



भारतीय कृषि अनुसंधान परिषद  
INDIAN COUNCIL OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

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Dated: 27<sup>th</sup> March, 2023

**OFFICE MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for conducting Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCEs) in ICAR – reg.**

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for conducting Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCEs) in ICAR is hereby notified with the approval of the Competent Authority for the information, guidance, compliance and necessary action to all concerned.

**Encls: As above**

  
(N.K. Sarvang)  
Under Secretary (R&P)

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1. The Directors of all the ICAR Institutes/NRCs/PDs/Bureaux/ATARIs.
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(Hindi Version will follow)


Standard Operating Procedure for  
Limited Departmental Competitive  
Examination in ICAR

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1. Examinations for filling up of the different categories of vacant posts through Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations, two types of examinations are being conducted as indicated below:
  - A. Centralized examinations: Centralized Examinations are those Limited Departmental Competitive Examinations (LDCEs), which are conducted at the ICAR Headquarters level viz. Limited Departmental Audit & Accounts Examination for eligibility for filling up of the post of Assistant Finance & Accounts Officer (AF&AO) in ICAR etc.
  - B. Decentralized examinations: (i) Limited Departmental Competitive Examination for promotion to the post of Section Officer, Assistant, Upper Division Clerk, Lower Division Clerk at ICAR Headquarters. (ii) Limited Departmental Competitive Examination for promotion to the Assistant Administrative Officer, Assistant, Upper Division Clerk and Lower Division Clerk at the Institutes/Units of ICAR. Note: The LDCE quota for each post has been prescribed in the Recruitment Rules of the post.
2. The vacancies for the post should be called for Category-wise as per Recruitment Rules. Notice of the Examination should be issued well in advance and at least 30 days' time should be given for filling up of the application form (maximum 40 days, if incumbent is on deputation or long leave). Care should be taken to avoid any important festival (National/Regional) and National Holidays etc. falling on the dates selected for the conduct of the Examination.
3. The notification/notice of the Examination should contain category-wise vacancy position, eligibility criteria, date of Examination, Scheme & Syllabus of the Examination, Mode of Examination, Last date of receipt of application etc. The last date of receipt of applications should be clearly specified keeping in view that reasonable time is given to the candidates to submit their applications. The notifications should be uploaded on the Institutes/Units website as well as eOffice module to aware all the concerned.
4. Paper-setters should be selected after due care and caution by the prescribed Authority. Paper setters should not be involved in work relating to evaluation of answer script work. Only those officers who have got aptitude, interest and flare in such activities should be entrusted the task of paper-setting/finalization of answer key. The question paper should be set bilingually both in English and Hindi. In case of any difference between the printing text of Hindi and English, the English version will be treated as final.



5. Minimum Pay Level of paper setters are as follows-
- (i) LDCE for the post of Section Officer at ICAR Headquarters Level – 11.
  - (ii) LDCE for the post of Private Secretary Level – 11.
  - (iii) LDCE for the post of Assistant Administrative Officer Level – 11.
  - (iv) Limited Departmental Competitive Audit & Accounts Examination for filling up of the post of Assistant Finance & Accounts Officer Level – 11.
  - (v) LDCE for the post of Assistant, Personal Assistant, Upper Division Clerk. Level – 10.
  - (vi) LDCE for the post of Lower Division Clerk Level – 8
6. The paper setters will ensure that the standard of the questions is commensurate with the caliber, aptitude and mental level of the candidates, cadre and job requirement as per the Scheme & Syllabus and instructions issued by the Recruitment Section/Cell of the Council. In all circulars, orders and guidelines/Rules issued in the Council before two months of the examination will be part of the syllabus.
7. Paper Setters should provide the soft copies of the question with password protected file. The question papers should be supplied in both soft copy and hard copy prepared bilingually in Hindi and in English by the Paper Setters. All necessary measures should be taken to maintain confidentiality in setting/moderation of question papers.
8. If the Examination is held Centralized by ICAR Headquarters, all the Institutes/units should verify the details of all the candidates including date of birth, date of regular appointment, category, etc. for allotting Roll numbers. However, in case of Unit based examinations, the details of the candidates should be verified by the Establishment/Administration Section concerned. If any candidate is found to have made a false or incorrect statement or to have suppressed material information, he will be considered as having used unfair means in the Examination concerned and treated accordingly as per rules.
9. Admit Cards to the candidates should be issued only by the Controller of the Examination well before one-week time of the Examination. The Admit Cards/Hall Tickets should bear the details of the candidate viz. Name, Roll Number, Venue of Examination, Date & Time of the Examination, Medium of Examination opted, Instructions for strict compliance in the Examination etc. Candidates should check the DETAILS printed in the Admit Card and in case of any discrepancy, the same may immediately be reported to the issuing authority for rectification.



