

Standard Operating Procedures

Conducting annual examinations for nursing and paramedical courses

OBJECTIVE

- a. The primary objective is to lay out Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure exams for diploma level nursing and paramedical courses are conducted in a fair and transparent manner.

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

1. Tentative Examination Calendar release

- a. {*mention state nursing council*} shall publish an academic calendar, which shall give tentative timelines for activities such as exams, fee collection, etc., at least **twelve weeks** before the start of the exams.

2. Exam fee payment

- a. The deadline to pay exam fees should be at least **ten weeks** before the exams to ensure there is sufficient time to finalise the list of candidates.
- b. The exam fee is to be paid by the respective institutes on behalf of all the candidates who meet the eligibility criteria of attendance greater than 75% based on their attendance records.
- c. Admit cards will be issued to only those candidates who have paid the examination fee.

3. Infrastructure requirements shared with exam centres

- a. A clear requirements document should be prepared and shared with institutes at least ten weeks before the tentative exam dates to ensure they set up the CCTV cameras and associated infrastructure in time before the exams.
- b. Information gathering must be carried out to get all CCTV related data in one place at least four weeks before the start of the exams. (Data fields to be collected include, but are not limited to, centre code, Name of Training Institute, Tech PoC Name, District, Sector, DVR\NVR Brand, Static IP, Port Number, User Name, Password, No. of Students, Course, No. of CCTVs).
- c. {*mention state nursing council*} should ensure that all CCTVs whose information was provided by institutes has been verified before the exams
- d. It is recommended that at least two rounds of verification be carried out for the CCTV monitoring by {*mention state nursing council*}, and one round of verification by the onboarded vendor (see below for more information on the selection of this vendor).
- e. A tech Point of Contact (PoC) must be assigned at {*mention state nursing council*}, whom

institutes can contact for support/grievances related to the setting up of CCTV cameras and associated infrastructure.

4. Finalisation of control room vendor

- a. A vendor should be onboarded to set up a control room at *{mention state nursing council}* to monitor the live CCTV feed of the exams towards ensuring probity of these exams.
- b. For this, a requirements document should be drafted and sent to *{mention state development system}* to invite bids from vendors.
- c. *{mention state development system}* will then provide *{mention state nursing council}* with a proposal/multiple proposals based on the requirements. All or some of these proposal(s) will be put up for tender, based on criteria like costs and requirements.
- d. The tender process can take anywhere from seven to fourteen days, and, therefore, should be completed at least six weeks prior to the exams.
- e. Once a vendor is onboarded, it should verify data from institutes that allows the vendor to monitor the live CCTV feed on the day of the exam (Data fields to be verified include but are not limited to centre code, Name of Training Institute, Tech PoC Name, CCTVs Verified (Y/N), Feed Uploaded (Y/N), Feed Available (Y/N), Cameras Renamed (Y/N), no. of exam rooms, no. of cameras/exam room, Remarks).

5. Final datesheet release

- a. The final datesheet should be released at least **six weeks** prior to the exams to give students and institutes sufficient time for preparation.

6. Instructions for dispatch of answer sheets

- a. Instructions to institutes about dispatching answer sheets should be sent at least **six weeks** prior to the exams. The dispatch should only be done through India Post/RMS and on the same day of the exam.
- b. All answer sheets must be submitted to *{mention state nursing council}* as per the issued guidelines. Any answer sheets that are not sent following the guidelines should not be evaluated.

6. Centre finalisation

- a. After the last round of verification has been conducted on institutes' CCTV infrastructure, the list of exam centres should be finalised. Institutes whose CCTV infrastructure can not be verified should not be made exam centres.
- b. The verification and centre finalisations should be completed at least four weeks before the exam
- c. For unverified institutes, there are 2 available options:

- i. Send *{mention state nursing council}* -appointed observers to physically monitor the conduct of exams at the centre
- ii. Allocate students from the unverified institute to the closest possible verified centre

7. Admit card release and correction of errors in admit card

- a. Admit cards can be released after payment of exam fee and finalisation of centres.
- b. Students should be given at least fourteen days to request for correction of errors in the admit card.
- c. Final admit cards should be released at least two weeks before the start of the exam.

8. Transporting answer sheets to centres

- a. Answer sheets should be sent to the exam centres at least a week before the start of exams to ensure they reach the centres in time.

