



# Fair Chance for Education Outreach Activity Resource for Higher Education Institutions: Organising a College Visit 'Taster Day' for Potential Higher Education Applicants

Developed by Nikita Samanta, Anjali Thomas, Julie Mansuy, Ann Stewart, Emily F. Henderson, Nidhi S. Sabharwal

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# Introduction

This Outreach Activity Resource has been developed, under the Fair Chance for Education academic research project, to provide support to higher education (HE) colleges in India for the organisation of ‘taster days’.

Taster days are a beneficial activity for colleges as they enable prospective students to get a ‘taste’ of what attending college might be like, by welcoming them on site. This can lead to a greater number of students wanting to enrol in college, but can also increase the number of applications received by the college having provided the taster day.

As decisions about HE in India are made by young people who may be first generation students and therefore may not know what college involves, taster days can inform their choice on whether to attend college and ensure that decision is made based on merit and aspiration.

## The Fair Chance for Education Project

‘A Fair Chance for Education: Gendered Pathways to Educational Success in Haryana’ was a five-year collaborative project (2017-2021) that aimed to determine the gendered factors that contribute to young people’s HE access and choice in Haryana, India.

The first phase of the project explored the social, economic, and educational backgrounds of students accessing co-educational government colleges in Haryana, in relation to gender. Two key findings emerged: that families are heavily involved in decisions about HE, and that there is very limited institutional outreach available to first-generation students and students from marginalised communities.

The second and third phases of the project focused on the role of family members in the educational choices of young people (Phase 2) and explored the ways in which outreach activities organised by colleges can influence the way in which young people access HE (Phase 3).

The key conclusion is that developing an outreach culture in government colleges is both possible and desirable so that,

- i) more young people access HE, and
- ii) young people and their families make more informed choices about accessing HE.

Because decisions regarding HE are made within families, as a family group, it is important that outreach activities engage with individual young people, and with their family members.

## Understanding the Context

As HE is massifying, there are a variety of ways in which countries and educational institutions are encouraging and improving participation of students from disadvantaged and marginalised groups and communities. These efforts include three kinds of activities: (a) inreach activities, which involve recruiting students to enrol in a particular institution, (b) outreach activities, which often involve participation with stakeholders such as schools and communities and (c) structural reorganisations such as distance learning and using information and communications technology (Osborne 2003).

In the Indian context, the larger structural efforts involve: the caste-based affirmative action policy which is institutionalised through the system of reservations, and a variety of scholarships and student loans which are available to students from socially and economically disadvantaged groups such as young women and students from marginalised communities and students with very low family incomes.

Lack of information and relevant knowledge about HE options is a significant barrier to students and families who are contemplating post-schooling state-funded HE choices in Haryana. Students and families require information about HE institutions (HEIs), scholarships, educational loans, cost of HE and the courses provided; they also require relevant and up-to-date information regarding application and enrolment procedures to be provided in a timely manner. Since many students are the first generation in their families to access HE, they often do not have the benefit of inter-generational primary experience, knowledge and informed expectations of HE.

The NEP 2020 has recognised the need to develop an institutional culture of inreach and outreach to complement the existing reservation policy. It identifies the need for support for students from socio-economically disadvantaged groups (SEDGs), and the importance of developing a supportive culture with schools and communities. It recommends that:

Universities and colleges will thus be required to set up high-quality support centres and will be given adequate funds and academic resources to carry this out effectively. There will also be professional academic and career counselling available to all students. (NEP 2020: 39)

NEP 2020 highlights the need to support HEIs in

their development, community engagement and service, contribution to various fields of practice, faculty development for the higher education system, and support to school education. (NEP 2020: 35)

An outreach programme which involves a range of stakeholders—colleges, schools and family members—will address these the NEP requirements. A programme of this kind will help students and families to have more primary information about HE choices, experiences and expectations, and will assist more young people, especially first-generation students, to access HE and to make more informed educational decisions.

We present here an Outreach Activity Resource to assist stakeholders to meet the NEP 2020 requirements. It is based upon the research findings from the Fair Chance for Education project, but also developed collaboratively with local partners.

### How to Use this Outreach Activity Resource

This Outreach Activity Resource has been developed for stakeholders in Indian HEIs, particularly government colleges. This includes but is not limited to HEI leadership teams and faculty members.

