



Taking **MAT** to the masses

Mercer | Mettl's remote proctoring technology enables AIMA to take the prestigious MAT online for 35000+ students across the country



welcome to brighter

About AIMA

The All India Management Association (AIMA) was established over 60 years ago to further management learning and practice in India. AIMA's contribution to the country's management profession has been exceptional through various services, such as distance learning programs, events and conferences, skill development and training, reports and publications, management development programs, executive education and testing.

Management Aptitude Test (MAT) is AIMA's flagship program. It is a prestigious and standardized test for admission in MBA programs in reputable B-schools. MAT was accredited as a national-level test in 2003 by the Government of India, with over 600 national and international B-schools accepting admissions based on the MAT score.



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AIMA's challenges & requirements in conducting MAT examination

MAT is conducted four times annually and receives up to 100,000 applications every year from students who aspire admission in the B-school of their choice. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in lockdown in March when AIMA was already gearing up for the MAT examination in May. It forced AIMA to choose whether to defer the exam or shift to an online mode.

AIMA wanted the right technology partner after deciding on conducting MAT in May. While AIMA had already contemplated digitizing MAT, the pandemic expedited the process, making it explore the available technologies to conduct remote proctored exams and ensure exam continuity. Since thousands of students took MAT every year, AIMA wanted to offer an efficient alternative to center-based tests it conducted till now.

AIMA intended to offer its students the flexibility and freedom to take the exam from anywhere. The pandemic and the related infrastructural constraints left AIMA with the sole option of conducting virtual exams. However, maintaining the exam's quality and credibility was equally a priority and a significant challenge, aside several issues for which AIMA needed quick solutions.

The four major challenges that AIMA needed to address immediately before shifting the MAT to the online mode were:



Cheating prevention

MAT is a prestigious test accredited and endorsed by top government bodies. AIMA needed to ensure the credibility and success of the exercise. Curbing instances of cheating, impersonation, and other malpractices was a significant challenge in digitization. While eliminating the need to travel to a physical center to take the exam was a necessity during the pandemic, AIMA wanted to maintain control and quality over the execution of the exam.

Students were not under the direct supervision of physical invigilators. Therefore, AIMA suspected that students might indulge in unfair means, use phones, browse the internet for answers, or have someone answer the questions for them by impersonating or being present in the same room. For AIMA, virtual exams meant multiple distractions and cheating opportunities.

AIMA wanted to simulate the same level of credibility offered in the physical center-based exam. The high level of control in physical invigilation had been a standard practice for AIMA. The new mode of exam needed to offer the same authenticity.



Stakeholder experience

MAT is taken by thousands of students from far-flung towns across the country. AIMA prides itself on its reach in the remotest locations in India. The sheer volume and scale was a significant challenge in shifting MAT to an online mode of examination. Given its eminence and high-stakes, a massive number of applicants needed to access the test simultaneously and seamlessly, without technical glitches.



Robustness and scalability

The aspirations of thousands of applicants are hinged on this exam every year. It was vital to improve the test-takers' experience while shifting the mode of the examination.

MAT had continually conducted center-based exams. Hence, facilitating a similar or improved experience was a notable concern for AIMA. Students were habitual of appearing for the exam in the traditional format. Therefore, a significant benchmark for the virtual mode of MAT was to ensure the same accessibility without hampering the candidate performance and experience.



Accessibility

A bulk of MAT applicants come from tier-3 and tier-4 cities, where internet connectivity and bandwidth are pertinent concerns. AIMA was apprehensive of disincentivizing aspirants from such geographies by moving to a virtual mode.

MAT was round the corner, and AIMA had a daunting task ahead. Its reputation, along with the other 600-plus institutes associated with it, was on the line. AIMA set out to partner with a compatible technology platform that could fulfill its varied requirements and address the challenges that had dissuaded it from going online till now.

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The solution

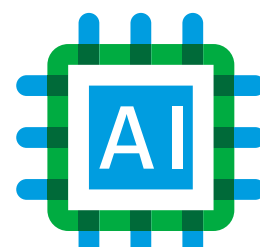
Mercer | Mettl's proctoring and platform suite

Mercer | Mettl combined its top of the line tools and services to create an impeccable solution after understanding AIMA's unique challenges and considering the importance of the MAT exam. Catering to AIMA's every concern, Mercer | Mettl offered its **state-of-the-art proctoring features, robust platform and services.**

Proctoring suite: Artificial Intelligence (AI) + human proctoring

Mercer | Mettl assured AIMA of a double-layer proctoring - AI operating in the background, with human invigilators remotely monitoring the students.

AIMA's concerns about students cheating and using unfair means to pass the test were put to rest with a 98% cheating detection rate. Mercer | Mettl's AI-based proctoring flagged facial detection, voice detection, device detection, multiple people detection and other distractions.



