

REPORT ON PAPER SETTING FOR PUNJAB BISEs

Structural Reforms in Examination Systems

Prepared Pursuant to the Higher Education Department's Meeting
Chaired by Mr. Muzammal Mehmood (Chairperson, CM Task Force)

Date: October 2026
Focus Boards: BISE Multan & BISE Sahiwal

Pursuant to the Higher Education Department's meeting on Examination Reforms held on September 18, 2026, at 5:00 PM, chaired by Mr. Muzammal Mehmood (Chairperson, CM Task Force), the key structural reforms for the Punjab Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISEs) are detailed below.

The Chair highlighted six priority intervention areas, out of which Paper Setting was assigned to BISE Multan and BISE Sahiwal.

1. History of Paper Setting and Prevailing Practices

- **Annual Schedule:** Effective from 1998, the Punjab Boards Committee of Chairmen (PBCC) issues the paper-setting schedule on October 12th each year. It allocates two to three subjects to each of the Punjab BISEs for question paper development.
- **Venue and Reporting:** Paper setters across Punjab are invited to report to the specific BISE allocated for their respective subjects.
- **Appointment:** Each Board appoints its own paper setters for both equal-weightage and non-equal-weightage subjects.
- **Equal-Weightage Subjects:** The PBCC allocates these subjects to Punjab Boards to develop three question papers per subject from a single BISE.
- **Non-Equal-Weightage Subjects:** These question papers remain intact within the same BISE and do not follow the PBCC criteria of developing three papers per subject.

2. Process of Question Paper Development

The case of the Multan Board exemplifies the process, serving as a replica for all other eight boards:

Initiation

The PBCC has allocated the subject of Biology (as an example) to BISE Multan to develop question papers for the SSC 1st Annual Examination 2027 (10th Grade), commencing on March 16, 2027. BISE Multan will develop these question papers in accordance with the demands of all other Boards. The total number per board varies from three to five, as some boards request three, some four, and others five different question papers for this single subject.

The logic for developing at least three papers is to cater to different paper groups (separate papers for Morning and Evening groups), plus one extra or alternate paper to manage emergencies. Some boards request two extra question papers to meet the needs of the 2nd Annual Examination, bringing their total requirement to five.

Paper Setters

One paper setter (a biology subject expert) appointed by each relevant board will report to BISE Multan on October 12, 2026. All nine paper setters for this subject will work together at the

Multan Board to develop three separate papers each over five days (Monday to Friday), resulting in a total of 27 question papers.

Supervision of Paper Setting Activity

- **Internal Oversight:** The paper-setting and development activity is supervised by the Officer Confidential Press (OCP) of each BISE.
- **Coordination:** Each board appoints a coordinator to oversee the paper development activity. This coordinator remains with the paper setters for all five days.
- **PBCC Directives:** The PBCC has directed the appointment of a Coordinator, Reviewer, Supervisor, or Moderator to oversee and manage the work of the paper setters.

Appointment Criteria for the Coordinator:

- Must have previously served as a paper setter for the subject in question.
- Must have served as a subject specialist or expert in the relevant subject.
- Must not be an employee of the hosting BISE.

Work Strategy Adopted by Paper Setters, OCP, and Coordinators

- **Briefing Session:** The first session of the working day consists of a briefing for all paper setters and coordinators regarding logistics, work timings, refreshments, and socialization (which may include a hosted lunch as a goodwill gesture).
- **Planning:** The paper setter and coordinator jointly develop the Scheme of Study and decide which chapters will be utilized for Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs), Short Questions, and Long Questions.
- **Execution:** Paper setters finish their work within five days by developing 27 question papers, which are duly packed and placed in separate, secure envelopes.

Tasks of the Coordinator / Moderator

In addition to working alongside the paper setters for five days, the coordinator, supervisor, or moderator spends an additional four days at the same venue to perform the following tasks:

- Frames three new and distinct sets of Biology question papers from the completed envelopes (e.g., selecting Question 1 from the Bahawalpur envelope, Question 2 from the Rawalpindi envelope, Questions 3 and 4 from the Gujranwala envelope, etc.).
- Ensures there is no repetition of questions across any set of question papers.
- Ensures that a minimum of 25% of each question paper consists of conceptual questions.
- Hands over the compiled bundles of question papers to the OCP.

Tasks of the OCP

- **Confidentiality:** Guarantees 100% confidentiality by keeping all question papers in safe custody.
- **Distribution:** Ensures the accurate distribution and packaging of question papers with respect to the number of copies, subject, group, and timing.

3. Current Gaps and Missing Elements

Subject specialists and expert question paper setters were requested to analyze the existing question papers for 10th Class English and Chemistry. The analysis revealed that the question papers meet only the first three levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (remembering, understanding & applying), while the consideration of fourth level (analyzing) is marginal. Levels 5 (evaluating) and 6 (creating) are missing.

Use of Difficulty Index: The difficulty index aligned with this taxonomy is distributed in the table below. At present, only Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOTS) and Middle Order Thinking Skills (MOTS) are being considered, while Higher Order Thinking Skills (HOTS) are entirely missing. No specific format (as given below in table) or formula regarding the difficulty index is currently practiced.

Type	Meaning	Main Skills	Difficulty Level (DL)
LOTS	Lower Order Thinking Skills	Remembering & Understanding (recalling facts, definitions, formulas, dates, etc.)	Easy (E) & Moderate (M)
MOTS	Middle Order Thinking Skills	Applying & Analyzing (applying knowledge to a new but familiar situation)	Moderate (M) & partially Difficult (D)
HOTS	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Evaluating & Creating (making a judgment using evidence or criteria)	Difficult (D)

4. Recommendations

Based on the gaps identified above, it is recommended that assessment items be developed and balanced according to the following proposed difficulty index, which is ideal for an item/question bank:

Sr. No.	Difficulty Level	Proposed Percentage Target
1	Easy	50%
2	Moderate	30%
3	Difficult	20%
Total		100%

Proposed Terms of Reference (TORs) for the Coordinator / Moderator

- **Curriculum Alignment:** Certify absolute compliance with the authorized curriculum and national syllabus guidelines.
- **Outcome Verification:** Verify strict alignment with the prescribed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs).
- **Cognitive Balance:** Audit analytical and conceptual layers to verify the targeted difficulty index ratio (50:30:20).
- **Error Correction:** Review scripts to eliminate ambiguities, conceptual flaws, grammatical mistakes, repetitions, or out-of-syllabus content.

5. Approval and Timeline Request

- **Administrative Approval:** Formal approval of this intervention is required from the relevant forum or authority, similar to how the Smart Syllabus was notified by PCTA. Formal legislative or regulatory notification from the Higher Education Department (HED) will be required before the start of the academic session.
- **Immediate Implementation:** As paper setting for the 2027 session is scheduled to begin on October 12, 2026, it is requested that the proposed difficulty index be approved for immediate implementation.
- **Long-Term Plan:** The development of a formal Question Bank/Item Bank should be initiated for the new induction/session 2028–2030, following the execution of the proposed training sessions for question paper setters and moderators and software development.

Proposed Distribution of subjects to develop papers by BISEs:

Subject	BISE	Subject	BISE
English	Multan	Chemistry	DG Khan
Computer Science	Bahawalpur	Mathematics	Lahore
Biology	Faisalabad	Trajama Tul Quran	Sahiwal
Islamic Studies	Sargodha	Physics	Rawalpindi
Urdu	Gujranwala		