10. Candidates should be informed to bring their own Pens, Pencils, Erasures etc. All Electronic items including Mobile Phones, Pagers, Calculators or any electronic gadget as Bluetooth Devices, Pen Drives etc. are strictly prohibited in the Examination Hall, accordingly, the candidates are directed not to carry these gadgets during the Examination. Candidate should be provided blank sheets for rough work. The rough work should be done at the specified blank sheets and in any circumstance; it should not be done on Admit Card / Answer sheets.
11. The Examination Centre (if other than the concerned ICAR Institute) should be identified by the Controller of Examination/In-charge. The Examination Centres should be secured for conducting the Examination as per the requirement, considering the number of candidates appearing in the examination at the particular Centre. Facilities like availability of safe drinking water, washrooms, lights, fans and furniture should be ensured. The Examination Hall should be appropriately ventilated, if not Air-conditioned.
12. Candidate should be allowed to take the examination on producing of their Admit Card/Hall Ticket in original. It may also be advised that the candidate should carry his/her original Identity Card. Proper identification of the candidates should be made with reference to admit cards/official identity cards, etc. to avoid any impersonation. Candidates should not be allowed to change their seats in any case.
13. The Reporting Time should be minimum half an hour before the scheduled time of the examination and in No circumstances, candidates should be permitted to enter the examination Centre after half an hour of the scheduled time of the examination.
14. The Centre Supervisor should ensure completion of all necessary arrangements in connection for the conduct of the Examination on the day previous to the Examination like Seating arrangement, display of placards of instructions etc. It should be ensured that suitable persons are appointed as Invigilators, Examination Assistants, MTS etc. Detailed instructions should be explained/issued to the invigilators and examination functionaries before actual conduct of Examination.
15. The Invigilators should arrive at least half an hour before the commencement of examination and make sure of the room allotted to them. Two Invigilators should be appointed for every 24 candidates. There should be at least 2 Invigilators even if the number of candidates is less than 24 in a single hall. This arrangement would enable one

Invigilator to remain on duty in the room if the other one has to go out for some reason.

16. The Centre Supervisor should ensure that no relative/dependent of her/his or any of the invigilators is appearing at that Centre. He/She will obtain the required certificate (i.e. No Relation Certification) from the Invigilators in this regard. He/she will also make a declaration to the effect for himself/herself.
17. The question paper packets should be taken out by the Centre Supervisor from the Strong Room at the Examination Centre. He/she will keep the question paper packet in his/her personal custody. About 30 minutes before the Examination is to commence, the Invigilators should be directed to collect the question paper and answer booklet. It must be ensured that no Answer Book is supplied which does not contain the initials of the Centre Supervisor. No Answer Book is to be left at tables that are not occupied by any candidate.
18. The number of Question papers in the packet is to be checked with the number indicated on the cover. Whenever the sealed packet of question paper is taken out for distribution to the candidates, it has to be ensured that it pertains to the correct paper and on opening also this may be checked up before actual distribution. This would obviate the chances of distribution of wrong question papers.
19. Answer sheets are to be distributed only to candidates who are actually seated in the Examination room/hall. Answer sheets along with the copy/sheet for descriptive part should be distributed amongst the candidates 15 minutes before commencement of the paper for filling description like name of examination, paper, Roll No., Subject, Series etc. It should be the responsibility of the candidates to make sure that all the above required data/entries in the Answer Book are correctly filled in and omission or lapses in these entries will be subject to rejection of the Answer script at the time of evaluation. The candidate should be personally responsible for the same and no excuses will be accepted later.
20. Before the commencement of the Examination, the following instructions to the candidates should be read out in an audible voice by the Invigilators:
  - (a) Candidates should carefully read and follow the instructions on the cover/reverse of their Question paper and Answer scripts.
  - (b) Candidates will not write their names/any other type of indication anywhere in the Answer Books (if not prescribed).

- (c) Disciplinary action can be taken against the candidates for doing so.
  - (d) If more than one Answer Book (for theory part) or forms etc. have been used, the answer paper should be tied with a tag, provided to the candidates.
  - (e) Candidates will be expelled from the Examination hall for resorting to unfair means and they will also be subject to departmental proceedings.
21. The Question Papers are to be distributed to the candidates 2 minutes before the actual commencement of examination with a direction to start writing/answering after the bell rings or as informed orally. The Centre Supervisor should ensure that no question paper or Answer Book is allowed to fall into unauthorized hands. He should also render a proper account of spare copies of the question papers and the unused Answer Books.
22. The Invigilators should see that there is no communication of any sort either among the candidates, or between the candidates and any outsider from the Examination hall. Silence should be maintained in the Examination Hall.
23. Soon after the commencement of the Examination, the Invigilators should get the Attendance sheet signed/filled by the candidates, this should be completed within 45 minutes of commencement of the Examination. The invigilators should also check that all the above entries are correctly made by the candidates and that no entry is left blank. It should be ensured that all instructions meant for candidates are scrupulously followed by the candidates.
24. Supplementary Answer Books/Sheets (for descriptive part) should be supplied to a candidate only when the Supervising Officer/Invigilator is satisfied that the candidate has actually exhausted the previous Answer Book. While issuing supplementary Answer Books, the candidates must be asked to enter roll number and book number on the supplementary Answer Books/Sheets also.
25. If any candidate raises an issue of any misprint or ambiguity in a question paper or any other such omissions, he/she should be informed that these issues will be considered after the actual conduct of the Examination and candidates will be given reasonable opportunity to raise these issues before finalizing the answer keys. Only corrections/changes which are received along with the question paper will be announced by the invigilators/Centre supervisor.