The Mettl Secure Browser (MSB) enhanced MAT's safety and security by enabling browser lockdown functions and allowing minimum navigation control to block all external ports. This addressed on-screen cheating and restricted test-takers' access to all unauthorized resources. A notification was shared with the human proctors if they attempted to navigate away from their screens.

Human proctors could invigilate multiple candidates in a single view. They could zoom in on students, check on them, even chat with them to assuage their concerns or warn them. The system also recorded test-takers' every activity and flagged questionable actions in a time log to ensure the examination's credibility. These processes provided a verifiable mechanism to alleviate any doubts on the exam's integrity and results.



The interventions mentioned-above created a watertight environment, negating any possibility of cheating.

A seamless and robust platform

Mercer | Mettl's advanced platform provided a simple, interactive and user-friendly interface to cater to MAT's scale while ensuring ease-of-use for all stakeholders.

Mercer | Mettl's highly scalable and secure cloud-based platform was designed to seamlessly manage the magnitude of MAT applicants without glitches. Mercer | Mettl had already conducted 100,000 proctored assessments in a day, assuring AIMA of its platform's prowess. Mercer | Mettl ensured that MAT was made accessible to everyone, irrespective of their location, with minimum requirements of low bandwidth internet connectivity and a webcam. This encouraged candidates even from tier-3 and tier-4 cities to take the exam from the convenience of their locations.

Exceptional delivery and support

Even though AIMA first contacted Mercer | Mettl in April to discuss the deliverables, Mercer | Mettl was committed to ensuring exam continuity for MAT's test-takers. The company worked tirelessly to fulfill AIMA's specifications, customized the tools and the service model, and successfully implemented the virtual exam within the promised timeline.

Mercer | Mettl's uninterrupted operational support and promptness empowered AIMA to solve all its challenges and conduct nation-wide MAT with the same robustness and credibility as in a traditional format, making the alliance a resounding success.

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AIMA's technology partner: The experience of partnering with Mercer | Mettl



Mercer | Mettl came across as one of the most robust platforms for AI-based proctoring. The AIMA teams that worked with Mercer | Mettl appreciated it for being accommodative, flexible and prompt. The Mercer | Mettl team never gave 'no' as an answer. They were always upfront about the specifications and customizations we requested from them. The professionalism and transparency of the team are highly commendable and appreciated by all of us.

Sanjeev Phatak

Director
Centre For Management Services
AIMA



AIMA's experience with Mercer | Mettl was enhanced because of its:



Rich expertise

For AIMA, Mercer | Mettl's rich expertise and experience in conducting large-scale and high-stakes examinations over a span of eight years played a crucial role in assuaging its concerns about scale and credibility. Mercer | Mettl had enabled countless institutions to give their exams online, ensure high exam integrity and facilitate cheating prevention through advanced measures. This assured AIMA of taking MAT virtual, with Mercer | Mettl's platform and proctoring suite.



Customization & flexibility

Due to AIMA's immediate need and its accreditation with government bodies, it desired flexible processes, tools and service model. Mercer | Mettl accommodated AIMA's prerequisites and modified its tools to fulfill MAT's specifications.



Uninterrupted support

Given its maiden attempt at giving such a high-stakes exam online, AIMA needed 24x7 support and rudimentary hand-holding and training by a partner with considerable experience in facilitating such an undertaking. Mercer | Mettl offered continual assistance and impeccable support to AIMA to ensure a successful drive.



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Impact

Mercer | Mettl's examination platform and proctoring tools impacted MAT in several positive ways:

- Enabled over **35000 applicants** to move from offline to the online mode, seamlessly and without any technical or operational glitches.
- Since MAT was conducted four times a year, AIMA anticipated a drop in the number of applicants for the remote proctored exam format. Contrary to AIMA's expectations, MAT witnessed an uptick in participation from tier-3 and tier-4 cities.
- The test was administered in May, as scheduled, ensuring students' career progression continued unhindered despite the corona-induced disruption.



The participation rate was around **37%** in the offline mode, which increased to **45%** after introducing remote proctored exams.





Thousands of candidates have already taken the test on Mercer | Mettl's platform. They are completely satisfied with the way the test has been conducted, how the entire platform is deployed, and the processes that are extremely user-friendly.

I must say it has been a very successful journey.

Sanjeev Phatak

Director
Centre For Management Services
AIMA

The way forward

AIMA houses many departments under its name. The Center for Management Education offers degree programs and foreign universities exchange programs. AIMA is seeking to extend remote proctored examinations to students from other programs to ensure they too benefit from the new system.

Mercer | Mettl's customization prowess has instilled a deep trust in AIMA of seamlessly undertaking examinations of all formats and scale. AIMA is writing a new future of exams with Mercer | Mettl and digitizing education to ensure learning continuity.

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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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