Bureau of Indian Standards

Draft Indian Standard

(Draft for comments only)

(Not to be reproduced without the permission of BIS or used as an Indian Standard)

ऑनलाइन कोचिंग सेवाएँ — अपेक्षाएं
ONLINE COACHING SERVICES — REQUIREMENTS

ICS (03.180, 35.240.90)

The Higher Education, Skill Development and Related Services Sectional Committee, SSD 04

Last Date of Comment:

Forward

(Formal Clause will be added later)

Online coaching has grown in significance as an educational tool just like technology has developed and progressed over the years. The rapid increase in internet connectivity in the last few years has been an important catalyst for the growth of online coaching in India. Online coaching provides an opportunity for people living in smaller towns and cities to get access to the best possible learning resources from across the world, at a very affordable price. This helps create a level playing field. During the COVID-19 pandemic, online coaching experienced a significant surge in popularity and adoption as traditional learning institutions were forced to close their doors to prevent the spread of the virus. This sudden shift to remote learning highlighted the importance and effectiveness of online coaching platforms and tools.

Various online coaching service providers in India offer a wide range of courses and programs, catering to different levels of learners, from school students to working professionals. Online learning platforms utilize advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) algorithms to provide personalized learning experiences.

These platforms analyze student performance, identify areas of weakness, and provide targeted recommendations and practice exercises.

In an era of rapidly advancing technology and an ever-evolving educational landscape, the demand for effective and standardized online coaching services has grown exponentially. Online coaching has emerged as a powerful tool for education, training, and skill development, offering accessibility, scalability, and flexibility. As India strives to bridge educational gaps, empower its workforce, and expand the horizons of knowledge, the need for a robust framework for online coaching services has become increasingly imperative.

The primary objective of this standard is to establish a comprehensive and adaptable framework that addresses the various facets of online coaching services. The standard provides requirements related to administrative/backend support, counseling Services, competency of the instructor, IT security, assessment, feedback from the learner, and improvement in services.

ONLINE COACHING SERVICES — REQUIREMENTS

1 SCOPE

This Indian standard specifies requirements for coaching services provided through online modes but does not include sports, dance, theatre and other creative activities.

> NOTE — Non-specific learning such as knowledge videos on social media platforms are excluded from this standard.

2 REFERENCES

The standard given below contains provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this standard. At the time of publication, the edition indicated was valid. The standard is subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent edition of the standard given below:

IS/ISO No.	Title
IS/ISO 29995 : 2021	Education and Learning Services — Vocabulary
IS 18692 : 2024	Coaching Centre Services — Requirements

3 TERMINOLOGY

For the purposes of this standard, in addition to IS/ISO 29995:2021, the following terms and definitions shall apply.

3.1 Audit — Systematic, independent and documented process for obtaining objective evidence and evaluating it objectively to determine the extent to which audit criteria are fulfilled.

3.2 Audit criteria — Set of policies, procedures or requirements used as a reference against which objective evidence is compared.

3.3 Audit scope — Extent and boundaries of an audit.

3.4 Competence — Ability to apply knowledge and skill to achieve intended results in online coaching services.

3.5 Learning Management System (LMS) — A software application for the administration, documentation, tracking, reporting, automation, and delivery of educational courses, training programs, materials or learning and development programs.

3.6 Online Coaching — Tuition, instructions or guidance in any branch of learning imparted to students/learners through online mode excluding counselling, sports, dance, yoga, theatre or any other form of art.

3.7 Online Coaching Service Provider (OCSP) — A skilled/trained/competent person or group or organization providing a platform for online lectures.

3.8 Feedback — Opinions, comments and expressions of interest in learning services

3.9 Faculty — A person providing online lectures on the online coaching platform.

3.10 Learner — A person or a group gaining/acquiring knowledge and skills through online mode.

3.11 Improvement — Activity to enhance performance.

3.12 Top Management — Person or group of people who direct and control online coaching at the highest level.

4 CONTEXT OF ONLINE COACHING SERVICES

4.1 Teaching Effectiveness

The top management shall ensure teaching effectiveness while considering the following:

a) Providing opportunities to the learners to enhance their interaction with other learners and instructors by encouraging collaboration;

b) Promoting learners' digital citizenship skills to teach them how to use technology correctly and responsibly; and

c) Promote blended learning by combining traditional classroom instructions with advanced teaching methodology such as virtual reality (VR).