This Outreach Activity Resource is structured as follows. First is the above **Introduction**. Secondly, this Outreach Activity Resource offers four **Open and Taster Day Options** which can be chosen according to the resources available to each institution. Third, the Outreach Activity Resource includes a **Case Study** for a taster day which was organised by the Fair Chance for Education Project, and the activities included in this event. Finally, the Outreach Activity Resource provides several **Templates** which may be useful in order for HEIs to organise a taster day. This includes

- checklist for the organisation of the taster day,
- sample letter inviting students and families to the taster day,
- evaluation form for students to fill in to provide feedback on the taster day
- college profile form which can be filled in by the HEI and distributed to students at the taster day (to provide a record of the key characteristics of the college),
- reflective activity to encourage discussion between staff organising the taster day.

Finally, the Outreach Activity Resource provides additional **Resources** which may be useful to consider for the preparation and planning of a taster day.

If you do decide to use this Outreach Activity Resource, we would very much like to hear about your experiences of organising a taster day. You can also get in touch with questions and feedback about this Outreach Activity Resource. You can contact us at [FCFHaryana@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:FCFHaryana@warwick.ac.uk) .



# Open and Taster Day Options

This table presents four different options, displayed from the more complex option necessitating more resources, to the simplest option requiring fewer resources.

Resources	Open Day	Open Day <i>light</i>	Taster-Day	Taster-Day <i>light</i>
<b>Time</b>	Full day (4-6 hours)	Half day (2-3 hours)	Half day (2-3 hours)	(2 hours)
<b>Staffing</b>	Requires substantial staffing: <b>core committee</b> with representation from staff, faculty and students	Requires low staffing: <b>one person in charge</b>	Requires a medium amount of staffing: <b>one to three people in charge</b>	Requires low staffing: <b>one or two people</b>
<b>Activities</b>	Informational sessions, taster lectures and campus tour	Informational sessions and campus tour	Informational sessions, taster lectures and campus tour	One or two taster lectures with Q&A and short campus tour
<b>Invitation</b>	Open to any class 12 students and family members	Open to any class 12 students and family members	Selective invitation	Selective invitation
<b>Transport</b>	Buses to ferry students/families to and from school or village	Students/families travel by their own means	Buses to ferry students/families to and from school or village	Students/families travel by their own means
<b>Refreshments</b>	Water and snacks	Water and snacks (optional)	Water and snacks	Water
<b>AV</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Campus tour</b>	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Marketing</b>	Marketing for event: posters in public places/WhatsApp groups/in-person invitation to schools, village panchayats/newspaper advertisements	Marketing for event: WhatsApp groups/in-person invitation to schools, village panchayats	In-person visit to schools/villages who are being invited to the event	In-person visit or calls to schools/villages who are being invited to the event
<b>Material</b>	Print out fliers/college prospectus	Print out fliers/college prospectus	Print out fliers/college prospectus	Redirect students to college website
<b>Feedback</b>	Print feedback forms	Print feedback forms (optional)	Print feedback forms	Verbal feedback

# A Taster Day Case Study

A co-educational government college in a rural part of Haryana organised a 'Taster Day' for the students of nearby government schools, to allow high school students to experience the atmosphere of a college and also to give students access to important information on how to access college. The objectives of the event were to give students information about:

1. The admission process (admission dates, application forms, fees, documents needed)
2. Courses and streams available in this college
3. Scholarships and bursaries
4. College facilities (NCC, NSS, Sports, Computers, etc.)

In addition, the event aimed to provide students the opportunity to ask questions from the faculty and staff and seek guidance about accessing HE.

Since the college wanted to limit the number of students attending, and also would conduct a pre-event and post-event evaluation of the level of information students had accessed about HE, the college decided to host a 'taster day', which is an invite-only event, instead of an 'open day' (see previous page for options).

The college first put together a team who were responsible for organising the event; the team consisted of two faculty members who were active with the local parent community, the principal and an external researcher who was to evaluate the event. The faculty members were to facilitate taster sessions for the students, the principal was to facilitate the informational session for the students about admission and scholarships and the researcher's role was to organise the logistics for the event as well as to evaluate the event.

