MERCER | mettl

safeguarding

online examinations

How Mercer | Mettl empowered IFIM Business School
to maintain its examination's integrity

welcome to brighter

About institute

Established in 1995, IFIM Business School, Bangalore, is one of the most prestigious B-Schools in India. Its groundbreaking quality of education encompasses a bespoke curriculum model, various super specialization courses, best-in-class faculty, and an elite set of international academic partners.

It is a pioneer of India's only Index of Service Excellence in India (ISEI), with a mission to nurture holistic, socially responsible, and continuously employable professionals. Currently, the institute ranks amongst the top six Business Schools in the country to have been awarded the notable AACSB accreditation.

Identifying challenges and business requirements

IFIM Business School has an established track-record of charting a transformative learning path in the Indian business education sector. A rich selection of leadership curriculums, tailor-made interactive learning models, and path-breaking pedagogical innovations, construe the professional and personal growth of innumerable students. The institute's quality reputation is also credited to its industry-based far-sighted approach.

The driving force balancing the institute's commitments, year-round, has been its academic calendar. As per that, IFIM Business School was gearing up to hold its high-stakes semester exams in April, when the pandemic altered its course. A government-extended lockdown caught the institute off-guard as they foresaw an indefinite pause in their regular routine. While students lacked clarity on the course of the examinations, provided closures continued till the next term, the varsity at IFIM Business School mooted a contingency plan to manage the ongoing crisis.

Initially, several suggestions, such as canceling the exams, scheduling open-book exams, and even channeling web conferencing software for conducting one-on-one exams, were mooted. The institute also contemplated postponing the exams until the situation improved or taking to a more virtual examination method. However, both approaches had certain consequences.

For instance:

1

Rescheduling exams would hamper the productivity of the students tremendously

2

Students who've spent months preparing for the exams would lose valuable time

3

The uncertainty on new dates would invariably delay the onset of the next academic year, causing furthering anxiety among students

Adopting an online approach created the possibilities of technical snags. However, the advantages of leveraging the technology in maintaining continuity far outweighed the disadvantages of postponing academic exams.

Challenges

IFIM Business School was familiar with the process of online examinations. These tests, however, were conducted on its LMSs in the class, with short objective questions under specific guidelines. It now wanted to incorporate technology for a more high-stakes examination and was exploring appropriate tools to modulate a sizable number of students and several courses remotely. However, the unavailability of a robust online platform with the agility to manage its magnified exam needs were bottlenecks in IFIM Business School's shift to the online medium and educational continuity. The institute also wanted a credible source to eliminate the possibilities of unethical behavior during the exams and the flexibility to integrate a teacher-created assessment and monitoring functionality.
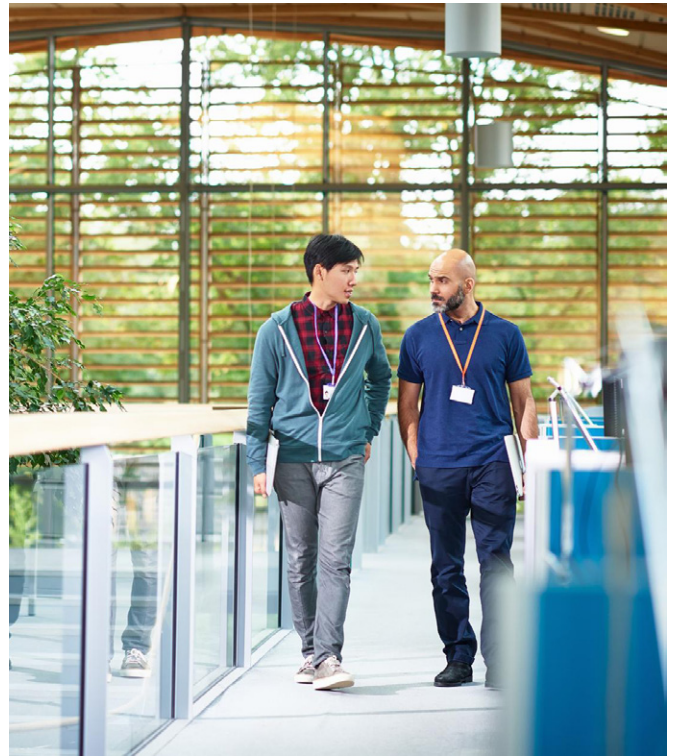
Therefore, IFIM Business School was actively exploring solutions to mitigate the following challenges:

