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# EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF JOINT ADMISSIONS AND MATRICULATION BOARD (JAMB) IN TERTIARY ADMISSIONS IN NIGERIA

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## Abstract

This study evaluated the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Three (3) research questions were raised and answered. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with sample size of two hundred (200) respondents (undergraduates) randomly selected from Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that the rationales behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria included. Likewise, the findings showed that the extent at which the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved is high. The findings further revealed that Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) is an effective examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Also, the finding showed that challenges militating against the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria include: inadequate budgetary allocation to Jamb, Inadequate staff, poor internet services, shortage of infrastructure facilities, Epileptic power supply among others. This study concluded that JAMB prospects in our education sector are not in doubt and with its recent innovations to



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make candidates selection quality wise. The study therefore recommended that there should be increased collaboration and teamwork between JAMB and tertiary institution in Nigeria in candidates selection processes that would ensure quality and standards. Also, there should be a step up of the usage of ICT in JAMB examination conduct that would minimize human interference as well as engender quality result output. In like manner, there should be more computer and internet facilities to facilitate the use of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board computer-based examination.

# Introduction

Examination is a process of assessing the amount of education/learning an individual has achieved over a period of time. Examinations are authentic means utilized to ascertain the degree to which learning targets have been imbibed by students so that they can be offered some assistance in their further studies, certification or job placement. Usman (2018) defined a test or examination as an assessment intended to measure a testee knowledge, skills, aptitude, physical fitness or classification in many other topics (e.g., beliefs); a test may be administered orally, on computer or on a paper. The school based are conducted by schools focusing on what the teachers have taught while public examinations are based on a syllabus which schools are expected to cover. They determine academic and job opportunities. National examinations are designed for use by policy makers to find out how education is progressing, while international assessment provide information for inter country comparison. Examination is one of the ways to test one's ability, and school grades have been shown to be a powerful predictor of future success, as measured by education, occupation and income (Slominski, Sameroff, Rosenblum, & Kasser, 2011; Strenze, 2007). The role of examination bodies across the world are specifically outlined for obvious reasons. For instance, Terseer (2012) noted that the general societal expectations from examination bodies focus on the ensuring right individual passed required examination as expected. In this wise, examination bodies like Joint Admission and Matriculation Examination Board (JAMB), West African Examination Council (WAEC), National Examination Council (NECO) and National Board for Technical Education Board (NABTEB) are all having different roles to play in Nigerian education sector particularly, in tertiary institutions' candidates' selection into their choice courses and schools.

Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) is an examination body set up by Nigeria government in 1978 with the responsibility of ensuring a uniform standard for the conduct of matriculation examination and placement of suitable candidates into the nation's Universities. The law was amended in order to add the conduct of Monotechnic,



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Polytechnics and Colleges of Education Matriculation Examination (Eze, 2014). Thus, today, the board conducts entrance matriculation examinations not just into Nigerian Universities but also into Nigerian public and private Monotechnic, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education. Initially, the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) into Universities (UME) was held separately from that of the Monotechnic, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (MPCE). However, in a bid to save time, cost of operation and give every candidate equal opportunity to gain admission into any institution based on their academic performance, JAMB joined both exams together to form the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). This helped JAMB to establish a fair method of selection for admission and helped create an equitable distribution of available space in tertiary institutions (Eze, 2014).

UTME could be referred to as 'common entrance' examination conducted by the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) of Nigeria on yearly basis for the sole purpose of selecting and placing suitably qualified candidates into Nigerian Universities. UTME helps JAMB to establish a fair method of selection for admission and helps create an equitable distribution of available space in tertiary institutions. In 2013, Computer based test was introduced by JAMB in addition to the paper and pencil test that it had used since its inception. Omodara (2010) also stated that the standardization of test administration conditions is one of the benefits offered by CBT that was introduced by JAMB. No matter the size of the test-takers, CBT helps test developers to set the same test conditions for all participants. More so, Bodmann and Robinson (2004) in their study investigated the effect of several different modes of test administration on scores and completion times. They observed that undergraduate students completed the computer-based assessment test faster than the paper-based assessment test. Furthermore, Lim, Ong, Wilder-Smith & Seet (2006) presented that technology-based assessment provide opportunities to measure complex form of knowledge and reasoning that is not possible to engage and assess through traditional methods.

