



NPF

NATIONAL POLICY FORUM



Photo: Bhusan Yadav

INSENSITIVE BOARD EXAMS AND EVALUATION POLICIES

NEGATIVE IMPACT ON STUDENTS' FUTURE

Submitted by
NATIONAL POLICY FORUM

Submitted to
Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education, Science and Technology

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Preface

The National Policy Forum (NPF), established in 2024 and registered under the Companies Act, is dedicated to promoting good governance, evidence-based decision-making, and civic awareness throughout Nepal. As an organization committed to driving positive change through informed policy interventions, we are pleased to present this report, which addresses a critical gap in Nepal's education system.

Board exams are pivotal moments in students' academic journeys, shaping their future educational and career opportunities. However, unforeseen emergencies such as health issues, family losses, or other crises can prevent students from attending these exams, placing their academic progress and future prospects in jeopardy. In Nepal, the absence of policies to accommodate such circumstances forces students to either take exams under distress or face significant academic delays, often losing an entire year or having their transcripts marked with stars, which indicates that students passed the subject only after failing regular exams. This system not only disrupts their education but also negatively impacts their motivation and mental health.

NPF believes that a student's hard work and dedication throughout the academic year should not be undermined by circumstances beyond their control. Our research highlights the urgent need for flexible examination policies that can accommodate emergencies, ensuring that no student's future is compromised due to administrative inflexibility. Quality education is a constitutional right, and it is imperative that our education system supports every student's success, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.

This report offers a comprehensive analysis of the current situation, international practices, and practical solutions to ensure academic fairness. We propose policy changes, including flexible exam schedules, special internal evaluations, and attendance waivers, alongside clear procedures for managing emergencies. Our goal is to align Nepal's education system with global standards, ensuring that students' futures are protected, and their educational journeys remain uninterrupted.

Introduction

Board exams are critical junctures in students' academic lives, determining their future educational and career opportunities. Despite their importance, students may encounter emergency situations such as health-related issues, family loss, or any emergencies that prevent them from attending board exams. When students are unable to attend their board exams, they risk losing the most valuable of all: their time, opportunities for further studies, and professional development. However, currently, in Nepal, there exists no policy to accommodate these circumstances. Whether a student has lost a parent or suffered a serious illness, they are still obligated to take the board exams without exception. Failure to do so often results in the loss of an entire academic year/semester or disrupts their future career prospects.

Due to the lack of a clear policy addressing the aforementioned matters, students are being penalized for situations beyond their control. The rigidity of the current examination system can significantly hinder a student's academic progress. When students miss exams due to unforeseen circumstances, they often have to wait an entire year or semester to retake them, with stars—symbols indicating a second or more attempt after failing—on their transcripts, delaying their education and disadvantage them compared to their peers. This delay affects not only their academic timeline but also their motivation and mental health, creating a sense of hopelessness and frustration.

If a student has timely fulfilled all the course requirements and attendance throughout the academic year or semester, their hard work must not be sabotaged and career prospects must not be jeopardized simply because they could not show up for the board exams due to circumstances that were beyond their control. Quality education is our constitutional right and our education system should ensure that every student succeeds with due consideration towards their well-being. Therefore, a student's success shall not fall victim to our administrative mismanagement and inefficiency.

Systemic Gaps in Addressing Emergency Situations in Nepal's Education System

Alongside the inconsistencies within the examination policies, the lack of clarity becomes more apparent when we examine the data management and information-sharing processes within the government bodies responsible for overseeing the education system at various levels. One example includes the author's aim to get detailed data from the National Examination Board (NEB) about the total number of students in grades 10 (Exhibit 1) and 12 (Exhibit 1) who missed exams over the years and the reasons behind it. They tried to get this information by filing a Right to Information (RTI) application. However, the NEB did not provide any information when they first asked. They made a second attempt with another RTI application, but unfortunately, no form of follow-up updates were received.

Exhibit 1: RTI application filed and registered at NEB on 2081/03/24 seeking information for a total number of students of grade 10 who remained absent from 2074 B.S. to 2080 B.S.