NOTE — For guidance, refer to Annex A for digital citizenship.

4.2 Design of Learning Services

The OCSP shall design a learning service consisting of curriculum, learning materials and means of assessment and evaluation based on the following:

a) Expected needs of the users;
b) Proposed intensity and duration of the course;
c) Methods, resources, and responsibilities to optimize the transfer of learning;
d) Intended learning outcomes;
e) Intended means of assessment;
f) Intended procedure of monitoring and evaluation; and
g) Social and cultural needs, as well as the background of the learners.

The curriculum, learning resources, and the means of assessment and evaluation shall be disclosed to relevant stakeholders.

4.2.1 Course Design

The courses and its curriculum including instructional manuals, video tutorials, and learning simulations, provided by an OCSP shall have clear and measurable learning objectives and be aligned with the overall learning outcomes of the course or program.

NOTE — The curriculum design and development should be carried out in consultation with the faculty by an experienced and trained person.

4.2.2 Assessment

The OCSP shall provide opportunities for learners to practice their skills and apply their knowledge, through the involvement of quizzes, simulations, or real-world scenarios.

In designing or selecting assessments, the following aspects shall be considered:
a) Intended use of the assessment;
b) Measurable Learning outcomes;
c) Methods of assessment (including formative and summative assessment);
d) Scoring, rubrics, scheme of examination and reporting;
e) Interested parties involved in or affected by the assessment.

The progress of learners shall be assessed by continuous evaluation and at the end of the course. The process and outcome of the assessment shall be shared with learners.

Notes
1 Before, or at the beginning of the course, an assessment can be made of the learner's level of competence in the subject to be learned.
2 Access to assessment results should be given only to those with established authority or legitimate consent to view the information with regard to principles of fairness, transparency and confidentiality.

4.2.3 Outcome

The evaluation of learning services shall include the following:

a) Periodic observation of teaching and learning for quality assurance purposes;
b) Review of assessment results and the alignment of these results with the learning outcomes;
c) Analysis of the level of satisfaction of learners with the learning service, as well as their feedback and suggestions for improving the quality of the learning service;
d) Analysis of enrolment, attendance and attrition.

Data sets and reports resulting from monitoring and evaluation shall be clear and transparent. Reports shall clearly describe the findings and the rationale in light of the learning service objectives.

Any complaints and claims shall be dealt with within an agreed timeframe to provide redress or explanation.

The results of monitoring and evaluation shall be taken into account in implementing improvements and changes to the learning service, such as in the curriculum, course programmes, teaching methods and professional development.

NOTES

1. An attempt should be made to integrate the latest/updated technology.
2. Special provision for learners to make online coaching inclusive.
3. ADDIE (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation) model can be used for teaching framework.
4. Bloom's Taxonomy framework can be used for teaching performance evaluation.

4.3 Quality of Delivered Lectures

The lectures delivered by faculty on an online coaching platform shall be:

a) factually accurate/free from error or misleading information;
b) relevant to the learning objectives and the needs of the target audience;
c) addressing the specific skills or knowledge that learners need to acquire;
d) clear and easy to understand, with explanations provided wherever necessary;
e) avoiding usage of technical jargon or language that is overly complex;
f) appropriate in tone, style, and formatting in general of the presentation based on the needs, expectations and demands of the learners to help learners focus on the content;
g) engaging and interesting, with a variety of media used to convey information this may include text, images, videos, animations, and interactive elements;

NOTE — This may involve providing alternative formats or ensuring that the content is compatible with respect to assistive technologies and in accordance with the perseverance of the differently abled learners.

j) appropriate for the target audience and the learning context;
k) catering to cultural and linguistic differences and avoid using content that may be offensive or inappropriate;
m) closely aligned with the learning objectives of the course or program;
l) designed to help learners achieve the desired outcomes and be relevant to their professional or personal development; and
m) ensured that borrowed material must be duly acknowledged and due permissions shall be sought for copyrighted material.