A month prior to the event, the researcher, on behalf of the college, contacted the girls' and boys' high schools in the area surrounding the college to set a date for the event that would suit the schools' and college's schedule. A week before the event, the researcher printed copies of the pre-event and post-event questionnaires to be distributed among the high school students who were to participate in the event. The college organised for a private bus to ferry students and the accompanying school teachers to and from the college for the taster day. Snack boxes were ordered for the participants from a local sweet shop. The team responsible for the event put together a brief PowerPoint presentation with information on the admission process, fees, scholarships and course options. The college already had their own projector and screen along with microphones, so did not need to organise for this to be in place.

A few days before the event, the college confirmed the date and time with the schools, and double-checked the timings with the bus operator and the catering shop. They also conducted a dry-run of the presentation with audio. They set up the hall where the event was to take place.

On the day of the event, as the students arrived into the college, the researcher collected the pre-event questionnaires from the students. The principal and some other faculty members conducted an informational session for the students for an

hour, with a question-and-answer session where students were able to clarify doubts and ask for more information from the college staff. Then the students were taken on a campus tour and shown the facilities of the college. The students also briefly were able to sit in on lectures to give them a feel of what it would feel like to be a college student. After the event, the students were requested to fill out a post-event questionnaire. Following this, the snack boxes were distributed, and the students departed from the college by bus.

The college staff, faculty and researcher participated in a brief reflection session about the event which helped to highlight steps to further improve the next event in the following year, as well as to acknowledge the elements that went well and could be replicated. The feedback forms indicated that the majority of students felt they had gained more information about admissions, courses, scholarships and facilities from attending the event.

# Templates

The below templates are provided to support colleges with the organisation and evaluation of a taster day event. These may not all be relevant, or may need adjusting to fit your institution's event.

1. Checklist with timeline and suggested tasks for organising the event (page 9).
2. Sample letter to invite Class 12 students and families to the event (page 11- English; page 12- Hindi).
3. Evaluation form for students and families attending the event (page 13).
4. College profile document to fill in and photocopy in order to distribute to students and families. This will enable them to have a record of the key characteristics and strengths of your institution (page 15).
5. Reflective activity providing some points of discussion for the Taster Day organising committee (page 16).



## 1. Event Checklist

The following table outlines some of the tasks which may be necessary in order to organise a taster day. This list is not exhaustive, so please use your discretion to alter the list to suit your college. The table allows for the date of completion of the task, and the initials of the person who completed the task, to be noted for organisation purposes. Some spaces have also been left blank for any other tasks that may be missing.

### Pre-Event:

Timeline	Task	Date	Initials
Tasks to complete <b>5 weeks</b> before the event	Identify a coordinator in charge of the event.		
	Staff reflective activity (see page 16).		
	Choose type of event being organised (see options page 5).		
	Set up a core committee (if applicable, depending on the type of event chosen). Include college student ambassadors, including trailblazers (students who are the first in their family to access HE).		
	Set a date for the event in consultation with schools and the holiday calendar to ensure maximum attendance.		
	Make a list of all the schools/ groups/ areas you want to invite to the event.		
	Inform the respective principals/ in-charge/ authority about the event and obtain their buy-in.		
Tasks to complete <b>4 weeks</b> before the event	Put together an agenda for the day with details on who will speak when and about which topic; campus tour; Q&A; etc.		
	It would be a good idea to invite any existing students (college ambassadors/trailblazers) to speak as well.		
	Inform and invite any relevant local authorities.		
	Promote the event through various channels such as WhatsApp, newspaper, fliers, word-of-mouth, or any other appropriate channels.		
	Organise a space where the event will take place (eg: AV room, exam hall) keeping in mind that the room should be equipped for audio-visual equipment (eg: projector and speakers), should you choose to use PPT slides or videos.		
Tasks to complete <b>3 weeks</b> before the event	Organise the audio-visual equipment for the event (eg: microphone, projector, screen, laptop, clicker).		
	Organise food for the event, if applicable.		
	Organise transportation for the event, if applicable (eg: buses to transport school students).		
Tasks to complete <b>1 weeks</b> before the event	Organise stationery (pens, notepads) for the event.		
	Organise training for college ambassadors/trailblazers.		
	Print out the handouts, pre-event questionnaire, post-event questionnaire, along with any other material that may be relevant.		
	Create the slides, video etc. if applicable.		