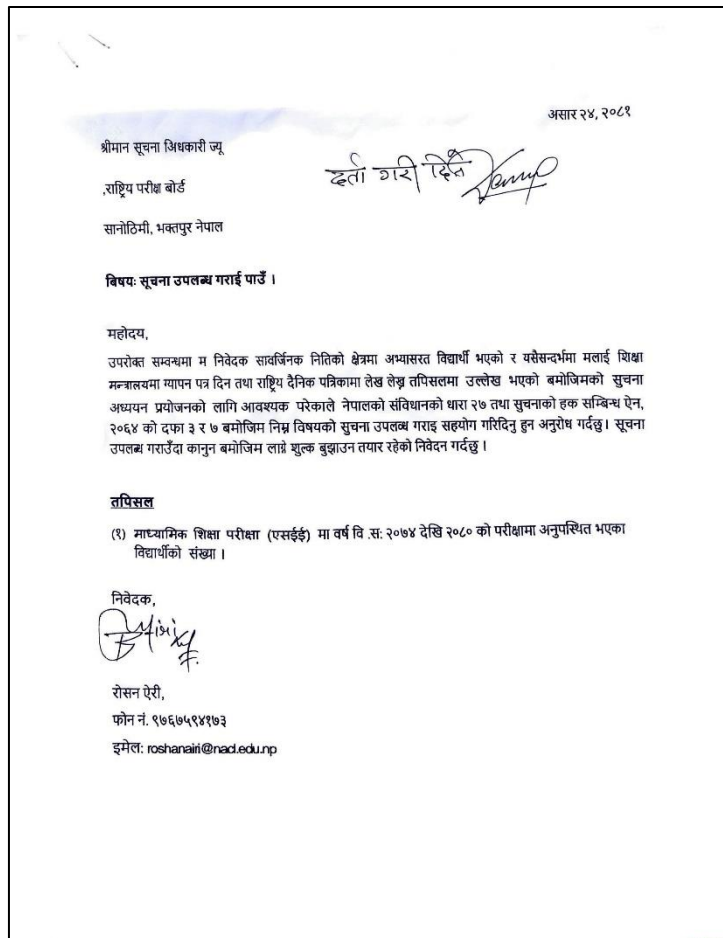
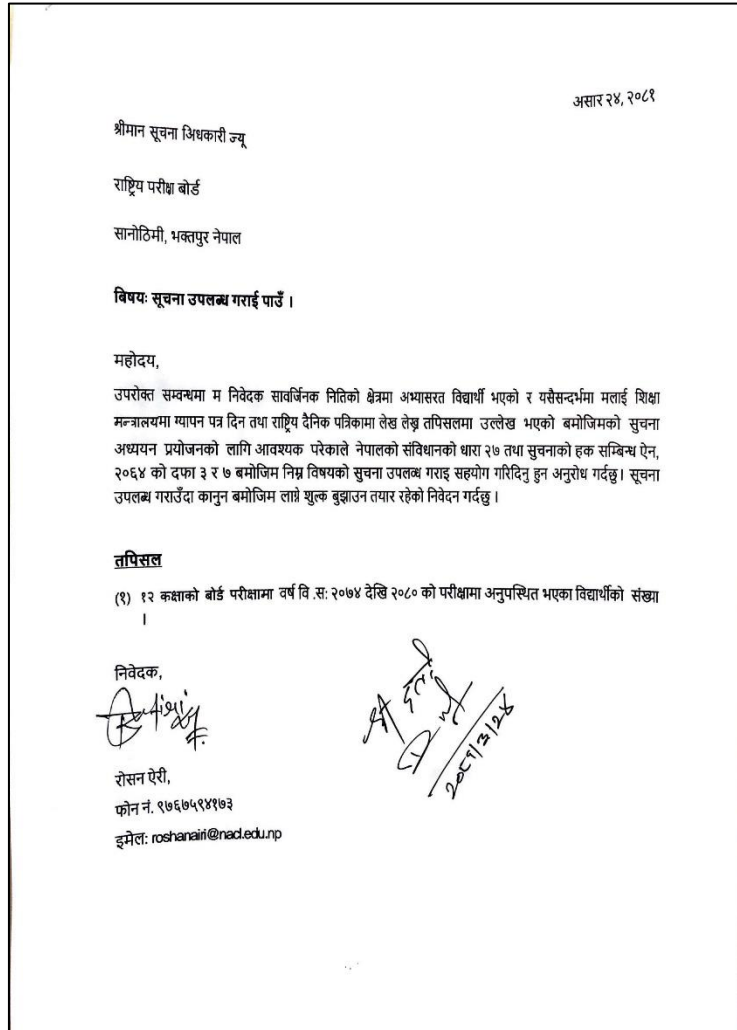


Exhibit 2: RTI application filed and registered at NEB on 2081/03/24 seeking information for a total number of students of grade 12 who remained absent from 2074 B.S. to 2080 B.S.



The above examples call for the need to improve data accessibility and communication within educational authorities to facilitate better research and policy-making while also ensuring that attempts from researchers alongside challenges faced by students are not met with silence. In conclusion, addressing academic fairness during unforeseen circumstances is essential for the holistic development of students.