However, despite of all benefits of JAMB enumerated above there are problems associated with the testing methods. These problems are discussed one after the other. The first of these problems is a power supply problem which has to do with the challenge of erratic power supply in Nigeria. This problem is the most problem militating against CBT as means of assessing the learners since all the villages, hamlets, towns and cities and the learners there are to write external examination for them to gain admission into higher institution of learning with erratic supply of electricity into the cities and towns and no power supply to hamlets and villages at all despite attempts by various governments. Irregular and frequent interrupted power supply in Nigeria is a perennial problem affecting every aspect of the economy including education (Oye, Mazleena & Iahad, 2021).



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Many applicants have become handicaps while many have lost their lives due to accidents in one way or the other when traveling for JAMB examination due inadequate ICT infrastructure including hardware, software and bandwidth accessibility in their environment. Obioma, Junaidu & Ajagun (2013) observed that much of the infrastructures for automated examinations are either obsolete or overstretched in terms of capacity, accessibility, reliability and security. Again, the absence of internet facilities in our rural areas requires students travelling long distances to urban centres to have access to internet. As a result of this many students have to cover many kilometers distance to their place of abode and a times accidents do occur leading to death or maimed. Broadband penetration needs to be fast-tracked to reduce the cost of internet bandwidth access in Nigeria and to forestall untimely death and possible fracture.

According to Akinnodi, Akingbade and Gbadamosi (2025), the public opinion about the appalling standard of performance of students graduating from universities in Nigeria in the recent time has reached an alarming crescendo. More disturbing is the common observation that many graduates from universities are being rejected by the labour market because of low academic competence. Hitherto, the general untidiness in the uncoordinated system if admissions into universities and their attendant problems were sufficient causes for concern to all and sundry in Nigeria. Despite the establishment of JAMB which is Nigeria's official entrance examination board aimed at regulating admission process, some educationists have argued that the incompetence of many university students after graduation is precipitated by the selection procedure of JAMB which fails to control the number of quality of candidates being admitted into the universities annually.

Furthermore, the problem of examination malpractice has affected the effectiveness of JAMB as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Examination malpractices cannot be overcome because majority CBT examination centers in Nigeria are privately owned individual cybercafé owner. These individuals are profit making individual are ready to make profit at all cost (Imasuen and Ebuwa, 2020). One of the key reasons advanced for migrating from PPT to CBT is to curb the rampant cases of examination malpractices in the country, the integrity of these businessmen in adhering to the laid down procedure for biometric data capturing during registration and verification during examination cannot be guaranteed (Imasuen and Ebuwa, 2020). Experience in SSCE examination has shown that most of the privately owned schools are for pure economic gains leading to all sorts of examination malpractices. These exam "miracle" centers syndrome has been transferred to CBT centers (Imasuen and Ebuwa, 2020). It is against this background information that this study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of joint admissions and matriculation body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria.



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**Statement of Problem**

The problem that faced by Joint Admissions and Matriculations Board (JAMB) when it used UME scores to select candidates into first year undergraduate classes was that of the predictive validity of the assessment instrument. In the actual fact, meeting JAMB's criteria should predict future performance in the University. The question then is to what extent is this actually so? JAMB had been repeatedly criticized over the years regarding its selection and admission procedures. Such critics included Agbonifoh and Dimowo (1985), Ogonor and Olubor (2002). Adeyemi (2001) reported about candidates whose incredible high scores did not reflect in their own level of intelligence while some candidates who managed to secure just a little above 200 marks by their own efforts and were privileged to secure admission were performing excellently well. The issue of ineffectiveness of JAMB has been a major concern to all Nigerian in recent time. It is believed that the conduct of the examination body is not effective when compare with the aim and objective behind its establishment. The problem could be hinged on the influence of variables such as inadequacy of ICT facilities, problem of power supply, inability to operate computer effectively, distance of CBT centers to where the candidates live, examination malpractices through the Cyber Café ownership and due to unavailability of paper pencil to do some workings. The study, therefore seeks to examine the extent to which variables such as inadequacy of ICT facilities, problem of power supply, evaluate the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**Purpose of the Study**

The primary purpose of the study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Specifically, the study is designed to:

1. assess the rationale behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria;
2. evaluate the extent at which objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved;
3. evaluate the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**Research Questions**

The following questions were raised for the study.

i. What is the rationale behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria?



