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# Safeguarding online exams

How Mercer | Mettl enabled Vidhyamandir Classes
to conduct secure online proctored examinations

welcome to brighter

# About the institute

**Vidyamandir Classes (VMC)**, with a legacy of 34 years, is one of the foremost test preparation institutes in North and East India. It is synonymous with success in IIT-JEE & NEET - India's premier examinations. VMC employs unique pedagogy, extensive classroom sessions, a comprehensive and integrated study material, and an India-wide test and assignment system to help students explore their potential.

# Identifying challenges and business requirements

VMC's popularity and credence within the IIT-JEE & NEET aspirants' community are fortified as over 1,00,000 students appear every year for its test. **National Admission test (NAT)** is VMC's primary examination that filters the quality of enrolments based on the score and performance for its various JEE classroom programs across India.

Initially, the NAT was being conducted at testing centers. However, the global disruption caused by COVID-19 mandated an extensive shut down of educational institutes. Primary entrances were also postponed without clarity on its rescheduled dates. VMC realized the need to pivot from a traditional center-based format to an alternative strategy. It decided to shift its large-scale, high-stakes entrance test to the online mode.

While VMC had a scalable Learning Management System (LMS) to conduct the NAT, it did not have a proctoring feature. NAT was a high-stakes exam and necessitated an airtight solution to prevent cheating or the use of unfair means during the test. One of VMC's primary stakeholders, its sales staff, was also hesitant in shifting online as the transition appeared to be an added responsibility. There was considerable resistance, either owing to the desire to maintain the status quo or the inexperience in conducting online examinations. Hence, several challenges concerning scalability, ease-of-use, and integrity hindered VMC's transition online.

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# Challenges

VMC was empathetic toward thousands of aspirants who had prepared for months for the NAT. Hence, desired to ensure examination continuity by leveraging a robust, scalable, cheating-free, easy-to-use and location-agnostic platform.

The desired platform had to offer the following features to mitigate VMC's online examination challenges, **including:**

## A dynamic platform

NAT was a stepping stone for pan-India aspirants seeking a college to study diverse career disciplines. Therefore, VMC believed a massive number of candidates would use the content. Hence, VMC sought a platform that matched its desired scale. It also needed to be robust, credible, secure and swift, with no margin for flaws.

## Proctoring accessibility

VMC offered consistent and reliable courses and assessments, which lent value to its degree. Hence, when it decided to conduct the NAT remotely, it required a robust anti-cheating feature to ensure candidates attempting the test couldn't resort to illicit means. VMC also needed a remote-proctored online solution based on its format to supervise tests in real-time, in a secure environment. A stricter focus on invigilation would preserve transparency and fairness, ensuring only the deserving applicants were admitted.

## Ease of use

VMC wanted to bridge the gap between technology and its sales staff. The only way to mitigate the workforce's resistance and help them master the environment was by accessing an easy-to-use, safe and functional platform. It was not merely about navigation, as much as about a smooth transition with an uncomplicated interaction. Hence, its focus was on the user experience, reduced effort and seamless experience for all.

## Flexibility

The VMC faculty were going to design technical questions, comprising MCQs and JEE format questions. It needed assistance in uploading papers. VMC also had its learning management system (LMS) with an efficient assessment logic. Hence, it sought the flexibility to take the data from the examination platform and integrate it onto its LMS for grading and assessment.

VMC sought a partner through secondary research and references. It was well-versed of Mercer | Mettl's proven track record of delivering results at all levels. VMC was aware of Mercer | Mettl's noteworthy feat of conducting over one lakh proctored assessments in a day, simultaneously hosting multiple students.

Mercer | Mettl's ability to enable new-age technology to achieve the required scale assured VCM of the collaboration.

# Solution

The Mercer | Mettl team deployed its expertise instantaneously. It gained a comprehensive overview of the institute's challenges to determine the desired course of action. The Mercer | Mettl team was aware of its technological prowess and a host of features that would ease the VMC's online examination process. But it needed to allow VMC stakeholders validate the assertion.

The team engaged with VMC and offered it an understanding of the Online Examination Platform. It set up assistive demonstrations and allowed stakeholders to try the features. The platform's efficacy and efficiency piqued the interest and accelerated its usage.

# Online platform

**Mercer| Mettl's Examine:** VMC leveraged the robust **Online Examination Software System**, an intelligent, state-of-the-art solution to meet its online examination requirements. The comprehensive software enabled the institute to host its high-stakes entrance exams securely in a scalable and credible manner, with minimal technical adaptability.

## Mercer | Mettl solved these significant challenges:

## Scale

Accommodating a vast number of test-takers for the NAT, across various locations in a glitch-free manner was a priority for VMC. The Mercer | Mettl software was adept at meeting large-scale, high-stakes exam requirements. Its robust technology had a proven track record of conducting 100,000 successful proctored assessments in one day.

- VMC could tap the ample reach with efficient operation and performance from a single unified platform

- Even though the platform was had hundreds and thousands of simultaneous users from various geographic locations, the infrastructure could smoothly handle the increased load

- VMC could also upload a variety of question paper formats onto the platform with ease

- The digital answer sheets were integrated onto VMC's LMS for grading and evaluation after the exam

## Experience

VMC was facing significant resistance from its sales staff in conducting examinations online. They expected it to be inconvenient and complicated. The platform demonstration altered their perception.

- It was user-friendly, easy to navigate, and the staff didn't need technical knowledge or experience to understand its functionality

- There was no change in the experience for them

- The online examination software replicated and created a real-life exam experience to retain the traditional exam's experience for the applicants

- VMC noticed a visible transition amongst the staff who realized the possible opportunities by using technology

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# Preserving academic integrity

VMC wanted to supervise students' screens taking the tests even from the remotest of locations. Hence, Mercer | Mettl's intelligent algorithm was employed to monitor the applicants' screen using the Mettl Secure Browser (MSB).

- This secure browser feature allowed VMC to host NAT in a safe environment, without worrying about on-screen cheating

- Real-time updates on candidates' activities on screens and the ability to identify malpractices early on ensured excellent and relevant results

- MSB restricted access to unauthorized resources, including enabling browser lockdown functions, allowing minimum navigation control and blocking all external ports

- This validated VMC that only deserving students would be awarded the much-acclaimed admission

# Impact

## Here are some key results:

- VMC was one of the fastest adopters of online examination technology

- VMC was successful in conducting fair and unbiased exams for aspirants

- VMC has given almost 30,000 assessments using the Mercer | Mettl platform

- VMC could rationalize expenses, saving revenues worth INR 30 to 40 crore during COVID-19

- Digital efficacy also fuelled interest among other staff members

- The ease in conducting online examinations prompted VMC to also leverage the ecosystem in the longer term

- VMC plans to enable online examination using the Mercer | Mettl platform for its various entrance tests in tier-1 cities

- VMC's applicants provided extremely positive feedback as it offered ease, safety and examination continuity, safeguarding their future

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We have had an enjoyable experience working with Mercer | Mettl. And we believe this relationship will only get stronger, as our biggest test will be conducted by the end of October, where we will target close to 40,000 students. We will be taking an advanced offering from Mercer | Mettl for that exam.

**Mayank Jain**
Manager
**Vidyamandir Classes**

# 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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