

Setting a model on exam front

With barcoded answer books and online question paper delivery, KUHS follows an almost hassle-free digitised pattern for conducting exams, reports SHYAMA RAJAGOPAL.

Barcoded answer books, double evaluation, leak-proof online delivery of question papers and CCTV-supported invigilation are part of the new examination system implemented by the Kerala University of Health Sciences (KUHS).

Built fully on software developed internally by the university, the new digitised pattern for conducting examinations could well be a model for any medical university in the country.

All the 290 colleges affiliated to the health university are now following the pattern, which is termed almost hassle-free.

“The pattern works 99.9 per cent in tune with what the university had intended to implement. No system could be called 100 per cent perfect,” said new Vice Chancellor of the university M.K.C. Nair.

SWOT analysis

There is always room for improvement by incorporating new digitised methods to improve the efficiency and this introspection brought about a SWOT (strength, weakness, opportunity, threat) analysis of the examination pattern.

The analysis was published in the latest issue of the National Medical Journal of India.

Involved in the study were P.K. Sudhir, central council member, Homoeopathy, and Controller of Examinations; Praveenlal Kuttichira, Principal, Government Medical College, Ernakulam, who was the former Dean (Research), Department of Psychiatry, KUHS; K. Harilal, systems manager; and K. Mohandas, former Vice Chancellor, KUHS.

The new pattern has been in place for the past two-three years and the SWOT analysis reveals the major achievements and some inherent weaknesses in the system.

Double evaluation was something of a benchmark for the health university, said Dr. Nair. SWOT analysis points out that if there is more than 15 per cent difference in the marks awarded to a student by two examiners, a third examiner is appointed by the university to evaluate the answer paper. “Students do not have to worry about re-evaluation,” he said.

Well in advance

Other highlights are issuing barcoded photo identity cards once students register for a course and publishing the examination calendar at the start of the academic year.

Examinations are notified 45 days in advance.

Admit cards are generated after verifying the eligibility and are electronically sent to the Principal of the college concerned who issues signed copies to the students.

Barcoded answer books help in keeping the identity of the student secure.

The results are published after the computer adds the marks for practicals and internal assessment. Till then marks remain scattered in different files and in different locations.

Random selection

Question papers (QP) set by various panels of experts are fed into the Question Paper Bank from which the computer randomly selects a QP on the day of the examination.

It is uploaded to a website 45 minutes before the examination. A university observer monitors the proceedings till the despatch of answer books.

Weaknesses

Among the weaknesses identified during the SWOT analysis are that there is no dedicated pathway for transmission of QPs and the software developed is not registered, hence not tamper-free.

The double evaluation, though an achievement, is an arduous task and there is no system to provide a feedback about evaluation.

‘The pattern works 99.9 per cent in tune with what the university had intended to implement.’