Challenges Faced by Students During Board Exams Across Educational Various Levels

For the purpose of brevity, problems faced by students during board exams at various levels of education are divided into three points.

1. Secondary Level or Secondary Education Examination (SEE)

Secondary Education Examination (SEE), normally scheduled from March to April each year, is conducted by the National Examination Board (NEB) — an autonomous body that handles the Secondary and Higher Secondary Board Examination in Nepal.

In Nepal, 10th-grade board exams (SEE) are important for the continuation of senior secondary education. On completion of the 10th-grade board exam, students are required to choose a singular ‘stream’ of subjects such as science, management, arts, humanities, etc. to study at the senior secondary level. Additionally, Higher Secondary schools often consider SEE scores for admission (sometimes even scholarships) to higher secondary disciplines like sciences, management, law, humanities, or other courses in the absence of admission. Thus, SEE exams are the deciding factor in deciding which course the student will be comfortable with.

Even though SEE exams are extremely important for the continuation of senior secondary education, there is no provision of special consideration for students who face emergencies during the SEE.

Shared Experiences:

Due to the rigidity of the board exams students are compelled to sit for exams even during their parents’ death or funeral rites. When students are forced to take exams during their parents’ death or funeral, they are unable to cope with loss and maintain their mental health. This can have long-term psychological effects, including prolonged grief, depression, and anxiety. It is essential to acknowledge that students are not just academic machines but individuals with emotional needs that must be respected and met.

1. Sangam and Saugat Chhetri's Case:



Image: Sangam and Saugat Chhetri taking their SEE exams amidst their father's death.

Sangam Chhetri and Saugat Chhetri sat for their SEE exams just four days after their father's death. In Syangja, at the Saraswati Secondary School examination center in Putalibazar Municipality 4, two brothers, Sangam and Saugaat Chhetri, took the Secondary Education Examination (SEE).

2. Sabin and Santosh Dangol's case



Image: Sabin and Santosh Dangol participating in their board exams amidst their mother's death.

Two brothers, Sabin and Santosh Dangol, participated in their board exams in Hetauda while in mourning for their mother, who passed away 11 days earlier. Despite their grief, they had to attend the exams.

3. Aavash Pandey's case:



Image: Aavash Pandey taking his board exam amidst their father's death.

Aavash Pandey from Pokhariya, Belbari-9, Morang, participated in his board exams while in mourning for his deceased father. Despite being in the middle of performing his father's funeral rites, he had to attend the exam. He couldn't even properly conduct funeral rites and duty towards his father, who had guided him throughout his life.

4. Suraj B.K's case



Image: Suraj participating in their board exams amidst his mourning.

Suraj B.K., a student from Buchakhani Secondary School, Tanahun, took his SEE exams at Dharma Secondary School exam center in Bhimad-6 while in mourning.

5. Kishor Mahara's case



Image: Kishor Mahara taking his board exam amidst their father's death.

Kishor Mahara from Patan Municipality-4, Baitadi, participated in the SEE exams at Nepal Rastriya Secondary School exam center in Surnaya Rural Municipality-2 while in mourning for his father. His father had passed away on Chaitra 12 after falling from a cliff.

6. Alok Jaiswal's case:

Alok Jaiswal, a 17-year-old high school student at Eager Bridge Boarding Secondary School (EBBSS), was diagnosed with appendicitis just one day before his SEE Examination. He experienced moderate to severe pain for 30 minutes while performing his first day's SEE paper; after 30 minutes, the pain became unbearable to him, and he consulted the invigilator. The invigilator suggested he bow his head on the bench, but the pain only worsened. Unable to handle the pain, he went to the principal's office.

The principal called his parents and the doctor. The doctor administered two pain-killing injections, but they didn't work either. He was advised to visit the provincial hospital, but due to the risk of getting an NG (Non-Graded), he decided to finish the exam in pain. Immediately after completing his exam, he went to the hospital.

The doctors at the provincial hospital advised ignoring the SEE exams this year and re-taking them next year, as surgery needed to be done within three days. However, his parents didn't agree to delay the SEE, so they went to Karnali Care International Hospital. After his parents requested to continue his SEE for about seven days, the doctor decided to give painkillers and pancreas-relaxing injections. Every day, Alok had to receive numerous medications and injections — about 4-5 injections before every exam in the exam center. Even after those injections, the pain persisted. He somehow completed his SEE amidst the appendicitis chaos. After completing the SEE, he immediately underwent surgery. When the result was published, however, He was upset with his low-marked transcripts. Alok suggested, for these kinds of situations, there should be some kind of provision to tackle emergencies.

