The North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) is a unique Institute of its own kind in the country, having unconventional and innovative academic programmes. It was established in 1983 by the Government of India. Its foundation stone was laid by former President of India Late Giani Zail Singh on 4th March 1984.

The Institute was set up initially as a project of the North Eastern Council (NEC) for providing a system of education to create technical manpower at various levels for the development of the North Eastern Region of the country.

Its approach is to encourage a policy of vocationalisation at the +2 level and to allow motivated students to go for degree level while others to go out of the Institute to enrich their profession with some years of industrial experience. It is an autonomous, fully funded and controlled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Govt. of India from April 1, 1994. It got the status of deemed to be university on 31st May 2005 under section 3 of the UGC Act 1956. It is governed by the Board of Management (BoM) comprising the representatives of the MHRD, Govt. of India, the eight beneficiary states of the North Eastern States, AICTE and eminent educationists. It is fully residential, and is spread over in 513 acres of land.

Academic programmes in the Institute started in August 1986 with the first batch of students admitted to its Base Module.

Till July 2010, nineteen batches of graduates with specialization in Agricultural Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Science and Engineering, Electronics and Communication Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Forestry have passed out and many have been placed in different reputed organizations at national and international levels.