NOTE — An attempt should be made to ensure that the platform is accessible to all learners, including those with differently abled or who use assistive technologies. This may involve providing alternative formats or ensuring that the content is compatible with assistive technologies.

5 OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

The top management shall ensure a robust, continuous, easy to access online coaching services considering the following operational requirements;

a) Online coaching platform;
b) Integrated learning management system;
c) Sufficient cloud memory and libraries;
d) Timely and effective technical support including FAQs or chatbots, if possible, to provide technical and operational support to the learners available on the public site;
e) Community services including wikis, glossaries and discussion groups;
f) Availability of counsellors;
g) Online assessment/practice tools; and
h) Robust internet connectivity and operational readiness.

NOTE — The online coaching service provider should preferably use a combination of asynchronous and synchronous delivery methods to ensure that learners can access the content at their own pace or participate in real-time sessions as needed. This may require an indexed library of online resources.

5.1 Online Coaching Platform

The top management shall ensure a reliable platform for delivering online coaching services.

NOTE — This could be a website with integrated coaching tools, video conferencing software, or a dedicated online coaching platform.

5.2 Learning Management System

The top management shall incorporate an integrated learning management system (LMS) to ensure enhanced learning experiences. The LMS shall have the following features:

a) Tools to create, organize, and manage courses within the online platform;
b) Allow faculty to upload various types of multimedia content such as videos, presentations, documents, quizzes, and interactive activities;
c) Tracking mechanisms to monitor learner's progress within courses, including completion status, quiz scores, and time spent on different activities;
d) Discussion forums, chat rooms, or social features for learners to interact with each other, ask questions, and discuss course topics;
e) Accessible to all users, including learners with special abilities;
f) Robust security measures to protect copyrighted content, learners data, and sensitive information shared within the platform;
g) Scalability in mind to accommodate growth in the number of users, courses, and content; and
h) Integrate the LMS seamlessly with other features of the online coaching such as scheduling, messaging, payment processing, and analytics, to provide a cohesive experience.

5.3 Sufficient Cloud Memory and Libraries

The top management shall ensure cloud storage of relevant information/content to ensure that the platform and lectures remain available in case of natural disasters or other emergencies.

5.4 Robust Internet Connectivity and Operational Readiness

The top management shall ensure the following:

a) Infrastructure supporting the online coaching platform, such as servers and databases, is reliable enough to handle the expected load;
b) Monitor the performance of the online coaching platform and related systems, such as the database and server, to identify and resolve any performance issues quickly;
c) Provide regular backups of learner data and have a disaster recovery plan in place to ensure quick restoration of the platform in case of an outage or other disruption;
d) Regularly update and maintain the online coaching platform to ensure that it remains secure and up-to-date with the possible latest technologies;
e) Provide analytics and reporting on learner progress and performance to help instructors and administrators identify areas for improvement and optimize the learning experience;
f) The Online coaching platform and related systems comply with relevant industry/educational standards and regulations.
g) have systems in place to ensure that the platform remains available even if there are hardware or software failures. This may include backup servers, load balancers, and failover mechanisms etc;
h) provide technical support to learners and instructors to help them troubleshoot any issues that they encounter while accessing the platform or lectures; and
j) provide multiple access points to the platform and lectures, such as through a website or mobile app, to ensure that learners can access the content from anywhere and on any device.

