



Taking semester exams **online**

Mercer | Mettl's resilient solutions ensured examination continuity for 26500 students of **CHRIST University**.



welcome to brighter



About the university

CHRIST (deemed-to-be-University) is a premier educational institution based in Bengaluru. It was initially established in 1969 as Christ College. Due to its holistic education and adoption of global higher education practices, it was declared a deemed-to-be-University in 2008.

Being a multi-disciplinary university with harmonious multiculturalism, CHRIST offers programs in various disciplines such as humanities, social sciences, science, commerce, management, engineering, education, law and architecture to over 26000 students. These include bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs spread across the deemed-to-be-University's five plush campuses in Bangalore, Pune and Delhi/NCR.



Challenges and requirements in conducting CHRIST's semester exams

CHRIST is a progressive deemed-to-be-University with a global footprint. Along with its unconventional reach, process, and policies, CHRIST has an incomparable forward-looking approach concerning education and examination. This was reflected at the beginning of 2020 when CHRIST successfully and seamlessly administered its entrance examination online amid the pandemic.

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Departments

Following that, it prepared a contingency plan for the remainder of the trimester and restored routine learning by adopting virtual education technology at multiple levels. Soon, the first academic session for **twenty-nine** of its departments neared its end, and semester exams approached.

There was a lack of clarity on the road ahead as CHRIST had no playbook for taking such a crucial exam online. The problem was not a psychological barrier to change. CHRIST was appreciative of the online ecosystem. Adequately replicating every aspect of a classroom-based semester exam with a digital model was the challenge. Reasonably, neither could academia postpone such a crucial exam nor employ the same solution like that for the previously administered entrance exams since the requirements were starkly distinct. Meanwhile, the pressure to maintain continuity with exam schedules was mounting.

What could convince CHRIST's academia and give them the confidence to embrace the digital way again?

Let us first explore the bottlenecks in shifting to the online medium.



Access to a dynamic examination platform

CHRIST was well aware that Mercer | Mettl's platform could easily scale to 100,000+ exams in a day. Therefore, modulating a sizable number of students was not an issue. But it needed to be robust enough to provide the empirical support for conducting and managing several courses remotely. CHRIST mandated a resilient platform for all its needs, including creating and scheduling exams, ensuring quality proctoring, evaluating the answer sheets, and eliminating all time-consuming tasks.



Managing the requirement of various question types

CHRIST offered bachelor's to doctoral programs in humanities, social sciences, science, commerce, management, engineering, education, and law to over 25,000 students. Each discipline had diverse user requirements, distinct exam formats such as equations, short and long questions, formula writing, diagram drawing and much more. The problem extended to finding a rich repository to accommodate miscellaneous question formats.



Ensuring a fair test writing experience

Students at CHRIST were extremely tech-savvy. But not everyone could type fast and manage their efficiency online for the full duration of an exam, given the distinct formats in which one had to write. Hence, CHRIST wanted a rational solution that would allow students a fair writing experience in their preferred format for quantitative and qualitative questions without any convolution.



Complications in manual evaluation

Another hindrance to CHRIST's move online was the possibility of managing evaluation. Given that the exams were remote, it was challenging for the institution to collate and manage physical answer sheets from distinct locations securely. It was the missing cog in the online exam process that was stalling its quick shift online.



High integrity

Academic and data integrity and security and confidentiality were significantly rigid and high-security conditions associated with administering large-scale semester exams online. Though CHRIST was already well-versed with Mercer | Mettl's secure and reliable environment bundled with AI (Artificial Intelligence) proctoring capabilities, it wanted substantial assurance that the same quality and rigor as its physical classroom examination could be replicated online without a glitch.



Flexibility with proctoring

CHRIST, like any other preeminent university, harbored a stricter focus toward its semester exams. Therefore, stringent invigilation to ensure fairness and promotion of only deserving students was extremely important. But it did not want external professionals to proctor the exam. It wanted its staff and faculty members to live proctor the applicants and supervise tests in real-time, in a secure environment. Thus, CHRIST was looking to train 900+ faculty, staff, and admin members on the proctoring software for a smooth remote proctored online semester exam.


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Continuity with Mercer| Mettl

Mercer | Mettl helped execute CHRIST's entrance examination drive, which was conceptualized and delivered within four days to ensure academic continuity. Despite the staggering impact of the pandemic, 43,000 students transitioned online without worrying about geographical boundaries or technical glitches. This superlative experience assured academicians of Mercer | Mettl's abilities. But the scenario with end-of-term exams was different.

Mercer | Mettl was aware of CHRIST'S dilemma and understood that it mandated a new-age solution. Anything off the shelf would not suffice. Hence, Mercer | Mettl's team built context-appropriate digital solutions suiting every aspect and stage of CHRIST's semester exam needs.