1 Robust online platform

To conduct its high-stakes exams, IFIM Business School wanted a dynamic end-to-end online examination platform with the right combination of credibility, security, swiftness, and scalability. The institute's expectation included a high-range of sophisticated features for giving and taking exams, and evaluation while complying with its exam regulations.

2 Easy accessibility

The logistics related to creating technical accessibility can be a challenge. Not all academicians are well-versed in technology, and a smooth transition to the online medium could be burdensome for them. Similarly, preparing for the new format/delivery of exams, given the disruption of classroom examination, had to be fair to students. Hence, finding an easy-access, user-friendly, location-agnostic platform with a minimum bandwidth for learners and examiners alike was another challenge.

3 Managing the requirement of various question

Manual assessments, created by educators, are still considered the most common instrument for measuring students' learning. Hence, the institute wanted a platform that would personalize the exam console by enabling it to create and upload its exam papers. Additionally, to ensure validity and reliability, the institute needed multiple question types and exam formats such as MCQs charts, formulas, equations and many more, without any operational complexities.

4 Prompt delivery

The semester exam was around, by the time IFIM Business School decided on online exams as its solution. It was a challenge requiring enormous efforts to find a collaboration that would facilitate the timely delivery of various requirements with excellent services.

5

Credibility

Resorting to malpractice or unethical behavior during online exams pose a challenge to maintaining credibility and academic integrity. IFIM Business School was exploring ways to prevent cheating during the online exams, along with preserving transparency and fairness in assessments to evaluate students objectively. The possible measures included the option of enabling a human proctor to deter students' attempts at cheating or gaining an unfair advantage, which would be considered an act of academic dishonesty. Secondly, IFIM Business School wanted a secure browser feature that allowed academicians to host the exam in a safe environment without worrying about on-screen cheating.

6

Authentic evaluation and report generation

IFIM Business School wanted to gather detailed insights on student learning. Therefore, the institute wanted a genuine assessment evaluation to determine students' competency in the real world.

IFIM Business School believed the current disruption was not temporary and relatively long-term. It, therefore, sought viable partnerships to circumvent drawbacks and stimulate its online examination process, also enabling it to tide over similar unforeseen disruptions better in the future.

Solution

Mercer | Mettl was mindful of the institute's prestige and its urgent requirements. Hence it realized that aside from providing a well-rounded solution, it also had to negate numerous complexities to present a simplified strategy. Efficiency was important, but clarity and efficacy were equally critical. After a few constructive conversations, Mercer | Mettl's technical team integrated the Online Examination Platform with the institute's system in just two days. Within those two days, the team also trained the academicians on various aspects of the platform's functionality.

This deployment was a remarkable value proposition that met IFIM Business School's online examination requirements and accelerated its adoption of online tools with minimal technical adaptability.

> A proactive adoption of technology and new pedagogy are excellent risk mitigators against crises like these with no threat to business continuity
>
> **Dr. Atish,**
> Director at
> IFIM Business School

Online platform

Mercer| Mettl's Examine: IFIM Business School leveraged the robust **Online Examination Software System**, a competent, end-to-end solution to meet its online examination requirements. The comprehensive software enabled the institute to host its semester exams securely in a cost-effective, scalable, and credible manner online, in line with its rules, requirements, and policies.

Mercer | Mettl solved the following significant challenges:

Accessibility for students

IFIM Business School has a significantly diverse student population spread across the country. Therefore, it was critical to provide virtual connectivity to areas with even the most basic bandwidth connection.