5.5 Counselling Services

When needed, the top management shall provide course counselling services to the learners and medical counselling to the learners, staff, and faculty. The counselling provided to the learners shall focus, but not limited to, the following:

a) Easily accessible to learners through multiple channels, such as online chat, email, phone, or video conferencing;
b) Ensure that counsellors have the appropriate training and qualifications (preferably master's degree in psychology/counselling from a recognized University or institution), to provide effective counselling services to learners;
c) Provide both individual and group counselling services to meet the diverse needs of learners;
d) Ensure that counselling sessions are confidential, and that learner information is kept private and secure;
e) Provide counselling services that support learners' mental health and well-being, such as stress management, anxiety reduction, and coping strategies;
f) Address learning-related concerns such as time management, motivation, and study skills to help learners succeed in their courses or programs;
g) Provide referrals to external resources, such as mental health professionals, community services, or other support organizations, as needed; and

h) Incorporate feedback from learners to continuously improve counselling services and ensure that they meet the evolving needs of learners.

> NOTE — Information about the names of psychologists, counsellors, and the time they render services may be given to all students and parents. Trained counsellors could be appointed in the coaching centre to facilitate effective guidance and counselling for students and parents.

6 SUPPORT

The top management shall determine, and provide the support needed for the establishment, implementation, maintenance and continual improvement of the online coaching platform.

6.1 Administrative Support

The top management shall ensure an administration section in place for effective customer support, enrolment and registration of learners, learners' data management, course and schedule management, documentation and reporting, financial and billing support, communication and coordination and other related tasks. The administrative support shall be able to:

a) handle inquiries, provide assistance to learners and instructors, address technical issues, and resolve problems or complaints promptly and professionally;

b) manage the enrolment and registration process for learners, ensuring smooth onboarding, accurate data entry, and timely communication regarding course availability, prerequisites, and registration deadlines;

c) manage the learning management system including management of learner data and records, course enrolments, troubleshooting technical issues, providing support to learners and instructors in navigating the platform and ensuring compliance with data protection regulations;

d) handle documentation and reporting tasks, including generating reports on learner progress, course evaluations, and other relevant administrative data as required;

e) maintain proper records, ensure compliance with regulatory requirements, and support internal audits or external inspections related to learning operations;

f) Communicate and coordinate effectively to liaise with instructors, learners, and other stakeholders to provide updates, share important information, and facilitate smooth operations; and

g) perform general administrative tasks such as managing email correspondence, scheduling meetings, organizing files and documents, and assisting with other administrative functions to ensure efficient operations and if applicable, handle the financial and billing tasks, such as processing payments, issuing invoices, managing refunds, and reconciling financial records.

> NOTE — The specific requirements for administrative support in learning services may vary depending on the structure, size, and specific needs of the learning service. Determining the scope of administrative support required will help identify the necessary skills, qualifications, and experience for the administrative support staff.

7 QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

The minimum qualification requirements for faculties shall be as per IS 18692.

All faculties shall have the necessary competence and skill in the relevant subject to undertake the teaching and related assigned duties.

8 COMPETENCY

The top management shall ensure the following:

a) Necessary competence to design and deliver high-quality learning courses or programs involving knowledge of programming languages, learning management systems, and multimedia tools;

b) Deep understanding of learning service principles and techniques including knowledge of different learning styles, assessment methods, and online coaching platforms;

c) Commitment to continuous learning and development that involves participating in relevant training programs, attending conferences or workshops, and keeping up-to-date with the latest developments in learning technology and instructional design;

> NOTE – The top management may establish code of ethics and ensure compliance including maintaining learner confidentiality, avoiding conflicts of interest, and upholding academic integrity.

9 CONTROL ON EXTERNALLY PROVIDED SERVICES

9.1 The top management shall ensure that all outsourced processes and services conform to the requirements of this Standard and regulatory requirements. The online coaching service provider shall determine the controls to be applied to outsourced processes and related services when,

a) outsourced processes and related services are intended for incorporation into the online coaching service provider's own services; and

b) outsourced processes and related services are provided directly to the learners or instructor by external providers on behalf of the online coaching service provider; and

c) a process, or part of a process, is provided by an outsourced service provider as a result of a decision by the online coaching service provider.

9.2 The online coaching service provider shall determine and apply documented criteria for the evaluation, selection, monitoring of performance, and re-evaluation of outsourced service providers, based on their ability to provide processes or products and services in accordance with requirements. The online coaching service provider shall retain documented information on these activities and any necessary actions arising from the evaluations.

