ICAN implements e-marking in six months and takes the first step to digital assessment

Case Study | Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria

Introduction

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) is a professional body established in 1960. The Institute has over 50,000 members and marks more than 90,000 exams annually. ICAN's mission is to produce world-class chartered accountants, and to regulate their ethical standard and technical competence in the public interest.

They do this through providing qualifications, professional development and support for their members so that they have the knowledge and values to help improve local and global economies. Therefore, it is important that the assessment process to qualify these professionals is rigorous, accurate, and timely.

In line with global trends, ICAN is investing in technology to facilitate more effective and efficient client service delivery to stakeholders.

ICAN approached RM in 2018 to find out how they could safeguard the security and integrity of their exams and help them improve their assessment practices.

RM offers end-to-end digital assessment solutions and has extensive experience of working with accountancy bodies such as ACCA and ICAEW and was, therefore, a natural choice of strategic partner for ICAN.

Goals

ICAN's goals in modernising their assessments were:

- To create a more effective and efficient system that reduces the exam assessment period and removes the need for central marking thereby reducing the assessment cycle.

- To implement a future-proof system that allows continuous improvement.

Key challenges

ICAN challenged RM to help them:

- Implement e-marking in just six months.

- Set up a flexible system that can be easily scaled up to suit ICAN's plans for continuous improvement and ongoing transition to full digital assessment.

The Solution

ICAN started the collaboration with RM in June 2018, when they performed a pilot with a small group of examiners marking a sample of live exam scripts. RM Assessor's ease of use saw the group assessing candidates' scripts within an hour of being introduced to the system.

ICAN recognised that RM Assessor could help maintain the security and integrity of the exam process through secure storage of scanned scripts. This, combined with the anonymisation of scripts (removing room for bias) and monitoring of quality through standardisation and script seeding, gave ICAN the confidence that their exam results would continue to be accurate.

Up and running in six months

As a result of the success of the pilot, ICAN wanted to get the system up and running for their next exam session, so the RM team leapt into action. RM worked with the technical team on integrating RM Assessor with ICAN's systems, setting up the data feeds structure and provided training for examiners. Six months after signing the contract, ICAN was ready to use e-marking.

A faster marking process

With e-marking, exam papers are scanned and made available to examiners online much faster. Marks are automatically collated, totalled and verified in the e-marking software. This flexibility, automation of admin tasks and ease of access to exam papers has allowed ICAN to speed up their marking process and improve efficiency. The first exam session went so well that, ICAN has already decided to expand the use of RM Assessor into their junior exams.

Increased exam capacity

By reducing the amount of time spent between when the exams are taken to when they are marked, ICAN was also able to introduce an additional senior level exam session, enabling students to take exams at more times of the year.

Improved marking quality

Before implementing e-marking, ICAN had a manual process in place to check exam marking accuracy which was time consuming. ICAN now uses the "seeding" quality model in-built in RM Assessor to quickly identify any marking concerns and redirect exam scripts to other examiners when necessary.

Financial implications

By transitioning to e-marking, ICAN reduced the cost associated with transporting paper exam scripts between multiple places for pen-and-paper marking and moderation.

Looking ahead –
Evolving through collaboration

To make the transition to e-marking possible in such a short timescale, the team at RM first implemented a 'light' version of RM Assessor. The system was configured in such a way that gives ICAN the opportunity to gradually add new functionality and make further steps in their journey to digital assessment rather than transforming to full digital assessment at once.

As a forward-looking organisation, ICAN is looking at ways of expanding the use of e-marking for their exams and getting the maximum available of the available technology.

rm.com/assessment

Testimonial

"We are continuously seeking ways to ensure our students' results are of the highest standard. The partnership with RM helps us revolutionise the way we mark our examinations, further cementing the integrity and transparency of our marking process."

Dr Innocent Okwuosa
Chairman, Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria

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