2. Higher Secondary Level or Grade 12:

The 12th-grade board examinations, normally scheduled from April to June each year, are conducted by the National Examination Board (NEB). The scores achieved in the 12th-grade board exams are considered very important for receiving scholarships and admission into professional courses, training programs, or National Institutes such as IOM, IOE, IoST, and Faculty of Law.

Unsurprisingly, NEB has no provision for special consideration, when emergency situations arise during 12th board examinations. Every year, the lack of special consideration policy during the board exams affects many students directly or indirectly. Some of the incidents are reported below.

Shared Experiences:

Aavash Subedi's Experience:

"I personally experienced the lack of special consideration policy when I was diagnosed with jaundice just two days before my Grade 12 board examination. I immediately informed my high school about the situation. Powerless, the school suggested that I either drop the exam and take it next year or sit for exams regardless of the disease. Anyway, delaying my progress for a year was unthinkable for me. "

"Optionless, I had to take the exam despite my condition. I vividly remember sitting in the exam hall with a foggy brain and a weak body which was aching from jaundice. I had to complete every single exam with no adjustments or extensions. Unsurprisingly, my papers

didn't go well as planned. The worst part, after years of dedicated intense preparation, was to see my 12th transcripts with the lowest scores I had ever received."

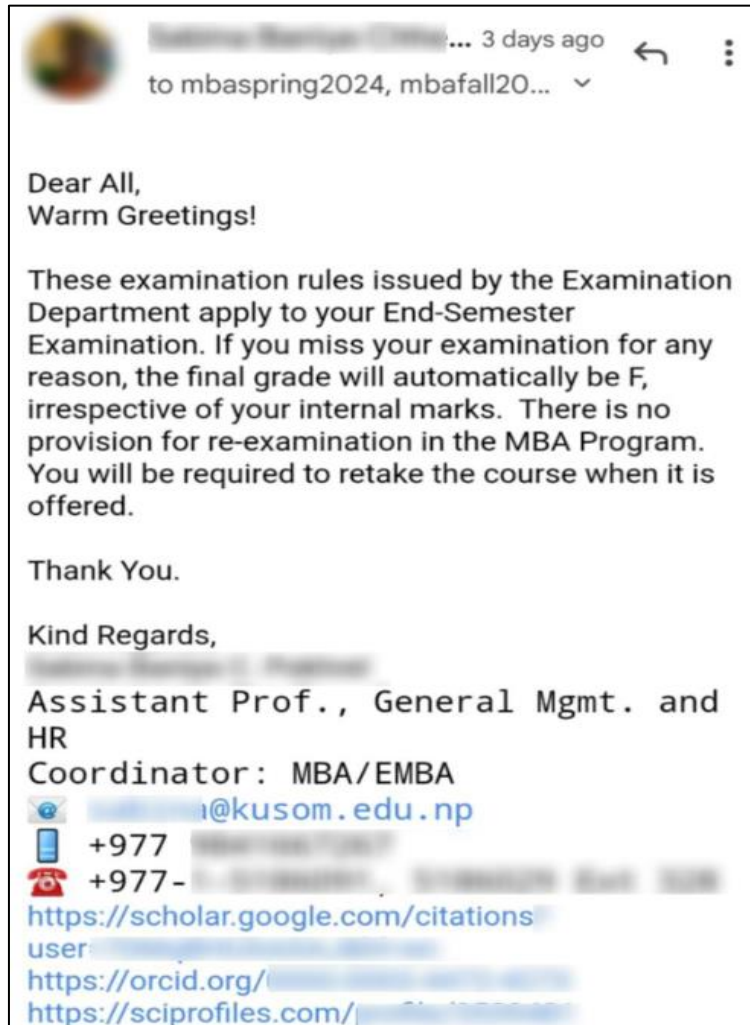
3. Higher Education (Undergraduate and Graduate):

As per the latest Economic Survey Report 2022/23, the number of students in Nepal's universities and affiliated campuses has grown significantly, increasing by 22.6 percent in just one year, from 556,797 in FY 2020/21 to 682,589 in FY 2021/22. Of the total 687,421 students studying in the country's 11 universities and affiliated campuses, a large majority, 78.2 percent, are enrolled in Tribhuvan University, with the remaining 21.8 percent attending other universities.