• Mercer | Mettl's cutting-edge application ensured that students were able to take exams smoothly, even with a basic internet speed of 512 kbps.

• The platform replicated and created a real-life exam experience for the students to ensure a seamless examination experience.

• Students' well-being and safety were also ensured by enabling them to take the examination from the comfort of their home.

• The ability to manage and host a sizeable community of students spread across geographies and educational courses was demonstrated remarkably by Mercer | Mettl. The prowess of the platform was recently demonstrated by conducting over one lakh proctored assessments in a day, along with hosting multiple universities and students simultaneously.

Experience for the educators

IFIM Business School was mindful of its conventional academicians' digital disconnect. It understood the challenges of moving to the online medium without a seamless process and transition.

• With multiple platform training sessions and demonstration initiation, Mercer | Mettl ensured a hassle-free user experience for the university and its workforce.

• The online examination software was interactive, easy to navigate, and the senior management was empowered to use it most efficiently within two days of training and familiarization.

• IFIM Business School could enhance productivity and improve operations by eliminating repetitive and manual work

• Digital efficacy also fuelled an interest among other faculty members who realized possibilities with the use of technology.

Supporting multiple question types

To analyze the candidate's inherent potential in solving real-life problems as well as their agility in applying learned knowledge, IFIM Business School required customized access to a comprehensive repository of question formats such as MCQs, charts, formula & diagram-based questions, equations, and many more.

• With the option of uploading questions in 26 different formats, the faculty could scale their examination requirements as per their needs

• The variety of available formats accommodated a range of difficulties required by the academicians

• The elements that were divided into knowledge-based, application-based, and complex formulae writing sections, helped academicians assess the students' skills and knowledge accurately

Proctoring

IFIM Business School was mindful of the malpractices used by test-takers to trick the system. Hence, the School wanted to supervise students and their screens, taking the test even from the remotest of locations, using their proctors. Mercer | Mettl's suite of online proctoring technologies provided them with an eclectic option of enabling an AI-assisted human proctor. Students had to allow proctoring on their devices as a prerequisite to taking the exam. Students had to accept sharing their screen, video, and audio for the invigilator and AI-based proctoring.

## Mercer | Mettl solved two crucial pain-points:

Cheating prevention to ensure credibility

IFIM Business School's human proctor was able to monitor every test-taker remotely with similar levels of accountability as an in-person class.

- A customizable requirement specified by the institute enabled the proctor to pause/stop/resume the test in real-time in case of any suspicions.

- A live chat option enabled the proctor to interact with students to discuss and clear doubts during the exam.

- The assistance of Mercer | Mettl's state-of-the-art AI algorithm trained with more than 2.8 million proctored assessments helped the human proctor detect up to 18 dynamic digressions with over 95% accuracy. For instance, identifying other faces in the test environment, raising flags on detecting objects such as smartphones, and reading distracted eye movement across the room.

- Offline availability of the video footage proved to be an asset for future reference.

Mercer | Mettl's intelligent algorithm was also monitoring the examinee's screen using the Mettl Secure Browser (MSB).

- This secure browser feature allowed academicians to host the exam in a safe environment without worrying about on-screen cheating

- From enabling browser lockdown functions, to allowing minimum navigation control to block all external ports, MSB restricted access to any unauthorized resources possible
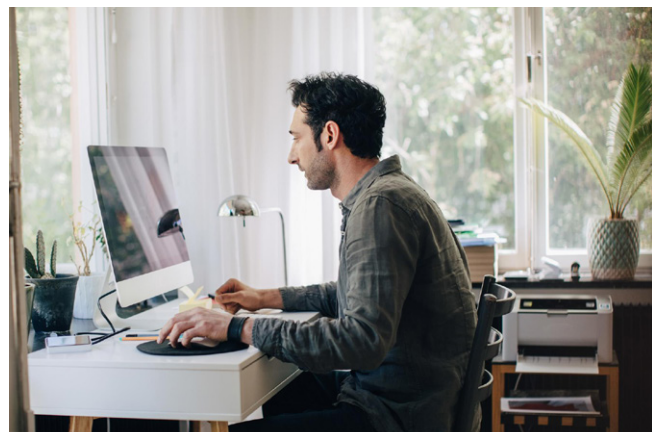
Credible report generation to maintain the authenticity of the evaluation

IFIM Business School wanted to keep a count of each candidate's score with below and above-average grades. Results from both the machine-graded and human-grade standardized assessment items were to be incorporated to create a complete picture of the student's grasp of the classroom learning.

