The National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) formerly known as Karnataka Regional Engineering College (KREC), is a public engineering college at Surathkal, about 20 kilometres north of Mangalore city. It was founded in 1960 as KREC while today, it is one of the 30 National Institutes of Technology in India and is recognised as an Institute of National Importance. It has a suburban campus, in close proximity to the Arabian Sea. National Highway 66 runs through the campus and serves as the major mode of access.

The foundation stone for Karnataka Regional Engineering College (KREC) was laid on 6 August 1960, at Surathkal. It was made possible through the efforts of U. Srinivas Mallya and V. S. Kudva and the area is now called Srinivasnagar in his honour. KREC began with three under-graduate courses in engineering: Mechanical, Electrical, and Civil, with affiliation to the University of Mysore. 1965 saw the beginning of under-graduate courses in Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering. In 1966, the college started its first post-graduate course in Marine Structures and Industrial Structures, followed by post-graduate courses in Industrial Electronics (1969), Heat Power (1971), Hydraulics and Water Resources (1971), Chemical Plant Design Engineering (1971) and Process Metallurgy (1972).

More under-graduate engineering courses were added later: Electronics and Communication Engineering (1971), Mining Engineering (1984), Computer Engineering (1986) and information technology (2000). In 1980, KREC came under the affiliation of Mangalore University, and the five-year under-graduate courses were shortened to four-years. On 26 June 2002, it was elevated to the status of a National Institute of Technology and has been called NIT Karnataka (NITK) ever since. It is now a Deemed University. NITK celebrated its 50th Institute Foundation day on 6 August 2009. The year long Golden Jubilee celebrations were inaugurated on 10 August 2009.

To facilitate transformation of students into good human beings, responsible citizens and competent professionals, focusing on assimilation, generation and dissemination of knowledge.