NOTE — Examples of some outsourced activities in online coaching services are listed in Annex B.

10 IT SECURITY GUIDELINES

The online coaching service providers shall comply with relevant data privacy and security regulations and take appropriate measures to protect the learners' personal information and data. The online coaching service provider shall ensure the following:

a) The personal data of learners, instructors, employees and other stakeholders are protected and stored securely. This may involve using encryption, password protection, and secure servers.

b) Secure and protected from hacking, malware, and other cyber threats. This may involve implementing security protocols, such as firewalls and antivirus software;

c) Implement measures to prevent unauthorized access to the online coaching platform, such as multi-factor authentication and IP blocking;

d) Establish clear policies for acceptable use of the online coaching platform and consequences for violating those policies. This may include policies to handle harassment, cyberbullying, and plagiarism;

e) Provide training to learners, instructors, and other stakeholders on the safe and responsible use of the online coaching platform. This may include training on data privacy, online safety, and cyber hygiene; and

f) Security plan shall be in place to address cyber threats, such as data breaches or hacking attempts. This may involve having a dedicated IT security team, performing regular security audits, and having a plan for responding to incidents.

11 REFUND PROCESS

The online coaching service provider shall establish a refund policy which shall be communicated to the learners at the time of admission. The process of refunding fees shall be completed as per the policy preferably within 10 days from the date of submission of refund application by the learner or as mentioned in the refund policy of online coaching service providers.

12 COMPLAINT HANDLING

The top management shall establish and maintain procedures to handle complaints lodged by learners and their redressal mechanism. An employee of online coaching shall be designated by the top management for handling and redressal of complaints.

The redressal of complaints shall preferably be done within 30 days of receipt of complaints. The online coaching service provider shall maintain records of complaints and their redressals. The status of complaints shall be reviewed by the top management on a regular basis.

13 EVALUATION

13.1 General

The top management shall incorporate appropriate formative and summative assessments and continuous evaluations to measure the learners' knowledge and progress. The assessments shall be aligned with the learning objectives and provide meaningful feedback to the learners. The online coaching service provider shall review and evaluate the following:

a) Instructional design capabilities, including their ability to develop effective learning objectives, design engaging learning activities, and create appropriate assessment methods;

b) Credentials of instructors or employees, such as their educational qualifications, certifications, and relevant experience;

   c) Technology infrastructure, such as their learning management system, video conferencing tools, and multimedia production capabilities;

   d) Support services, including counselling services, technical support, and accessibility accommodations; and

   e) Course outcomes, such as learner satisfaction, course completion rates, and job placement rates etc.

13.2 Feedback

The online coaching service provider shall monitor perception of learners to the services being provided and obtain feedback. The online coaching service provider shall determine the method of obtaining, monitoring and reviewing the feedback which may involve reviewing online reviews, conducting surveys, or interviewing learners.

13.3 Internal audit

The top management shall assign responsibility to conduct internal audits at planned intervals (preferably once in 12 months) to provide information on whether the established online coaching services are effectively implemented and maintained and ensure the following:

   a) Plan an audit programme(s) including the frequency, methods, responsibilities, planning requirements and reporting;

   b) Define the audit criteria and scope for each audit;

   c) Select auditors and conduct audits to ensure objectivity and the impartiality of the audit process;

   d) Results of the audits are reported to top management;

   e) Take appropriate correction and corrective actions without undue delay; and

   f) Retain documented information as evidence of the implementation of the audit programme and the audit results.

14 REVIEWS BY TOP MANAGEMENT

The top management shall review the performance of online coaching services at regular intervals (preferably every three months) considering the following:

   a) Status of actions from previous management reviews;

   b) Changes in external and internal issues that are relevant to the online coaching services;

   c) Actions required on feedback from learners and other stakeholders;

   d) Status of complaints and their redressal;

   e) Audit results; and

   f) the adequacy of resources.