The Tribhuvan University (hereinafter 'TU') which boasts 5 technical institutes and 4 general faculties with 1060 colleges under its affiliation is the first national institution of higher education and the largest university in Nepal. It is the largest university in the world based on the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) students. With these numbers at hand and a history of more than 65 years, the university is still struggling to obtain its status as the most sought-after and premium institution in Nepal because the number of students who travel to foreign countries from Nepal for education stood at 108,542 in 2023. In addition to this, the latest compilation of Right to information applications released by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) shows that the total number of students who took no objection letter (NOL) from 2080 B.S. Magh 1 till the end of Chaitra 2080 B.S. (Jan 15-April 12, 2024) was 34,178 which means about 380 students took NOL on a daily basis for 3 months. This largely comes as a result of the university's lack of concrete policies on a plethora of sectors where insensitivity during exams and evaluations is one of many.

Tribhuvan University (TU) has implemented a semester system for nearly all of its undergraduate and graduate programs in most of its central departments and campuses. The end-semester exams popularly known as "board exams" are often the student's foe rather than a friend because of their inconsiderate nature. Suppose a student encounters unforeseen circumstances such as critical health issues, or problems with family members including death, accident, and injuries. In that case, they have no other option than to wait for another full semester or even a year. This rigidity can put undue pressure on students, forcing them to prioritize exams over their health and personal situations, which is far from ideal. Moreover, other prominent universities also have similar policies including Purbanchal University, Pokhara University, Midwest University, Far-Western University, and Kathmandu University. In Kathmandu University, for instance, where if a student remains absent for end-semester exams in an MBA program "regardless of any reasons, their grades will remain 'F' irrespective of the internal marks and this comes with no chance of re-examinations" as shown in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 3: Email regarding examination rules received from Coordinator of MBA/EMBA of Kathmandu University School of Management on 24th June 2024



Shared Experiences:

A. Tanuja Pandey, a B.A LL.B student at National Law College (TU) now awaiting graduation, was diagnosed with a brain tumor while she was in her 7th semester towards the end of 2022. Due to her ongoing treatment in Delhi, she was physically and mentally unable to appear for the board exams of the 7th semester, resulting in her absence for six papers. Although she appreciated TU conducting re-exams a year later in 2023 considering the severity of her condition, she suggested that having more concrete policies would provide greater certainty and predictability, especially for students who miss their exams due to less severe health conditions and might be ready for re-exams within months of the initial exams. Tanuja also pointed out that the university marked 'NQ' (Not Qualified) in her grade sheets and issued a separate grade sheet for the re-exams, which she felt was unjustified. Instead, she suggested that if the university mentioned the reason for absence directly in the grade sheet, it would prevent students from having to repeatedly justify their situation to peers, family, and other stakeholders.

B. A 5th-semester student of Nepal Law Campus who requested to remain anonymous reported that she was involved in a major accident right before her board exams for the 4th Semester which was set to be held in April 2024. She remained absent during the pre-boards of the prior classes but had notified the college administration about her major accident. The college administration then conducted a meeting with the student where she was forcibly asked to step out from taking exams in the 4th semester due to a lack of attendance in classes completely disregarding her medical situation. Regardless of her submitting medical reports, she was not allowed to sit for the board exams of the 4th Semester citing lack of attendance in prior classes resulting in ‘NQ’ in 6 subjects excluding 1 where she apparently had “minimum attendance” fulfilled. The student emphasized that while the university prioritizes attendance and examinations, it neglects the physical well-being of students and fails to consider the impact on their mental health. She noted that having to wait an additional year to retake the exams leads to increased frustration and anxiety, further jeopardizing the continuity of studies in subsequent semesters.

C. A 5th Semester student from National Law College also requested to remain anonymous citing mental trauma and pressure due to medical reasons stating that she unfortunately missed 2 exams during her 1st semester owing to severe physical and mental health issues as she was staying alone in Kathmandu for the first time to pursue her undergraduate studies. Additionally, to make matters worse, she had to undergo a major spinal operation coupled with other illnesses which led to her hospitalization during her second-semester economics exams. Subsequently, after she was doing better, she scored an outstanding GPA in her third semester. However, she emphasized that the timing of re-exams is impractical, as they are usually held a year later and often close to the ongoing end-semester exams, which risks compromising students' performance in future semesters.

Universities and Assessment Policies

Tribhuvan University holds a particularly significant role in Nepal's higher education sector as the largest university in the country. However, TU lacks policies that distinguish between a student's failure in an exam due to incompetence and failure due to health or family-related reasons. If a student is unable to attend board exams because of serious health issues, they are categorized as 'failed,' which can leave an indelible mark on their academic record and adversely affect their future prospects.