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ii. To what extent has the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved?
iii. What is the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

**Methodology**

Descriptive research of survey design was used for the study. Descriptive Survey design which focuses on the vital facts from people, their beliefs, opinions, perceptions and behaviors was adopted. In this study, descriptive survey was suitable to elicit information about the evaluation of the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of all undergraduate from Adeyemi Federal University of Education, Ondo. A total number of two hundred (200) respondents were considered as sample size for this study. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select the respondents.

In stage one, simple random sampling technique was used to select two (2) departments from each of the faculties. In stage two, proportionate sampling technique was used to select students from each of the selected departments to make a total of 200 respondents. Research instrument titled "Self-Assessment Questionnaire (RSAQ)" was used to collect data. The instrument consisted of twenty-five (25) items on the evaluation of the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB). The instrument was subjected to face and content validity. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained through Cronbach alpha. Reliability co-efficient of 0.98 was obtained which indicated a reliable index. Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentage and mean.

**Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the rationale behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria?

**Table 1: Mean analysis of the rationale behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria**

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std. D | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jamb was established for the general control of the conduct of matriculation examinations for admissions into all Universities, | 152 | 40 | 8 | --- | 3.78 | 0.94 | Agreed |



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| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std. D | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Polytechnics and colleges of education | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Jamb was established for placement of suitably qualified candidates in collaboration with the tertiary institutions | 135 | 45 | 15 | 5 | **3.57** | **0.88** | **Agreed** |
| 3 | Jamb was established to ensure that all candidates took a unified entrance examination | 123 | 61 | 16 | --- | **3.56** | **0.88** | **Agreed** |
| 4 | Jamb was established to stop the practice of candidates receiving several offers of admission | 150 | 40 | 10 | --- | **3.72** | **0.92** | **Agreed** |
| 5 | Jamb was established to maintain consistent academic standard in the selection of candidates into Nigerian tertiary institution. | 133 | 51 | 16 | --- | **3.61** | **0.90** | **Agreed** |
| **Weighted Average** | | **3.64** | | | | | | |

**Key: SA** = Strongly Agree, **A** = Agree**, D** = Disagree, **SD** = Strongly Disagree, N = Number of respondents (Students), C = cut-off point, $\bar{x}$ = Mean of responses, R = Remark, S.D = Standard Deviation, **Decision Value:** Disagree= **0.00-2.49**, Agree = **2.50-4.00**

**Note on Remark:** *The highest mean value obtainable for each item is 4.00. Any item that has mean value below 2.50 was regarded as* ***Disagreed*** *while anyone with mean value above 2.50 was taken as* ***Agreed****.*

Table 1 shows the rationale behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria. The table shows that the respondent agreed to all the items on the table above that Jamb was established for the general control of the conduct of matriculation examinations for admissions into all Universities, Polytechnics and colleges of education ($\bar{x}$ = 3.78), Jamb was established for placement of suitably qualified candidates in collaboration with the tertiary institutions ($\bar{x}$ = 3.57), Jamb was established to ensure that all candidates took a unified entrance examination ($\bar{x}$ = 3.56), Jamb was established to stop the practice of candidates receiving several offers of admission ($\bar{x}$ = 3.72), and that Jamb was established to maintain consistent academic standard in the selection of candidates into Nigerian tertiary institution ($\bar{x}$ = 3.61). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 3.64 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which falls within the decision value for agree, it can be inferred that all the above are rationales behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria.



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**Research Question 2:** To what extent has the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved?