Mercer | Mettl's real-time data generation enabled real-time validation and analytics of each student's score in two ways:

- Mercer | Mettl's proprietary algorithm- Credibility Index - provided an excellent and most relevant score of a candidate's integrity to the administrators. The auto-generated report highlighted insights from AI flags, recorded details of the proctoring sessions, and test finish status

- Mercer | Mettl's Student Report gave granular insights to IFIM Business School that helped it diagnose the student's competency in the real world. From the time spent on each question, to question-wise, section-wise analytics, the auto-graded, system-generated comprehensive reports on the candidates' performance, provided a well-rounded summary of their attempt

- The speed and detail of the results provided a clear picture of the necessary course of action

Mercer | Mettl, as a team, has been extremely cooperative. We moved to the platform during a serious pandemic. The fact that they made it happen within our requested time-frame says a lot about the agility, commitment, and their level of customer support. Their diligent assistance to our team ensured our academic schedule wasn't disrupted, and that helped ensure business and academic continuity.

Dr. Atish
Director
IFIM Business School

Impact

- The institute was able to abide by its original academic schedule despite the disruption faced due to the pandemic and the consequent lockdown

- By ensuring a speedy delivery, the institute was able to amplify the trustworthiness and retain the relevance of its curriculum

- The institute was able to set a variety of questions from Mercer | Mettl's rich repository. It included knowledge-based, application-based questions and even complex formula writing

- The institute was able to conduct its semester exams duly, without having to resort to open-book examination as an alternative

To date, 1790 students in the two-year master's programs and 190 students in the executive law course have completed their online exams using the platform
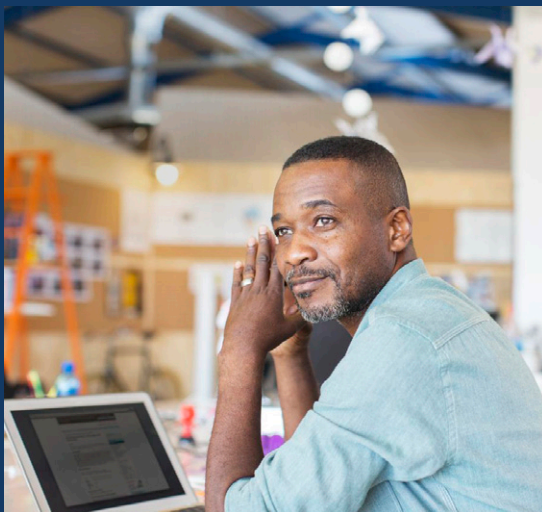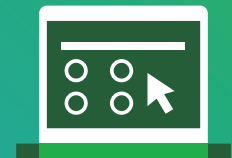
Moving forward

After the successful adoption of the online platform and the proctoring technology, the institute is now keen on further using Mercer | Mettl's services for its affiliated college examinations. A clear impression of the progressive creativity and affinity toward new pedagogical models showcased the pro-technology aspirations. IFIM Business School sees it as a definite boon in augmenting its overall learning operations and ensuring education continuity. After all, eliminating long-standing challenges and strengthening the education ecosystem are the cornerstones of Mercer|Mettl's advanced technologies.

About us

At Mercer I Mettl, our mission is to enable organizations to make better people decisions across two key areas: acquisition and development. Since our inception in 2010, we have partnered with more than 4,000 corporates, 31 sector skills councils/government departments and 15+ educational institutions across more than 90 countries.

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