9. Internals & Practicals

- a. The internal exams will be conducted by the institutes at their end and the marks for the same will be uploaded by respective institutes on *{mention state nursing council}* portal in the stipulated time as defined by *{mention state nursing council}*
- b. Practical exams will be conducted by institutes in their respective parent hospitals (labs in case of ANM course) in presence of an external assessor (not applicable for ANM course) assigned by *{mention state nursing council}* . The marks assigned to the students will be uploaded by the institute on the *{mention state nursing council}* portal in the stipulated time as defined by *{mention state nursing council}* , and subsequently verified by the respective external assessors for authenticity.

11. Online uploading of marks by training centres for internal exams

- a. Heavy traffic should be expected on the *{mention state nursing council}* website during the updation of internal exam marks. Required technical and logistical arrangements should be made by *{mention state nursing council}* to manage the same.
- b. Institutes must ensure that marks for internal exams are uploaded within five days of conducting the exams. Failure to adhere to this timeline will result in automatic assignment of zero marks for internal exams to all students appearing for the exam.

12. Control room set up

- a. The control room should be set up by the vendor on *{mention state nursing council}* premises at least a day before exams are due to begin. Two teams should be finalised to operate in the control room: one from *{mention state nursing council}* , and the other team should be from the vendor.
- b. Composition of *{mention state nursing council}* team should be the following:

- i. Eleven members - including Controller of Exams, Head of Exam Cell, one Tech PoC, two supervisors, three teams of two members each to conduct calling and coordinate between control room and flying squads and centres
- c. Composition of the vendor's team should be the following:
 - i. Seven members - five Technical Experts for operating the control room, one Hardware Support Engineer, one Project Incharge

13. Flying Squads

- a. Minimum one flying squad must be deployed in each district by *{mention state nursing council}* at least one week before the exam, and should cover a maximum of twenty exam centres. More flying squads should be deployed if the number of centres in the district is more than 20.
- b. Each flying squad will be constituted of ONE member - a representative from a medical college. In some districts, the flying squad may be constituted of TWO representatives from a medical college. A separate flying squad comprising a representative from District Magistrate office may be appointed in each district, depending on the availability and response from the DM offices of the respective districts.
- c. Before the exams, an SOP should be drafted for the Observers in the flying squad. A virtual training should also be conducted for the Observers to take them through the SOP and answer their queries.
- d. Two *{mention state nursing council}* officials should be appointed as PoCs for the Observers to reach out to in the event they have any queries.
- e. To collect Observer data to disburse payments, a Google form should be created and sent to Observers with necessary written instructions on how to fill it out.
- f. A feedback form must also be created and sent to the Observers to record their observations. Observers should use this form to record any instances of fraud/cheating which go unobserved by the control room.
- g. *{mention state nursing council}* must share with each flying squad the names of all centres in their district, Principal's name and contact details, and the exam timetable for each day a day before the exams begin.

14. On exam days

- a. On the day of the exam, the institutes should be split among the technical experts monitoring the live CCTV feed. Each expert should sequentially check every institute's CCTV feed.
- b. An online log sheet must be maintained by the technical experts, marking a tick or a cross against each institute basis availability of CCTV feed in each round of verification.
- c. For institutes whose CCTV feed is not available during a round of verification, the *{mention*

state nursing council supervisors must ensure that the Principals of the institutes are made aware of the same to give them an opportunity to correct the glitch.

- d. Another online log sheet should be maintained by the *{mention state nursing council}* team to record instances of suspected or actual fraud/cheating. For any such case found, the team must immediately call the appropriate flying squad and dispatch it to that centre for inspection.
- e. If any staff member of an institute is observed, whether through CCTV surveillance at *{mention state nursing council}* or by flying squads, aiding students in any capacity (reading/writing answers, passing chits, inadequate supervision, absence during invigilation, etc.), it should be regarded as an instance of mass cheating and the following actions should be taken immediately:
 - i. The *{mention state nursing council}* control room team must promptly record the instance of mass cheating using their mobile devices.
 - ii. The control room vendor must promptly record and share the video clip capturing the occurrence(s) of mass cheating with the *{mention state nursing council}* Exam Nodal Officer on the same day.
 - iii. The *{mention state nursing council}* Exam Nodal Officer or any appropriate representative stationed in the control room should immediately contact the institute and notify them of the observed incident and the subsequent cancellation of the exam for that day in that exam centre.
 - iv. *{mention state nursing council}* should publish a letter on their website on the same day to officially announce the cancellation of exams in exam centres caught in mass cheating instances.
 - v. *{mention state nursing council}* should dispatch a letter with details for exam centres caught in mass cheating to District Magistrates to disseminate the information through district newspapers.
 - vi. *{mention state nursing council}* should refrain from organising re-exams for these students, and students from the institute(s) indulging in mass cheating should be marked as failed in the exam where mass cheating was detected.
- f. The institute(s) indulging in mass cheating during exams should not be made exam centres for the next five examination cycles. The students of that institute should be mapped by *{mention state nursing council}* to another nearby institute for the next five examination cycles.