**Table 2: Mean analysis of the extent at which the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved**

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std. D | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jamb has made progress in fostering inclusiveness, notably for candidates with disabilities | 152 | 43 | 5 | --- | **3.76** | **0.93** | **Agreed** |
| 2 | Jamb has been able to reduce examination malpractice through the introduction Computer Based Test (CBT) system | 151 | 34 | 15 | --- | **3.70** | **0.92** | **Agreed** |
| 3 | The adoption of e-governance in Jamb's operations help to minimized information asymmetry and fraud | 120 | 60 | 20 | --- | **3.52** | **0.87** | **Agreed** |
| 4 | Jamb has been able to promote transparency in the examination and admission processes | 131 | 69 | -- | --- | **3.68** | **0.92** | **Agreed** |
| 5 | Jamb maintain high standard and quality in the matriculation examination process. | 135 | 23 | 38 | 4 | **3.47** | **0.86** | **Agreed** |
| **Weighted Average** | | **3.62** | | | | | | |

**Key: SA**= Strongly Agree, **A** = Agree**, D =** Disagree, **SD** = Strongly Disagree, N= Number of respondents (Students), C = cut-off point, $\bar{x}$ = Mean of responses, R = Remark, S.D= Standard Deviation, **Decision Value:** Disagree= **0.00-2.49**, Agree = **2.50-4.00**

**Note on Remark:** *The highest mean value obtainable for each item is 4.00. Any item that has mean value below 2.50 was regarded as* ***Disagreed*** *while anyone with mean value above 2.50 was taken as* ***Agreed****.*

Table 2 shows the extent at which the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved. The table shows that the respondents agreed as follows to all the items in the table: Jamb has made progress in fostering inclusiveness, notably for candidates with disabilities ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76), Jamb has been able to reduce examination malpractice through the introduction Computer Based Test (CBT) system ($\bar{x}$ = 3.70), The adoption of e-governance in Jamb's operations help to minimized information asymmetry and fraud ($\bar{x}$ = 3.52), Jamb has been able to promote transparency in the examination and admission processes ($\bar{x}$ = 3.68), Jamb maintain high standard and



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quality in the matriculation examination process ($\bar{x}$ = 3.47). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 3.62 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which falls within the decision value for agree, it can be inferred that the extent at which the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved is high.

**Research Question 3:** What is the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria?

**Table 3: Mean analysis on the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria**

| S/N | Items | SA | A | D | SD | $\bar{x}$ | Std. D | R |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Jamb has been able to serve as a unifying examination body for admitting students into all tertiary institutions in Nigeria | 162 | 31 | 7 | --- | **3.80** | **0.94** | **Agreed** |
| 2 | Jamb provide standardized evaluation | 171 | 12 | 10 | 7 | **3.76** | **0.93** | **Agreed** |
| 3 | Jamb improves overall admissions | 131 | 69 | -- | --- | **3.68** | **0.92** | **Agreed** |
| 4 | Jamb CBT led to a significant increase in the number of candidates admitted into tertiary institution | 135 | 23 | 38 | 4 | **3.47** | **0.86** | **Agreed** |
| 5 | Jamb CBT reduce the cases of examination malpractice thus, making admission process effective. | 120 | 60 | 20 | --- | **3.52** | **0.87** | **Agreed** |
| **Weighted Average** | | **3.64** | | | | | | |

**Key: SA**= Strongly Agree, **A** = Agree**, D =** Disagree, **SD** = Strongly Disagree, N= Number of respondents (Students), C = cut-off point, $\bar{x}$ = Mean of responses, R = Remark, S.D= Standard Deviation, **Decision Value:** Disagree= **0.00-2.49**, Agree = **2.50-4.00**

**Note on Remark:** *The highest mean value obtainable for each item is 4.00. Any item that has mean value below 2.50 was regarded as* ***Disagreed*** *while anyone with mean value above 2.50 was taken as* ***Agreed****.*

Table 3 shows the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. The table shows that the respondents agreed as follows to all the items on the table: Jamb has been able to serve as a unifying examination body for admitting students into all tertiary

institutions in Nigeria ($\bar{x}$ = 3.80), Jamb provide standardized evaluation ($\bar{x}$ = 3.76), Jamb improves overall admissions ($\bar{x}$ = 3.68), Jamb CBT led to a significant increase in the number of candidates admitted into tertiary institution ($\bar{x}$ = 3.47), Jamb CBT reduce the cases of examination malpractice thus, making admission process effective ($\bar{x}$ = 3.52). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average of 3.64 out of 4.00 maximum values obtainable, which falls within the decision value for agree, it can be inferred that Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) is an effective examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