26. No request for bio-break (wash room) should normally be entertained 30 minutes before the end of the examination/session.
27. Timings of the Examination may be sounded through bell or orally and 15 minutes before the Examination is over a warning bell or orally should also be made and the remaining time be announced loudly. The candidates should be asked to start the tagging of additional Answer Books and other papers, if and when applicable, if not already done. No candidate should be allowed to go out of the Examination hall till the Answer Scripts/sheets are collected by the invigilators.
28. Scripts are to be collected quickly ensuring that no candidate gets away with any extra time. Immediately after the end of the Examination, the number of the Answer Books are to be rapidly counted and tallied with the number of candidates present. Only after ensuring the above exercise, the candidates should be allowed to leave the Examination Hall. The scripts are then to be checked with the attendance list and issue of supplementary Answer Books to be tallied with the number of books actually affixed to the scripts.
29. All answer sheets of an Examination Centre shall be put in sealed packet in the presence of the Centre Supervisor. After sealing of the Answer scripts/sheets, the sealed Box may be placed in the safe custody/Strong Room of the Institute.
30. The entire Examination material including the answer scripts and unused question papers should be dispatched/ handed over, as the case may be, on the same day to the Controller of Examination, who shall ensure that the sealed packets have been received untampered/intact.
31. On the conclusion of the Examination in the last paper, the Centre Supervisor should send a report to the Controller of Examinations showing the details of candidates indicating the Roll numbers/names (if permissible) who actually appeared at the Examination and the subject or subjects in which they appeared in the prescribed form. Care should be taken that no mistake occurs in the names of the candidates.
32. The guidelines issued by the Department from time to time for Persons with Benchmark Disabilities to be followed in letter and spirit.
33. A Control room with suitable Officers nominated by the Competent Authority should function at ICAR Headquarters/Institute's Office on the day of the Examination. A Control room will function on the day of Centralized/Decentralized Examinations.

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34. After the successful conduct of the Departmental Examination, the provisional Answer Keys provided by the paper setters should be published on the ICAR's/Institute's Website/eOffice and call for objections/feedback from the candidates within a reasonable time fixed by the competent authority.
35. The Objections/Comments raised by the candidates should be considered by a Committee Constituted by the Institute for decentralized examinations and Competent Authority at the ICAR Headquarters for Centralized Examination and furnish report with specific recommendations on each disputed question substantiated by relevant rules. The minutes of the Moderation committee should be forwarded to the Paper Setters/Moderators and obtain their feedback.
36. In case the observation/recommendations of the Moderation committee are completely accepted by the paper setters/moderators, the competent authority can arrive at a final decision and Publish the final answer key and results accordingly.
37. Whenever there is a recommendation for deletion of any question by the committee and approved by the competent authority, due to being incorrect options in Answer, etc. No marks should be awarded to the candidates in respect of the deleted questions irrespective of the fact whether the candidate attempted the question or not.
38. In the event of tie in scores of candidates in the Examinations, merit will be decided by applying a criterion, one after another in the given order, till the tie is resolved. When two or more candidates get clubbed due to securing equal marks on the basis of written examination and APAR, decision shall be taken as per following:
- (i) Date of birth, with older candidate (length of service) being placed higher.
  - (ii) Total marks of Papers – I, II, III,.... of the Examination.
  - (iii) Alphabetical order in which the names of the candidates appear.
39. The Examiner should maintain strict secrecy in respect of the question paper, answer scripts, marks awarded, and all other matters connected with the Examination. They are also responsible for the security of the Answer Books so long as they are in their custody. Answer sheets will be evaluated mechanically at the ICAR Headquarters or Institute, as the case may be, under the supervision of an Officer designated for the purpose.



