two major violation criteria that will cause the student to be barred from their membership to the lab, with certain grave violations causing permanent rejection from re-applying in the future.

(i) *Failing to perform properly on two consecutive check-ins:* NTL checks the progress of all its members and associates through the concept of check-ins. **Check-ins** are meetings that the student has with the executive committee every month (excluding exam months) to showcase what they have learnt and done in the past month as well as what they are working on. Check-ins not only help evaluate the consistency and prowess of the student, but it also helps the executive committee in gauging what further resources and guidance the student needs to boost their progress. If a student has shown **sub-par or no progress** in their check-in, they are given a second chance along with a task in case of zero progress. If the student still does not perform well in the next check-in, they are removed from their position in the lab. (The student is allowed to apply again during the next series of recruitments.)

(ii) *Violation of the mentioned policy guidelines:* A member that violates the policy guidelines mentioned in this document will be barred from their position inside the lab. Certain violations will even cause a ban on re-applying in the following years. These violations include:

- 1) Roaming around the campus after 9:00 pm under the guise of visiting the lab.
- 2) Carrying and consuming any form of illicit substances in or around the NTL premises.
- 3) Engaging in any form of bullying with other members of the lab or any other student in general.
- 4) Disrespecting or engaging in any disorderly conduct with other members of the lab.
- 5) Using the name of NTL in performing any form of derogatory action on the university premises.
- 6) Not maintaining specific academic criteria in terms of CGPA and backlogs as decided by faculty advisors.
- 7) Making the fellow students uncomfortable by their actions or language.
- 8) Violating any of the University's disciplinary guidelines.

- c) **Operational Guidelines:** If any equipment is being borrowed from the lab, then the procedure for it is as follows:

- i) Get permission for it from an executive committee Member.
- ii) Post about what equipment you are borrowing and for how many days on the lab's discord (equipment channel).



- iii) After returning the said equipment, convey the message on the discord channel as well.

If the equipment borrowed gets damaged during the period it was borrowed, the financial liability will fall over the member that borrowed said equipment.

The procedure for handling the keys is as follows (only for members and the executive committee):

- i) Properly sign the logbook registers at reception before taking the key.
- ii) Update that the lab has been opened on the discord (keys channel)
- iii) If you want to leave the lab, make sure that there is at least one member present in the lab.
- iv) If no member is present, properly lock the lab.
- v) Hand the keys to the guard at reception and fill the out-time in the logbook.
- vi) Update that the lab has been closed in the discord channel.
- vii) Only members and the executive committee are allowed to handle the keys related to NTL.

- d) **Credit Allocation Conditions:** In accordance with the guidelines published by the university, members of the lab can showcase their projects to a panel consisting of faculty advisors and faculty members from the university with relevant expertise. If the project is deemed worthy, it may be considered for maximum up to 4 credits under one of the project categories, such as IDP or industry project.



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