15 IMPROVEMENT/CONTINUOUS QUALITY ENHANCEMENT

The top management shall determine and select opportunities for improvement and implement any necessary actions to meet the requirements of the learners and ensure the following:

   a) Actions on nonconformities,

   b) Improvement in quality of online coaching services on the basis of audit results and feedback from learners and other stakeholders;

   c) Foster a culture of continuous/continual improvement among employees by encouraging them to share ideas, experiment with new approaches, and take calculated risks;

   d) Professional development of employees by providing training and development opportunities; and

   e) Collaborate with partners and stakeholders to develop innovative solutions and improve its services.

ANNEX A
(Informative)
(*Clause* **4.1**)

A-1 Digital citizenship refers to the responsible and ethical use of technology, especially the internet and digital devices. It encompasses a range of behaviours and attitudes that individuals should adopt when navigating the digital world. Digital citizenship is essential in the modern age, as technology plays an integral role in our personal, social, and professional lives.

A-2 Key aspects of digital citizenship include:

a) Digital Literacy: Understanding how to use digital tools, software, and the internet effectively and safely. This includes knowing how to navigate websites, use software, and assess the credibility of online information.

b) Online Safety: Practicing safe and secure behavior online, such as protecting personal information, using strong passwords, and being cautious about sharing private data.

c) Respectful Communication: Treating others with respect and kindness in online interactions, including social media, email, and messaging. This involves avoiding cyberbullying, hate speech, and harassment.

d) Privacy Awareness: Understanding the importance of privacy in the digital world and knowing how to protect one's personal information. This includes being aware of data collection practices and privacy settings on social media and other online platforms.

e) Intellectual Property: Respecting copyright and intellectual property rights, understanding fair use, and avoiding plagiarism when using or sharing digital content.

f) Critical Thinking: Developing the ability to evaluate information and sources critically. This includes recognizing fake news, misinformation, and disinformation.

g) Digital Footprint: Being aware that every online action leaves a digital trail and considering the potential consequences of one's online behavior on future opportunities and personal reputation.

h) Cybersecurity: Understanding the importance of protecting digital devices from malware, viruses, and other cyber threats. This involves keeping software and antivirus programs up to date.

j) Digital Etiquette: Practicing good manners and appropriate behavior online, similar to how we do in face-to-face interactions. This includes being mindful of tone, language, and behavior in online communities and social media.

k) Digital Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding one's rights in the digital space, including freedom of speech, and recognizing that these rights come with responsibilities to maintain a safe and respectful online environment.

ANNEX B
(Informative)
(*Clause* **9**)

EXAMPLES OF OUTSOURCED ACTIVITY IN ONLINE COACHING SERVICES

Online coaching service providers can outsource the following activities to enhance their operations and focus on core competencies:

a) Content Development — Outsourcing content development can involve hiring subject matter experts (SMEs), instructional designers, and multimedia specialists to create engaging and interactive learning materials, including course modules, videos, assessments, and simulations;

b) Instructional Design — Online coaching service providers can outsource instructional design tasks to professionals who specialize in designing effective learning experiences. This can include creating learning objectives, designing curriculum structures, and developing instructional strategies;

c) Technical Support — Outsourcing technical support services can involve providing learners and instructors with assistance related to the online coaching platform, troubleshooting technical issues, and resolving user queries or problems;

d) Platform Maintenance and Upgrades — Online coaching service providers can outsource the technical maintenance and upgrades of their online coaching platform, including server management, software updates, and infrastructure maintenance to ensure smooth and reliable platform performance;

e) Localization and Translation — If the online coaching services cater to a global audience, outsourcing localization and translation services can ensure that the content is effectively adapted to different languages, cultures, and regions;

f) Marketing and Promotion — Online coaching service providers can outsource marketing and promotion activities, including digital marketing campaigns, content creation for social media platforms, search engine optimization (SEO), and lead generation; and

g) Quality Assurance and Compliance — Outsourcing quality assurance and compliance activities can involve engaging external auditors or experts to ensure that the learning services comply with industry standards, regulatory requirements, accessibility guidelines, and data privacy regulations.