CHRIST witnessed the feature-richness and user-friendliness of Mercer | Mettl's solutions. The team tackled every challenge, making the entire process seamless for all stakeholders involved. Furthermore, efficient execution of entrance examination assured CHRIST of Mercer | Mettl's capacity to meet every demand, prompting it to continue with its academic calendar coherently, using Mercer | Mettl's solutions once again.



Mercer | Mettl's robust system offered much-needed ease and flexibility to our students in taking their exams. The platform evoked a sense of comfort, evidenced from the fact that the students have begun gravitating toward online exams.

Dr. Anil Joseph Pinto

Registrar

CHRIST (Deemed-to-be-University)



Solution

Mercer | Mettl EXAMIN- an all-in-one online examination system, offering an end-to-end digital solution with the platform, proctoring and evaluation.

Mercer | Mettl understood that the various examination stages, i.e., pre-exam, during-exam and post-exam needed context-appropriate solutions. Hence, for the first two parts of the problem associated with administering and invigilating remote online exams, Mercer | Mettl advocated its most viable value proposition- the futuristic online proctoring solution and user-friendly examination platform.



Mercer | Mettl's examination platform:

A robust online examination platform that enabled educational institutes to set up question papers, schedule exams and conduct exams in a scalable manner on a single platform offered a systematic and technological alternative to CHRIST's classroom-based semester exams.



A suite of anti-cheating tools:

AI-powered proctoring tools sanitized the exam environment to ensure cheating-free online exams.

For the third part of the problem associated with grading and evaluation, Mercer | Mettl's team created an all-together new solution, state-of-the-art industry-leading software for marking and evaluating answer sheets online.



Mercer | Mettl's ExaminER:

It is a centralized and streamlined exam evaluation feature that enabled complete management of the answer sheet evaluation process online and offered exam controllers, admins and evaluators a shared ecosystem.



Let us explore how these solutions helped the institution:

Here's how Mercer| Mettl's Online Exams Management System met CHRIST's 'before-the-exam' requirements:



Operational assistance in setting up exams

The examination platform helped the faculty automate their pre-exam planning process, and Mercer | Mettl's team substituted as administrators and coordinators.

- It created around **6000+ question papers**. They were in varying formats: short answer type, long answer type, formula and diagram-based questions, charts, equations, and many more.
- Aside from uploading the exam papers in the desired format on the platform, Mercer | Mettl's team shared test links with the students and offered constant assistance on the days of the examination.
- The faculty witnessed a considerable reduction in the exam set-up time with increased cost efficiency as opposed to offline exams.
- There was better time management and improved productivity internally with less tedious tasks and staffing issues.



Pedagogy training

To suffice CHRIST's mandate of having its faculty and staff proctor the semester exams, Mercer | Mettl's team undertook the task of training **700+ CHRIST** personnel to increase their efficiency in online proctoring.

- It began with providing training and preparing them for various situations during the exam days.
- To smoothen the learning curve, the team even shared some best practices concerning AI-based proctoring. This included assistance in understanding flags and anomalies.
- The staff did not need much technical knowledge or experience to understand its functionality.
- Faculty proctors were up-to-speed in a few days and adept at validating the test-takers' identity to avoid impersonation and integrity-related issues.

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Here's how Mercer| Mettl's Online Exams Management System met CHRIST's requirements 'during the exam':



QR code scanning for answer sheets

The Mercer | Mettl team built a custom-made solution for the exam-takers at CHRIST who were explicitly used to writing by hand than typing. This mechanism ensured equal advantage for all. This feature was called [QR Code Scanning](#). The following eased academia's writing experience concerns:

- During an exam, [the students wrote the answers on a physical answer sheet](#). Once completed, they [scanned the document using the phone and uploaded the image](#) onto the system. This was done using a QR code.
- This feature was [used for diverse types of exams involving](#) long answer writing, drawing a diagram, or solving an equation, which was otherwise difficult for some students online.
- [More than 25000 students accessed this feature](#) and were given extra time toward the end of the exam by proctors to scan and upload their answers.
- And since mobile phones were also being employed, [strict invigilation was ensured to avoid any wrongful use](#).



Live proctoring flexibility

After Mercer | Mettl's team detailed the entire proctoring session to CHRIST's team:

- The in-house live proctors monitored students remotely, from start to finish, to negate any unfortunate incident using one-to-one and one-to-many proctoring views available. They even granularly verified the test-taking environment for any anomaly.
- An added feature of pausing /stopping /resuming the exam in real-time, along with a live chat option, enabled in-house proctors to interact with the exam-takers as desired.
- Offline availability of the recorded video footage of proctors' 1x1 interaction with students was made available to selected authorized staff of the university for future reference.
- With in-house live proctors, CHRIST could eliminate its reliance on third-party proctors, lending greater credibility to the process.