15. After the exam

- a. Sealing of answer sheets after completion of exams should be monitored via live CCTV feed by *{mention state nursing council}* control room. Necessary instructions should be issued to the institutes to ensure they can comply with this requirement.

16. Answer sheets received & sorted by date of examination

- a. Once answer sheets have started to arrive at *{mention state nursing council}* , detailed documentation (in the form of an Excel) should be carried out of the courier data. This would include recording
training centre code, centre name, academic year, subject name, subject division code, paper ID, courier service provider/company, tracking ID, booking date, receipt date, exam date, number of sheets, course name, number of days between exam and booking dates, and number of days between exam and receipt date.
- b. After compiling the answer sheet data, an analysis should be carried out on it to identify any instances of undue delay between exam and courier booking date, and exam and receipt date.
- c. Action, as appropriate, may be taken by *{mention state nursing council}* against exam centres for which instances of undue delay are identified.
- d. The answer sheets are to be sent only through India Post (Speed Post) after the end of examination on the same day by the institutes.
- e. If any institute is observed dispatching answer sheets via private courier (on the same day of exam or on any other day), the following steps should be taken by *{mention state nursing council}* :
 - i. The *{mention state nursing council}* answer sheet reception team must promptly document and share the exam centre details, which used a private courier for dispatching answer sheets, with the *{mention state nursing council}* Exam Nodal officer on the same day of receiving the answer sheets.
 - ii. The *{mention state nursing council}* Exam Nodal Officer or any appropriate representative stationed in the answer sheet reception team should immediately contact the exam centre and notify them of the observed incident and the subsequent action of non-evaluation of all the answer sheets in that bundle.
 - iii. *{mention state nursing council}* should publish a letter on their website on the same day of receiving the answer sheets to officially announce the details of exam centres caught using private couriers for dispatching answer sheets and the subsequent action being taken.
 - iv. *{mention state nursing council}* should schedule re-examinations for these exam centres at a later date and notify them about the same.

17. Finalisation of vendor for scanning and digital marking

- a. A vendor should be onboarded by *{mention state nursing council}* to scan the answer sheets of the students to make them available for digital marking.
- b. To initiate this process, a Request for Proposal (RfP) detailing all requirements should be published on the *{mention state nursing council}* website at least 6 weeks before the start date of examination to invite bid proposals from potential vendors.

- c. Upon receipt of multiple proposals, the financial and technical bids of each vendor should be evaluated based on various parameters outlined in the RfP, including the cost to *{mention state nursing council}* , certifications, annual turnover, and infrastructure capabilities, etc. The vendor with the highest score should be selected by *{mention state nursing council}* .
- d. Since the tender process can take approximately six to seven weeks, *{mention state nursing council}* should onboard the vendor at least two weeks before the start date of examination.
- e. Once onboarded, the vendor should share a detailed layout specifying dimensions with *{mention state nursing council}* to estimate the space needed for installing the required number of scanning machines. The vendor should set up all the necessary infrastructure for scanning of answer sheets, within two weeks of receiving the work order, under the oversight of CCTV surveillance to ensure transparency and integrity throughout the process.

18. Sorting and scanning

- a. The onboarded vendor should commence the sorting and scanning process within one day of arrival of the first bundle of answer sheets at *{mention state nursing council}* .
- b. Sorting and scanning process should be completed by the onboarded vendor within 2 days of arrival of the last bundle of answer sheets at *{mention state nursing council}* .
- c. Following scanning, the onboarded vendor should upload all scanned answer sheets on their online server and conduct a thorough quality check (QC). Any rejected pages due to folding, cutting, or other issues found in QC phase should be rescanned by the vendor.
- d. Once QC is completed, the vendor should map all answer sheets to nursing and paramedical assessors for evaluation to commence.
- e. The QC and mapping of answer sheets to assessors should be completed by the vendor within 4 days of completing the scanning process.