**Discussion of Findings**

Analysis on the rationale behind the establishment of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria revealed that Jamb was established for the general control of the conduct of matriculation examinations for admissions into all Universities, Polytechnics and colleges of education, Jamb was established for placement of suitably qualified candidates in collaboration with the tertiary institutions, Jamb was established to ensure that all candidates took a unified entrance examination, Jamb was established to stop the practice of candidates receiving several offers of admission and that Jamb was established to maintain consistent academic standard in the selection of candidates into Nigerian tertiary institution

Analysis on the extent at which the objective of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) in Nigeria has been achieved was high and this can be seen in the following area according to the findings: Jamb has made progress in fostering inclusiveness, notably for candidates with disabilities, Jamb has been able to reduce examination malpractice through the introduction Computer Based Test (CBT) system, The adoption of e-governance in Jamb's operations help to minimized information asymmetry and fraud, Jamb has been able to promote transparency in the examination and admission processes, Jamb maintain high standard and quality in the matriculation examination process. It however, agrees with the work of Adenegan and Osho (2012) which clarifies that the establishment of this examination body was aimed at monitoring and coordinating admission into the universities through a centralized examination system in order to do away with problems of multiple admissions of candidates and also minimize cases of admission irregularities as well as malpractices among individual universities.

Analysis on the effectiveness of Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) as an examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria revealed that Joint Admissions and Matriculation Body (JAMB) is an effective examination body for admitting students into tertiary institutions in Nigeria and this can be seen in the following area: Jamb has been able to serve as a unifying examination body for admitting students into all tertiary institutions in Nigeria, Jamb provide standardized evaluation, Jamb



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improves overall admissions, Jamb CBT led to a significant increase in the number of candidates admitted into tertiary institution, and that Jamb CBT reduce the cases of examination malpractice thus, making admission process effective. However, it contradicts the work of Akinnodi, Akingbade and Gbadamosi (2025) which clarifies that the problem of incompetency of university graduates in Nigeria has been partly blamed on the Board's system of admission. Thus, every year, JAMB conducts Unified Tertiary Matriculations Examination (UTME) and forwards the results to the candidates' institutions of choice for further screening as the case may be subject to individual mode of selection and admission.

**Conclusion**

This study discussed the role of JAMB in the selection of candidates into tertiary institutions in Nigeria by critically looking the intrigues, dynamics as well as the prospects of having a world class establishment that will guarantee the selection of competent students for admission into higher institution of learning. Before the advent of JAMB tertiary institution in Nigeria were at liberty to conduct their individual selection of candidates on a decentralized model. However, the challenges that followed this individual tertiary institutions selection of candidate give room for the establishment of JAMB as a centralize admission medium. Interestingly, JAMB in its forty-eight years of existence as a board having all the legal backing to select candidates is not without its challenges. Even as the board has transmitted from pen and paper to CBT, the problems associated with its examination conduct is not far from over. Nevertheless, JAMB prospects in our education sector are not in doubt and with its recent innovations to make candidates selection quality wise. This study made a modest concludes by way of making far reaching recommendations for JAMB and other critical stakeholders.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made for possible implementation.

1. There should be increased collaboration and teamwork between JAMB and tertiary institution in Nigeria in candidate selection processes that would ensure quality and standards.
2. There should be a step up of the usage of ICT in JAMB examination conduct that would minimize human interference as well as engender quality result output.
3. There is need to review the act that established JAMB so as to make the board work in synergies with tertiary institutions on a partnership, network and cooperation in the higher education sector.



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4. The management of Joint Admission and Matriculation Board should employ more computer personnel and instructional designers to design and guide the students during computer-based examination.
5. There should be more computer and internet facilities to facilitate the use of the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board computer-based examination.
6. Students should be encouraged at levels of education to improve their computer literacy so as to enhance their flexibility during the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board computer-based examination.
7. There should be provision for instructional guide, online campaign and frequent ask question on Joint Admission and Matriculation Board website for students.

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