In addition to the above, during board exams, faculties and centers record the attendance of all present students. Those who are unable to appear for exams are simply categorized as 'absent', without any follow-up to ascertain the reason for their absence. If there were specific categorizations based on the type and gravity of reasons for a student's absence, it would provide more detailed data on the number of students who miss exams due to unforeseen circumstances. This approach would also create a distinction in the student's exam record, making it more logical and justifiable for those who had to miss exams due to health or family emergencies. Moreover, the problem lies with the re-exam or compartment exam policies of TU.

Many students miss their exams for medical reasons or family reasons. Additionally, the prolonged gap between missed exams and re-exams can create difficulties in their future academic and professional endeavors due to the significant amount of time lost. Therefore, in the absence of concrete data on the total number of students who missed their exams due to health emergencies, the death of a family member, injuries, or accidents, we have opted to conduct interviews with the individual students who missed their exams before due to aforementioned difficulties and have made their way out of this career halting problem.

While there are daunting questions on whether a policy is introduced to address students' difficulties during board exams, many others will exploit this mechanism to their advantage to procrastinate and potentially give exams based on their convenience. Therefore, a policy framework must be established that defines the criteria for acceptable absences, sets clear guidelines for documentation where necessary.

Furthermore, the entire process of re-exams and compartment exams should be reviewed. Necessary amendments shall be added in order to ensure students who miss their exams due to the aforementioned situation receive adequate feedback and have the opportunity to retake their exams within the specified time limit without hampering their future studies. This improvement relies heavily on how quickly the university can publish its results. Therefore, the relevant departments must make a concerted effort to release results within a predetermined time frame.

By implementing these measures, the policy can maintain its integrity and effectively support students who face legitimate challenges during their exams.

Contemporary Plans and Policies

High-level National Education Commission Report, 2075

In the year 2075, a high-level national education commission was established with the goal of assessing the current state of the educational sector and proposing strategies for its development. The commission's primary task was to create a comprehensive blueprint for transforming the education system to better align with contemporary needs and national objectives. One of the significant areas highlighted for reform was the examination evaluation system.

The commission's report emphasized that the existing examination system should serve as a reliable tool for assessing not just knowledge and skills but also the expected behavioral changes aligned with the broader vision of education and the nation's objectives. The current methods, rooted in traditional teaching and assessment practices, were identified as a major obstacle, particularly in secondary education. This outdated approach was seen as a barrier to achieving a more holistic and effective educational experience.

Moreover, the commission noted the lack of uniformity in examination evaluation among different universities has led to inconsistencies and an unscientific approach to evaluating students' competencies. This issue has been a significant backlog for the advancement of university education.

To address these challenges, the commission recommended a comprehensive overhaul of both teaching and evaluation systems. The proposed reforms focus on adopting more scientific, modern, and practical methods. A key suggestion was to implement a practical evaluation system that would be mandatory across educational institutions. This shift aims to ensure that evaluations not only test theoretical knowledge but also gauge practical skills and competencies, better preparing students for real-world applications.

Though the commission's report laid out a vision for a reformed educational system that prioritized practical knowledge, skills development, and consistent evaluation standards, the recommendations and suggestions provided by the commission have not been adopted. This lack of implementation has hindered progress in transforming the education sector, leaving the system still burdened by outdated practices and inconsistencies. The need for action remains critical to ensure the education system evolves to meet modern demands and prepares students adequately for future challenges.

School Education Sector Plan (2022/23- 2032/33)

The School Education Sector Plan is a 10-year action plan designed to strengthen school education. This plan addresses the continuity of learning during emergencies and crises, aiming to make school education resilient to such situations. It includes strategies for alternative learning arrangements for students during emergencies and crises. However, the plan lacks provisions for alternative examination evaluation, which is a crucial part of the evaluation process. This omission could hinder students' educational progress.

Additionally, while the plan identifies three main types of crises—natural disasters, pandemics and epidemics, and war, conflict, displacement, and migration—it fails to recognize personal or individual crises, such as health emergencies or family emergencies, that can also impact students' learning.

Although this school plan provides an extensive framework for the education sector, it significantly overlooks emergency or contingency plans for situations that might affect students' examinations.

International Practices

United Kingdom: Special Consideration in GCSE

The UK's General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) offers a "Special Consideration" policy, which allows exam authorities to adjust a student's marks if they are disadvantaged due to illness or unavoidable circumstances. The adjustments are based on the severity of the student's condition and can range from a few percentage points to more substantial changes, depending on the impact of the circumstance.