19. Evaluation

- a. All answer keys corresponding to question papers should be uploaded onto the online evaluation platform as a reference for all evaluators. This practice will enhance the speed and accuracy of evaluations while maintaining a level of standardization.
- b. Nominations for Assessors:
 - i. *{mention state nursing council}* shall maintain a repository of sufficient evaluators as needed for evaluation across the academic year.
 - ii. *{mention state nursing council}* shall publish a letter on its website and official Whatsapp groups at least three weeks before the start date of examination, requesting for nominations of nursing and paramedical assessors and reviewers.
 - iii. It is recommended that the letter be published as early as possible and the evaluation

fee per copy to be kept at par with ABVMU in order to maximise the number of nominations received.

iv. After receiving nominations, *{mention state nursing council}* must shortlist the assessors and reviewers based on predetermined eligibility criteria set.

c. Training and Helpdesk Setup:

i. Training schedule with link, ID and password for digital marking system access to be generated and sent to all assessors and reviewers by the vendor on their email and contact number along with the helpdesk contact for resolution of any queries.

ii. A helpdesk to be set up by the vendor within 1 day after onboarding by *{mention state nursing council}* to contact all assessors and reviewers through phone calls. The helpdesk will confirm their in-principle agreement to become an assessor/a reviewer, receipt of training schedule with link, ID & password to access the marking system and infra requirement for marking process. This process should be completed at least one week before the start date of examination.

iii. All assessors and reviewers should mandatorily attend the training session (2-3 hours) scheduled for them. These sessions should be recorded and a link should be shared with all the attending assessors to view and refer to the recording at any time going forward.

iv. In case of absenteeism, the assessor/reviewer can request for another slot by contacting the helpdesk. It is also the responsibility of the vendor/helpdesk to reach out to the assessor/reviewer who missed the training session and add them in the next training session slot.

v. In case an assessor/reviewer is unable to attend the training session till the last available slot, the vendor should document and notify *{mention state nursing council}* about the same.

vi. *{mention state nursing council}* should only allow assessors and reviewers who attended the training session to be a part of the digital marking process.

vii. Training for all assessors and reviewers should be completed before the start date of examinations by the vendor. The training session should encompass a detailed explanation of the procedure for digitally marking the answer sheets on the system. Helpdesk should address any related queries.

viii. The day following the completion of training for each batch, the vendor should provide at least one sample answer sheet to all assessors and reviewers in the batch for evaluation, to help them become acquainted with the digital marking system. It is mandatory for assessors and reviewers to evaluate this sample answer sheet. Additionally, the vendor should offer support to all assessors and reviewers via the helpdesk to address any difficulties encountered during the digital marking process.

d. As per *{mention state nursing council}* assessment, the required target number of assessors and reviewers who agree in-principle to complete nursing and paramedical evaluation in time should be at least 350 nursing assessors and 35 nursing reviewers along with 150

paramedical assessors and 15 paramedical reviewers, with an evaluation rate of at least 60 answer copies per day for each assessor and reviewer. For an evaluation rate of less than 60 answer sheets per day per assessor and reviewer, the number of assessors and reviews required will increase proportionately.

- e. Once a final list is ready, a letter should be issued to these assessors, mentioning the start date of evaluation and expected minimum evaluation rate/day for each assessor. Additionally, the letter should clearly outline the consequences if any assessor fails to adhere to the daily evaluation rate.
- f. An official Whatsapp group to be made for both assessors and reviewers separately by the helpdesk for streamlined communication process.
- g. The vendor should share daily reports and dashboards with *{mention state nursing council}*, detailing the status of sorting, scanning, evaluation (course and subject wise), assessor and reviewer performance, ensuring transparency and effective monitoring.
- h. Penalties should be enforced for assessors who fail to adhere to the mandatory daily evaluation limit
 - i. Day 1 of default - A warning to be communicated to the assessor via call or message by the helpdesk on the same day
 - ii. Day 2 of consecutive default - A defaulter list to be published on the official Whatsapp group listing all defaulting assessors by the helpdesk
 - iii. Day 3 of consecutive default - The assessor will be removed from the assessor pool and debarred from participating in any future exam evaluation process of *{mention state nursing council}* up to one year.
- i. Reviewing process:
 - i. Reviewers should review at least 6 answer sheets daily evaluated by assessors. The marks given by the reviewer would supersede the marks given by evaluator in case there is a difference between both.
 - ii. Reviewing process should be conducted in parallel to the evaluation process of answer sheets by the assessors.
 - iii. Reviewers should be given at least 1 answer sheet with highest marks, at least 1 answer sheet with lowest marks and rest of the answer sheets with average marks to ensure a comprehensive review of the evaluation process.
 - iv. If the difference between the assessor and reviewer scores exceeds 25% on an answer sheet, an additional 5 randomly selected answer sheets evaluated by the same assessor should undergo review by the reviewer. If more than 2 of these additional answer sheets exhibit a difference of over 25% between the assessor and reviewer scores, the assessor in question should be prevented from further evaluations and be counted as a defaulter.
 - v. All answer sheets previously evaluated by the defaulting assessor should be reassigned to other assessors for re-evaluation.