40. In case of descriptive paper, the Examiner should ensure that the evaluation of answer scripts allotted to them is completed within the stipulated time. Where more than one Examiner is nominated for the same paper, it is necessary to ensure, as far as possible, uniformity in the standard of evaluation is maintained. Outsider Evaluator(s) should be instructed in advance as to the method of evaluation in respect of different cadres of the Council.
41. The entries of marks in the marks-lists should be carefully checked with the total shown on the respective Answer Books. This is also very important that each page of the marks-lists should be authenticated by the dated signature of the Examiner. The total of marks awarded to an answer script on any subject should not have any fraction. If the total amounts to a fractional figure, it should be rounded off to the nearest or next higher whole number, as the case may be. There is no objection in granting marks with fractions to individual question or parts of a question.
42. The Examiner should insert marks awarded to each answer in the margin of the script at the end of the answer. In the case of questions with parts, the final marks given to a question may also be similarly inserted, except that since the final marks will be the total of the different parts of the question, the final marks may in addition be encircled. If any answer deserves 'Zero' then it may be so marked instead of leaving it blank as otherwise it may lead to an inference being drawn that it has been overlooked in evaluation. Utmost care should be exercised in the evaluation of Answer Scripts, so as to ensure that no answer or option thereof remains un-assessed, and that the total of the marks awarded are correct.
43. If any candidate or any person on behalf of a candidate communicates or attempts to communicate with the Examiner, or otherwise tries to influence him/her for awarding marks, the Examiner should report the fact to the Director concerned (in case of Institute)/Joint Secretary (Admn.) (in case of ICAR Headquarters), to which the candidate belongs, for appropriate action.
44. Marks obtained in evaluation of record of service (i.e. APARs of the officers available to the Assessment Board at the time of its meeting) will be counted for ranking wherever applicable. Once the APARs have been evaluated by the Assessment Boards, no request for its reassessment will be entertained under any circumstances including a change in APAR grading, etc. at a subsequent date. There shall be a minimum of 40% (forty percent) marks in the evaluation of record of service. Therefore, such candidates who obtain less than 40% (forty percent)



marks in the evaluation of record of service will not be considered for ranking.

45. Answer Books/Sheets will be preserved for a period of 12 months from the date of declaration of result. Records related to court cases/vigilance cases/disputes/RTI should be preserved till finalization of such cases and thereafter suitable orders be taken from Competent Authority for disposal.
46. Paper wise marks should be tabulated, and category-wise merit list drawn for declaration of result keeping in view the vacancy position notified and cut off marks prescribed as per eligibility of different category of candidates in the Recruitment Rules or instructions of the Council. Result will be drawn on All India basis/Institute-wise as per recruitment procedures, as the case may be.
47. List of selected candidates/result should be provided to the Establishment Division/Administration as per the notified vacancies keeping in view the vacancies for reserved categories. Where the examination is qualifying in nature, the list of selected candidates should be published merit-wise.
48. In case of Court Case, the result of the Provisional candidates should not be published till their provisional status is cleared and recommended by the Competent Authority. Communications of marks, in respect of provisional candidates, cannot be communicated even if sought under RTI Act, 2005 without permission of the Hon'ble Court. In such cases, the marks should only be published after clearance of provisional candidature by the concerned authorities.
49. On conclusion of disciplinary case / criminal prosecution which results in complete exoneration or dropping of allegations / charges levelled against the employee or he/she is not found guilty, the sealed cover(s) shall be opened. The due date for promotion will be determined with reference to the position assigned to him in the result of LDCE kept in the sealed cover(s) and with reference to the date of promotion of his next junior on the basis of such position. If any penalty is imposed on the candidate as a result of the disciplinary proceedings or if he is found guilty in the criminal prosecution against him, sealed cover(s) shall not be acted upon. The above provisions / procedure shall be made applicable for all notification of Departmental Examination issued hereafter along-with the case(s) where result of Departmental Examinations is yet to be declared either at Institute level or Headquarters level.



50. Tabulated result sheets or mark sheet registers of all the examinations should be preserved for a period of two years from the date of announcement of the respective results. Records related to court cases/vigilance cases/disputes/RTI should be preserved till finalization of such cases and thereafter suitable orders be taken from Competent Authority for final disposal.
51. Examination functionaries:
- (i) Controller of Examination: The officer looking after the complete process of the Examination.
  - (ii) Observer: The officer nominated by the Competent Authority for observing the examination process as per guidelines.
  - (iii) Centre Supervisor: The officer responsible for smooth conducting the Examination on a particular City where number of Examination Centres are more than one.
  - (iv) Centre-In-Charge: The officer responsible for smooth conducting the Examination on a particular Centre.
  - (v) Invigilator: The officer deputed for invigilation duty by the Centre Supervisor.
  - (vi) Examination Assistant: The official deputed for confidential works of the Examination like preparing list of candidates, Exam. Hall Arrangements, etc.
  - (vii) MTS: The official deputed as supporting staff for conduct of the Examination.
52. If any clarification is required on any point of the above guidelines and/or if any issue arises, which is not covered in above guidelines, the same will be decided/finalized by the Secretary, ICAR.

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