Tasks to complete in the week of the event.	Send a reminder to the schools/groups a day or two before the event.		
	Confirm the AV equipment/ transportation/ food or any other material that is being sourced, one day before the event.		
	Distribute consent sheets and pre-event questionnaires to the schools/ groups a day or two before the event.		
	Set up the space where the event is taking place.		

**On the day of the event:**

Task	Date	Initials
Do a dry-run of the presentation and test any technical/AV equipment to ensure smooth functioning.		
Run the event as planned. Ensure some time for a Q&A.		
Hand out the informational fliers/booklets to the participants.		
After the event, distribute and collect the post-event questionnaires/feedback forms from the participants.		

**Post-event:**

Task	Date	Initials
Go through the post-event questionnaires/ feedback forms and reflect on the event. Consider putting together a brief report on the event, based on the feedback.		

## 2. Sample Letter to Families

<College Address>

<Date>

Subject: Invitation to Open Day Event <or another name of your choice> at <name of college> on <date>

Dear <name of parents>

We recognise that your child is a student at <name of school> and will be soon graduating from class 12. After finishing class 12, there are several educational and career opportunities available to children today. Higher Education in college and university is a very good route through which your child can develop their knowledge and skills. This will provide better employment opportunities for your child in the future. The knowledge and experiences in college would help your child in their future life and endeavours.

We would like to invite you and your child to <name of college> for an open day event where you will be able to see/experience/participate in <list activities>.

This will help you understand what your child will experience if they enrol in college and university. This will also be an opportunity for you to observe the college campus and its environment and interact with the wonderful staff and faculty who provide knowledge and different kinds of educational services to the boys and girls enrolled in the institution.

This event will be held on <date> between <time>.

We look forward to you and your child coming to this event and engaging with the staff and faculty who will be present to answer all your questions and concerns.

Yours sincerely,

<Name and Address of the Organiser>

<कॉलेज का पता>

<दिनांक>

विषय: ओपन डे कार्यक्रम के लिए निमंत्रण <या आपके पसंद का दूसरा नाम>, <कॉलेज का नाम >, <दिनांक>

प्रिय <माता-पिता का नाम >

हम जानते हैं कि आपका बच्चा < स्कूल का नाम > के 12 वीं कक्षा का विद्यार्थी है। 12वीं कक्षा पास करने के बाद आजकल बच्चों के लिए कई शैक्षिक और रोजगार अवसर उपलब्ध हैं। कॉलेज और विश्वविद्यालय में उच्च शिक्षा एक बहुत अच्छा मार्ग है जिसके द्वारा आपका बच्चा अपने ज्ञान और कुशलता का विकास कर सकता है। इससे आपके बच्चे को भविष्य में रोजगार के बेहतर अवसर मिल सकते हैं। कॉलेज का ज्ञान और अनुभव आपके बच्चे को उनके भविष्य के जीवन और प्रयासों में मदद करेगा।

हम आपको और आपके बच्चे को <कॉलेज का नाम> एक खुले दिन के कार्यक्रम के लिए आमंत्रित करना चाहते हैं, जहां आप <सूची गतिविधियों> को देख/अनुभव/भाग ले सकते हैं।

इससे आपको यह समझने में मदद मिलेगी कि यदि आपका बच्चा कॉलेज और विश्वविद्यालय में दाखिला लेता है तो उसे क्या अनुभव होगा। यह आपके लिए कॉलेज और उसके वातावरण को देखने, और कॉलेज के कर्मचारियों और शिक्षकों के साथ बातचीत करने का एक अवसर होगा।

यह कार्यक्रम <दिनांक> को <समय> के बीच आयोजित किया जा रहा है।

हम इस कार्यक्रम में आपकी और आपके बच्चे की भागीदारी की आशा करते हैं। आपके सभी सवालों का जवाब देने के लिए शिक्षक और कर्मचारी यहां मौजूद रहेंगे।