Australia: Special Provisions

In Australia, the "Special Provisions" policy provides various forms of assistance to students facing significant disadvantages, such as illness or disability. These adjustments include extra time, separate examination rooms, modified papers, or the provision of breaks during exams. The goal is to ensure that all students have a fair opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

New Zealand: Special Assessment Conditions (SAC)

New Zealand's Special Assessment Conditions (SAC) provide accommodations such as reader-writers, assistive technology, or extra time for students with disabilities or temporary conditions. The policy is designed to ensure that these students can perform to their potential without being unfairly disadvantaged by their condition.

Singapore: Special Consideration Framework

Singapore's Special Consideration Framework allows for the adjustment of marks or the rescheduling of exams for students who face severe illnesses or other serious emergencies. The framework is designed to provide immediate support in crisis situations, ensuring that students are not penalized for circumstances beyond their control.

Ultimately, incorporating these global practices into our education system would help to create a healthier, more equitable environment for students. By prioritizing fairness and support

during exams, this nation can align policies with global educational standards and ensure that all students, regardless of circumstance, have an equal chance to succeed. This method not only upholds the principles of equity and justice, but it also promotes a more compassionate and understanding educational system that recognizes and addresses students' real-life challenges.

Suggestions and Way Forward:

The current rigid examination policies in Nepal fail to accommodate the diverse challenges faced by students. This inflexibility impacts students' academic performance and mental well-being, extending its negative effects beyond the individual to the broader educational system. When examination policies ignore unpredictable and unfavorable situations, students may face repercussions that extend beyond the individual, affecting various aspects of the country's future.

This rigid approach ultimately serves as a source of demotivation and perpetuates an undue burden on students, pushing this inflexible system forward to future generations. These issues are pressing not only at the high school or university level but across every educational level in Nepal. Therefore, a comprehensive set of **recommendations is necessary** to introduce more compassionate and empathetic examination policies across all educational levels in Nepal. Thus, the following recommendations aim to create a supportive environment that acknowledges and addresses the unique circumstances that students may encounter during examinations. One of the pivotal recommendations among many is the idea of a 'Special Consideration Policy'. To contribute to a healthier education system and address the well-being of the students, the implementation of a 'Special Consideration System' is a must.

Special Consideration System

In general parlance, it can refer to a process or set of policies designed to account for unexpected or exceptional circumstances that may negatively impact an individual's performance or participation in academic assessments or formal evaluations. Special consideration is given to a candidate who has temporarily experienced illness, injury, or some other event outside of their control at the time of the assessment. It applies when an issue or event has, or is likely to have, significantly impacted a candidate's ability to take an assessment or perform at their usual level. Additionally, the Special Consideration System should primarily include the following aspects:

1. Flexibility of Exam Schedules to Accommodate Emergencies

To accommodate students facing extraordinary circumstances, it is essential to implement emergency or special examinations. These tests, scheduled flexibly, cater to students dealing with medical emergencies, family crises, or significant life events. This provision maintains academic fairness while supporting students in managing their personal and academic responsibilities effectively.

2. Special Internal Evaluation

An Emergency/Special Internal Evaluation System should be established to assist students whose ability to participate in regular assessments is disrupted by significant or unexpected events. This system ensures that internal evaluations reflect the student's true capabilities under normal circumstances.

3. Special Attendance Waiver

The implementation of an Emergency/Special Attendance Waiver System is recommended to address the issue faced by students who are unable to maintain the required attendance due to medical issues or other emergencies. Currently, students who fall short of the attendance requirement are barred from taking their exams, which can negatively impact their academic progress not only for the semester but for their overall degree. This proposed system would provide waivers to students who missed attendance due to valid emergencies, allowing them to take their exams despite not meeting the attendance criteria. This ensures that their academic standing is not unfairly compromised due to circumstances beyond their control.

Proposed Implementation Methods:

1. For Secondary Level (SEE) and Higher Secondary Level (Grade 12)

The current provision for re-examinations only allows students to appear for re-exams if they fail regular board exams, but this system is fundamentally impractical and unfair for students facing emergencies as there is no clear differentiation between a student failing in exams due to incompetency or owing to emergencies. Furthermore, this can be bifurcated into two reasons; firstly, students who are unable to attend any of their exams due to an emergency are unfairly disqualified from re-examinations, as the current policy doesn't permit re-exams for those who fail more than two subjects. Secondly, even if a student misses only two subjects and takes the re-examinations, the transcript will still bear the star (*) which is misleading in the context of emergencies because the star traditionally indicates that a student initially failed the regular exam. However, in the case of emergencies, the student didn't fail those subjects but was unable to attend those exams.

That said, there is no provision of emergency board examinations for students who face emergencies during or before their board exams. If a student faces an emergency during board exams, they currently have two options: either attempt the exams under emergency, leading to poor performance or failure, or drop the exams entirely, resulting in the loss of an entire academic year. To address this unfair dilemma, the implementation of an 'Emergency Board Examination' is a must.