20. Quality control

- a. After evaluation of answer sheets and digitisation of scores, descriptive statistical analysis (calculation of mean and standard deviation) should be done by *{mention state nursing council}* for each course and institute.
- b. In cases where mean scores for institutes are found to be either two or more standard deviations above or below the mean, 5% of the answer sheets should be re-evaluated by *{mention state nursing council}* .
- c. Pass rates should be calculated on the basis of theory exams conducted by *{mention state nursing council}* to ensure consistency in comparison.

21. Re-Evaluation

- a. After the declaration of results, students should be given an option to view their answer sheets and request re-evaluation.
- b. Viewing/ re-evaluation portal should be opened by the vendor on the subsequent day after declaring the final results, including fields like exam date, fee receipt, name, email, course, subject, year of student. Additionally, *{mention state nursing council}* should publish a letter for this purpose, mentioning helpdesk contact details for students, on their website and official whatsapp group.
- c. Students should be given a deadline of five working days to submit their request and pay the fees through this portal.
- d. The fees charged for viewing and re-evaluation will be decided and notified by *{mention state nursing council}*
- e. Students who successfully submit the request for viewing their answer sheets should be sent the viewing portal link and credentials via email by the vendor within 12 hours of submitting the request.
- f. A helpdesk should be set up by the vendor to address any related queries from the students at least 1 day before the viewing/re-evaluation portal is opened.
- g. *{mention state nursing council}* should finalise and notify the eligible pool of assessors for re-evaluation within three days of rolling out the re-evaluation letter.
- h. Mapping of answer sheets for students who have submitted the re-evaluation form to evaluators should be done by the vendor within one day of closing the form.
- i. Re-evaluation process should be completed within 1 week after the re-evaluation portal is closed by the vendor.
- j. Final marks resulting from re-evaluation should be compiled within 2 weeks after the re-evaluation portal is closed by the vendor. Subsequently, the final results derived from the re-evaluation should be published on the same day of completion of the compilation of final marks.

ANNEXURE 1: Indicative timelines*

1	Logistics	Tentative date sheet deadline	T- 84
2	Student list	Fee payment deadline	T- 70
3	Logistics	Infra requirements shared with centres	T- 70
4	Logistics	Control room agency finalised	T- 42
5	Logistics	Datesheet and Instructions for dispatch released	T- 42
6	Scanning logistics	RfP for onboarding scanning vendor published	T- 42
7	Logistics	Deadline for institutes to update infrastructure	T- 35
8	Logistics	Institute infrastructure - Three checks complete	T- 30
9	Logistics	Centres finalised	T- 28
10	Evaluation	Letter and form for assessor and reviewer nominations published	T- 21
11	Centre logistics	Exam centres trained (virtual)	T- 21
12	Logistics	Scanning vendor onboarded	T- 14
13	Student list	Final Admit cards released	T- 14
14	Evaluation	Helpdesk set up for assessors and reviewers completed by vendor	T- 13
15	Exam conduction	Internals conducted	T- 13
16	Results	Internals marks uploaded online by training centres	T- 8
17	Evaluation	Assessors and reviewers finalised &	T- 7

		notified	
18	Logistics	Answer sheets transported to centres	T- 7
19	Exam conduction	Flying squad finalised and deployed	T- 7
20	Exam conduction	Practical exams start	T- 6
21	Exam conduction	Practical exams end	T- 3
22	Exam conduction	Control room set up	T- 1

23	Evaluation	Training for all assessors and reviewer completed by vendor	T- 1
24	Scanning logistics	Scanning infrastructure setup completed by vendor	T- 1
25	Exam conduction	Theory exams start	T
26	Logistics	Answer sheets sorting and scanning started by vendor	T
27	Exam conduction	Theory exams end	T+ 8
28	Evaluation	Evaluation started	T+ 21
29	Scanning logistics	Sorting and scanning of answer sheets completed	T+ 24
30	Evaluation	Evaluation completed	T+ 35
31	Results	Results declared on website	T+ 42
32	Re-evaluation	Viewing/ Re-evaluation portal live	T+ 43
33	Re-evaluation	Answer sheets available for viewing	T+ 43

34	Re-evaluation	Assessors for re-evaluation finalised and notified	T+ 46
35	Re-evaluation	Viewing/ Re-evaluation portal closed	T+ 50
36	Re-evaluation	Re-evaluation started	T+ 51
37	Re-evaluation	Re-evaluation completed	T+ 58
38	Results after re-evaluation	Results declared on website after re-evaluation	T+ 63