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AI-powered proctoring

The examination platform's preconfigured AI proctoring technology ensured a stricter focus on monitoring, analysis, and scrutiny to maintain CHRIST's integrity. It gave a wholesome view of the applicant's action, activity, and environment remotely, in the following ways:

- Mercer | Mettl's futuristic and highly trained AI algorithm **proctored more than 25000 unique students, with more than 5000 students simultaneously** during peak timings or parallel exams.
- **The intelligent algorithm helped faculty flag various suspicious cases:** These included non-visibility of face/ presence, detection of mobile phone, the presence of an additional person, distracting movements, etc. This enhanced the live proctor's ability to detect cheating and led to proctoring instances that went beyond two lakhs (two hundred thousand) in number.
- AI-assisted proctoring even generated recorded feed and flags for review to help examiners filter out candidates who may have resorted to cheating. Such levels of reliability lent incredible ease and integrity to the invigilation process.



Here's how Mercer | Mettl's Online Exams Management System met CHRIST's 'after-the-exam' requirement:



Easy evaluation of answer sheets using ExaminER

CHRIST facilitated a seamless evaluation process for all its exams online with a custom-made feature called [ExaminER](#). It began with providing access and training to over 1,000 evaluators. Even though it was done collaboratively, CHRIST managed the process itself, making the exam evaluation a seamless process.

- A digital evaluation solution ensured there was [no physical handling of answer sheets](#). They were all scanned and uploaded online by the students using the QR code. This eliminated administrative tasks such as storing, circulating, tracking, and collecting answer sheets, with more attention on reliable marking and accurate results generation.
- Answer sheets were assigned to different evaluators by the moderator with complete anonymity to [eliminate any possibility of bias](#).
- With [controlled and well-defined access](#), CHRIST safeguarded the integrity of the evaluation process with no leakages, loss or theft of personal data, question banks or answer sheets.
- [Collaboration and real-time exchange of information](#) included the possibility of parallel checking wherein multiple assessors oversaw answer sheet evaluation simultaneously. This helped optimize time and effort and ensured a quick and reliable turnaround of rightly tabulated results



Project governance for timely delivery

The examination controller, administrators and evaluators had access to the user-friendly examination dashboard with the requisite checks and controls. Therefore:

- The examination controller could track every exam stakeholder's performance, progress, engagement, and adherence to the proposed timelines in real-time. This saved ample time otherwise spent in reaching out to individual members.
- Inbuilt reminders and alerts ensured automated notifications to the evaluators, informing them of the pending work if they were behind their schedules. This process helped the examination controller ensure that its proposed timelines were being honored without much effort.
- Students were also given limited access to ExaminER to review the evaluated answer sheets. This arrangement replicated the physical examination process while bringing much transparency to the entire process.



Quick results declaration

A faster digital evaluation ensured students did not need to wait for weeks or even months to know the status of their exams' results. This agility helped maintain the intended timeline for the following session.



24x7 support

Mercer | Mettl's technical back-end and customer support team ensured 24*7 client and candidate support. Mercer | Mettl hand-held, trained and actively assuaged every online examination, proctoring and evaluation concern while working round the clock to keep the software up to date, compatible and error-free. Simultaneously, it also mitigated students' concerns throughout the drive.



Data safety

Mercer | Mettl's stringent policies and extensive protocols ensured information privacy and data security at every stage of the examination process.

- All exam data, including student information, questions, and answer sheets, were stored safely on a cloud-based server (Amazon Web Services (AWS)).
- All data exchanged over the network between the test-takers and the invigilators were secured and encrypted via HTTPS 256-bit SSL encryption).
- With clear guidelines toward access-right-management, Mercer | Mettl's team allotted only a privileged few staff of the university and Mercer | Mettl the right to view and access the various system resources. They could even track who, where and when accessed the data. This ensured that sensitive information was free from hacks, leaks and theft.



Impact



Right from managing exam schedules, providing proctoring assistance to setting up evaluation features, Mercer | Mettl provided CHRIST with a cutting-edge all-in-one online examination system. This end-to-end digital solution with a platform, proctoring and evaluation prepared according to its exam-specific needs and requirements made every process easy to conduct, seamless to administer and immune to disruptions.

Mercer | Mettl's team delivered at scale. Its tailor-made offerings such as 'manual digital evaluation' and 'QR code scanning' enabled CHRIST to continue with its intended semester exam process and cycle without a glitch. The solutions eliminated bottlenecks, increased online competency and provided seamless advantages compared to traditional methods.

Here are some highlights:

- CHRIST took **25,000+ students online** without worrying about the test-takers geographies or any technical glitches.
- There were **four lakhs + hours** of proctoring done using Mercer | Mettl's proctoring technology.
- Mercer | Mettl's team created **6,000+ assessments** for CHRIST within the specified time limit.
- The ability to **scan and upload answers using QR codes** provided all test-takers with a level playing field.
- A suite of user-friendly proctoring features and the training provided by Mercer | Mettl helped **CHRIST's 700+ in-house invigilators** monitor the exams remotely.
- Optimum reliability and validity of the evaluation safeguarded the institution's integrity.

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About us

At Mercer | 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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