An '**Emergency Board Examination**' is an accommodating exam designed to ensure that students who missed regular board exams due to valid and genuine emergencies have the opportunity to take their exams shortly after the regular board exams. This system gives students a chance to accommodate the exams given critical emergency conditions. This system also caters to students dealing with medical emergencies, family crises, or significant emergencies.

The aforementioned emergency board examinations should be scheduled at least 30 days after the standard board exams, being mindful that this buffer period is crucial for students dealing with prolonged illness or the loss of a parent, allowing them time to recover and cope with emotional distress.

Proposed Processes and Mechanisms to Conduct Emergency Board Examinations in Secondary & Higher Secondary Levels

I. Notification Time Period

1. If an emergency situation arises before the exam, students or their guardians must notify their school which will be responsible for reporting it to the National Examinations Board (NEB). The school shall function as the regulatory body to evaluate individual needs and circumstances. The NEB shall only remain as a facilitator.
2. If an emergency arises during the exam, notification must be given within a minimum of 72 hours of the missed examination.

II. Documentation

1. Relevant documentation, such as medical certificates, death certificates, or letters issued by related entities or local government bodies, must be submitted to support the claim.
2. A notification from the school must be sent to the NEB.

III. Application Form

A standardized application form for the emergency board examination should be available online, at school offices, and at NEB offices.

IV. Approval Process

The NEB will receive the application and make necessary arrangements to accommodate the student for examination at other favorable times.

V. Exam Schedule

Students will be informed of the emergency board examination date, typically scheduled 45 days after the standard board examinations.

2. For Undergraduate and Graduate Levels (Bachelor's and Master's)

The examination and evaluation system under the Tribhuvan University (TU) should include an elaborate guideline that addresses the absence of a student during semester-end exams. This guideline should serve as a directive for students and examination management committees at the university and various affiliated colleges outlining the following considerations for students who miss exams owing to unforeseen circumstances including medical emergencies, accidents, and bereavement.

Therefore, for the purpose of brevity, the recommendations for the aforementioned comprehensive guidelines are as follows:

- 1. Clear Definitions:** There should be explicit definitions and boundaries for cases where a student's absence before or during exams is justified.
- 2. Procedure for Application Submission:** There should be an efficient division of the procedural aspect of submitting applications and evidence by a student or their guardians for approved leave during exams. The university and the administration should implement a centralized system to receive and record such applications, and evidence for greater convenience on the part of students.
- 3. Oversight Committee:** A committee should be formed to oversee the implementation of these measures across all affiliated colleges and the university itself.
- 4. Re-examination Procedure:** There should be a clear procedure for re-examination for students who miss exams due to medical, family, or similar unpredictable situations. This includes different timings for re-exams based on the nature and gravity of reasons behind remaining absent during exams.
- 5. Minimum Attendance Waiver:** There should be a provision for a minimum attendance waiver for students who face the aforementioned conditions and a method to ensure that their internal evaluation is based on more lenient methods that are tailored to their unique needs as they navigate unavoidable situations.
- 6. Result Differentiation:** The results should clearly differentiate between 'Not Qualified' (NQ) as a result of a student failing exams due to incompetence, and include 'Ab' to indicate students who were unable to attend the exams due to medical or other valid reasons to prevent misunderstanding or misinterpretation of a student's academic performance.
- 7. Exam Attendance Record:** Attendance during exams at examination centers should also note the reason for each student's absence during exams so that those remaining absent due to immediate emergencies do not receive NQ or remain non-graded during the results.

Resources:

1. UK's GCSE Special Consideration: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Guide.pdf>
2. Australia's Special Provisions: <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/special-provisions>
3. <https://www.sace.sa.edu.au/web/special-provisions>
4. New Zealand's Special Assessment Conditions (SAC): <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/special-assessment-conditions>
5. Singapore's Special Consideration: https://www.seab.gov.sg/docs/default-source/exam-rules-and-regulations/2024-gce-a-exams-rules_regulations_final
6. Sangam and Saugat Chhetri's Case: <https://khabarbani.com/archives/11984>
7. Sabin and Santosh Dangol's case: <https://www.edukhabar.com/news/11763>
8. Aavash Pandey's case: <https://janaaastha.com/story/18269>
9. Suraj B.K's case: <https://janachahana.com/posts/7226>
10. Kishor Mahara's case: <https://www.starbulletine.com/detail/1809>
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Bharatpur, Chitwan, Nepal
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info@nationalpolicyforum.com
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