

Mid-West University
Office of the Dean
Graduate School of Management
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Management
Model Questions for Entrance Examinations 2026

Time: 2:00 Hours

Full Marks: 50

Pass Marks: 30

Instructions to Applicant: Please attempt all questions from all sections. Your answers must demonstrate doctoral-level clarity of reasoning, theoretical depth, methodological rigor, and research originality. You are encouraged to integrate relevant conceptual frameworks, critical perspectives, and evidence-based managerial interpretations. Marks are allocated for analytical sophistication, philosophical grounding, and research competence.

Section A: Logical Reasoning and Analytical Thinking (10 x 2 = 20 Marks)

Q1. In organizational research, causal claims must be logically justified and empirically supported. Consider this argument: 'Firms that adopt digital transformation initiatives inevitably become more competitive. Since competitiveness determines long-term survival, digitalization is the only essential strategy for organizational sustainability.' Identify whether this argument is deductive or inductive. Point out two logical weaknesses or fallacies embedded in the reasoning. Suggest one way the argument could be strengthened through a rigorous research design.

Q2. A doctoral researcher is investigating whether a new performance-based incentive system significantly improves employee productivity in a large service organization. A pilot study was conducted with 8 employees, and their productivity scores (standardized index) were recorded before and after the incentive intervention.

Employee	Before	After
1	62	70
2	58	65
3	60	66
4	55	61
5	64	72
6	59	63
7	61	68
8	57	64

Answer the following:

- a. State an appropriate alternate hypothesis (H_a) for testing whether the incentive system improved productivity.
- b. Identify the most suitable inferential statistical test for this situation and justify your choice.
- c. Mention one limitation of making strong causal claims based on this pilot dataset.

Section B: Management Research Aptitude and Conceptual Competence (15 Marks)

Q3. Doctoral research requires strong theoretical framing, originality, and methodological coherence. Suppose you intend to conduct a PhD-level study entitled, 'Institutional Capacity, Digital Governance, and Evidence-Based Policymaking in Provincial Public Administration under Nepal's Federal System.' Formulate: (a) a clear and precise central purpose statement of the study, (b) a set of three research questions that reflect theoretical depth and originality, and (c) a justified explanation of whether a qualitative, quantitative, or mixed-methods research design would be

most appropriate, including one relevant theoretical framework that could guide the inquiry. Your answer must demonstrate PhD-level research competence, conceptual clarity, and methodological justification.

Section C: Case Incident (3 x 5 = 15 Marks)

Digitalization, Automation, and Institutional Transformation in Higher Education Governance in Nepal

In recent years, higher education institutions in Nepal have been under increasing pressure to modernize academic administration, enhance service efficiency, improve transparency, and respond to growing student expectations. Public universities, particularly those operating in geographically dispersed and resource-constrained contexts, face persistent challenges such as delayed administrative services, fragmented academic record systems, weak institutional data governance, and limited automation capacity.

In response, the University Grants Commission (UGC) introduced a trial run of an Integrated Digital University Management System (IDUMS) in a University Central Department in Nepal as part of its broader higher education reform initiative. The system aimed to automate and digitalize core academic and administrative functions, including: (a) Student admission, registration, and enrollment management, (b) Examination processing, grading, and transcript generation, (c) Digital attendance and learning management integration, (d) Online fee payment and financial reporting, (e) Academic performance monitoring and institutional decision-support dashboards, and (f) Student grievance handling and service request tracking.

The primary objective of IDUMS was to strengthen institutional efficiency, reduce manual paperwork, improve service delivery, enhance academic governance, and promote evidence-based management in the university system.

After one academic year of implementation, the UGC conducted an internal evaluation comparing key administrative and academic performance indicators before and after IDUMS automation.

Indicator	Before IDUMS	After IDUMS
a. Average time for transcript issuance (days)	25 days	7 days
b. Student satisfaction score (out of 10)	4.2	7.9
c. Number of administrative complaints per semester	180	65
d. Staff workload index (1–10)	6.0	8.6

The findings indicate substantial improvements in service efficiency and student satisfaction, along with a sharp reduction in administrative complaints. However, the evaluation also revealed a significant increase in staff workload. University personnel reported that although automation reduced repetitive paperwork, it introduced new responsibilities such as continuous system updating, digital verification requirements, technical troubleshooting, and increased reporting expectations.

The UGC leadership is now considering whether IDUMS should be scaled up across constituent campuses and replicated in other public universities in Nepal. However, policymakers and academic leaders are seeking deeper research-based insights into institutional readiness,

sustainability, governance implications, and the long-term impact of automation on higher education management.

As an applicant to the PhD program in Management, you are required to critically analyze the case using advanced research reasoning, digital governance perspectives, and evidence-based interpretation.

Q4. Interpret the changes shown in the table. What do these trends suggest about the effectiveness of automation and digitalization reforms in improving higher education service delivery and governance?

Q5. Despite improvements in transcript issuance time and student satisfaction, the staff workload index increased significantly. Explain two institutional and managerial reasons behind this increase in workload during digital transformation. Suggest an evidence-based organizational strategy to ensure workload sustainability and staff adaptation.

Q6. As a doctoral management researcher, propose two advanced evidence-based recommendations for scaling up IDUMS across higher education institutions in Nepal. Your recommendations should explicitly consider: (a) Institutional capacity and human resource readiness, (b) Digital governance and accountability mechanisms, (c) Equity, inclusion, and accessibility for diverse student populations, and (d) Long-term sustainability of higher education automation reforms.