

MCQ Practice Portal

User & Administrator Manual

Version 2.9.29

Internal student practice system for diploma colleges

Official examinations are conducted offline with question papers.

Includes installation, Admin/Staff workflows, student use, Open Practice, and security notes.

1. Purpose of this system

The MCQ Practice Portal is designed for **internal academic practice** only. Students practise theory MCQs online. Final examinations remain offline (paper-based). A clear “Practice / Internal” labelling is used so students do not confuse practice with official exams.

2. Version

This package and all documentation refer to **version 2.9.29**. The application constant `MCQ_APP_VERSION` must match this number.

3. Installation (shared hosting / XAMPP)

3.1 Requirements

- PHP 8.0+ with PDO MySQL, mbstring, openssl
- ZipArchive extension (for Excel .xlsx import)
- MySQL 5.7+ or MariaDB 10.3+
- Apache (typical cPanel) with normal PHP execution

3.2 New installation steps

- Create a MySQL database and user in cPanel (or phpMyAdmin on XAMPP). Grant ALL privileges on that database.
- Upload and extract the full ZIP into the domain document root or a subfolder.
- Open `/install.php` in the browser. Enter host (usually localhost), database name, username and password.
- Create the first Admin account (strong password).
- When installation succeeds, delete or rename `install.php`.
- Log in at `/admin/login.php`

Database settings are stored in **`config/database.local.php`**. Keep this file when updating the application. Do not publish it.

3.3 Updating an existing site

- Take a database backup (Admin → Backup) and file backup.
- Overwrite application files from the new package.
- Preserve `config/database.local.php`.
- Do not re-run `install.php`.
- Apply any new SQL migrations under `sql/` listed in `CHANGELOG_LATEST.txt`.

4. User roles

Role	Access
Admin	Full control: structure, staff, students import, college profile, backup
Staff	Department-scoped: questions, templates, results, roster for own department
Managed student	Register Number + registered mobile; college roster practice
Open Practice	Email + registration number; any college; self-registration

5. Administrator guide

5.1 College Profile

Set college name, logo, footer, developer contact, Open Practice toggles, and practice defaults (pass %, default questions, time limit, grace seconds).

5.2 Academic structure

- Departments → Subjects → Units/Chapters (and Semesters if used)
- Use clear department names; student import accepts codes DME, DEEE, DECE, DCE or full names

5.3 Questions

- Add manually or Import Questions (CSV/Excel) with preview
- Columns: Question, Option A–D, Correct Option, Explanation, Unit Name, Difficulty
- Staff only manage subjects in their department

5.4 Test templates

- Fixed question count, time, mode (random / unit / custom), attempts, schedule (open/close)
- Students cannot change these settings when starting a template test

5.5 Students

- Managed students: Admin-only bulk import (Register_Number, Name, Mobile_Number, Department, Batch)
- Mobile number is the login credential (hashed)
- Open Practice users self-register; no admin pre-enrolment required

5.6 Results, roster, analytics

Results show scores and units. Roster lists department-relevant students for a template. Analytics subject list is filtered for Staff.

5.7 Backup & restore

Download SQL backup regularly. Restore is Admin-only and creates an automatic safety backup first.

6. Staff guide

Staff accounts are limited to one department (or unrestricted only if Admin assigns “All departments”). Staff can manage questions, templates, results and roster inside that department. They cannot import students or change College Profile.

7. Student guide

7.1 Managed (college) login

- Register Number
- Registered Mobile Number

Do not use “change password” for managed accounts; the mobile number is the credential. Ask Admin to update mobile if it changes.

7.2 Open Practice login / registration

- Registration: name, registration/roll no., email, college name
- Login: Email + Registration Number
- Works from any internet location (not limited by campus IP list)

7.3 Taking a practice test

- Choose an available template or free practice (if enabled)
- Timer is server-side; answers autosave
- Use question navigator; mark for review if needed
- Submit only when ready — confirmation shows answered/unanswered counts

7.4 Results

After submission, score, pass/fail (per pass %), units and review (if released) appear on the result page. Print uses the Report template set by Admin.

8. Security notes (summary)

- CSRF protection on state-changing forms
- Soft-deactivate preserves history
- Completed tests snapshot questions/answers
- Staff department checks on server side (templates, questions, roster, export, comments)
- Campus IP allow-list applies only to managed students, not Open Practice
- Delete install.php after setup

9. Troubleshooting

- HTTP 500 after update: confirm config/database.local.php exists; check PHP error log
- Excel import empty: enable PHP zip/ZipArchive
- Open Practice registration disabled: College Profile → enable toggles
- Staff cannot open menu on phone: use v2.9.28+ (sidebar toggle fix)
- Future tests visible: templates must use availability window; student dashboard filters by UTC time

10. Document control

Manual version: 2.9.29 — matches application package mcq-practice-portal-v2.9.29.

For installation short forms see INSTALL.txt and SHARED_HOSTING_INSTALL.txt in the package root.