सादर,

< आयोजकों का नाम और पता >

### 3. Evaluation Form

**कृपया निम्नलिखित प्रश्नों का उत्तर दें (Please answer the following questions) :**

- 1) पूरा नाम (Full Name) \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) लिंग (Gender) \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) फ़ोन नंबर (Phone number) \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) कक्षा (Class) \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) क्या इस कार्यक्रम के बाद, आप किसी कॉलेज/विश्वविद्यालय में दाखिले के लिए होने वाली प्रवेश प्रक्रियाओं के बारे में अधिक आश्वस्त महसूस करते हैं? (Do you feel more confident about the admissions procedures to enrol in a college/university after the event?)
  - a. हाँ (Yes)
  - b. नहीं (No)
  - c. शायद (Maybe)
- 6) क्या इस कार्यक्रम के बाद आप विषय / संकाय को चुनने में अधिक आश्वस्त महसूस करते हैं? (Do you feel more confident about which subject/stream to choose after attending the event?)
  - a. हाँ (Yes)
  - b. नहीं (No)
  - c. कुछ कुछ (Partially)
- 7) क्या आप स्नातक स्तर पर किसी भी / सभी छात्रवृत्ति / सीट-आरक्षण या आपके लिए उपलब्ध योजनाओं से अवगत हैं? (Are you aware of any/all the scholarships/studentships/seat-reservation or schemes available for you at the bachelor level?)
  - a. हाँ (Yes)
  - b. नहीं (No)
  - c. शायद (Maybe)
- 8) क्या आपको लगता है कि आज का कार्यक्रम आपके लिए उपयोगी था? (Was today's event useful for you?)
  - a. हाँ (Yes)
  - b. नहीं (No)
  - c. शायद (Maybe)
- 9) आपको इस कार्यक्रम के बारे में सबसे उपयोगी क्या लगा? (What did you find most useful about the event?)  

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- 10) इस कार्यक्रम को अधिक उपयोगी बनाने के लिए हम क्या बदल सकते हैं या जोड़ सकते हैं? (What can we change or add to make the event more useful in future?)  

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- 11) आज के कार्यक्रम पर कोई अतिरिक्त टिप्पणी या विचार?  
(Any additional comments or thoughts on today's event?)





## 4. College Profile

Name of College- \_\_\_\_\_

Place- \_\_\_\_\_ District- \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Principal- \_\_\_\_\_

Type of college- Government/ Government aided/ Private/ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliated University- \_\_\_\_\_

Year established- \_\_\_\_\_

Medium of Instruction- \_\_\_\_\_ Number of students- \_\_\_\_\_

Approx. student body makeup- SC \_\_\_\_\_ BC \_\_\_\_\_ General \_\_\_\_\_

Number of full time staff- \_\_\_\_\_ Number of contract staff- \_\_\_\_\_

Student-teacher ratio- \_\_\_\_\_

Streams offered- \_\_\_\_\_

Average fees for UG- Without practicals \_\_\_\_\_ With practicals- \_\_\_\_\_

Are fees different for women and men, if so state here- \_\_\_\_\_

Facilities \_\_\_\_\_

Other comments:

Principal Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **5. Reflective Activity**

The purpose of this reflective activity is to provide some discussion points for **HEI leadership teams and faculty members** wanting to organise a taster day. It aims to assist with the development of an ethos or culture of outreach through self-reflection. It should be undertaken as a preliminary step to the organising the taster/open day.

These discussion points will provide the team with a deeper understanding of why they might want to run a taster day and which activities may be beneficial.

**What was your experience of making decisions about going to college?**

**When did you decide that you would go to HE? At which age?**

**How did you find out about your HE options?**

**Who was involved in the decisions about your HE choices? Why did you make your final choice of institution/course?**

**Did you face any opposition during the decision-making about HE options? Did you overcome this?** (Reflect on factors: family, personal, financial, institutional, geographical, logistical)

**Did you experience any challenges in going through the HE application and admissions process?**

**What are other challenges that young people face in making HE choices?**

**How might an open/taster day improve young people's HE options, particularly from marginalised backgrounds and young women?** (e.g.: via resources, information, assistance in filling application)

# Resources

Information on outreach in UK:

- UCAS:  
<https://www.ucas.com/providers/good-practice/emerging-cohorts/students-who-participated-wp-and-outreach-activities#the-shape-and-size-of-outreach-activities-and-programmes-in-the-uk>
- Office of Students:  
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/ddd39369-6072-4b11-b07d-8f3dfdf1da2a/perceptions-of-higher-education-outreach-and-access-activity.pdf>
- Sutton Trust Summer Schools:  
<https://summerschools.suttontrust.com>
- Brilliant Club:  
<https://thebrilliantclub.org>
- Aim Higher Progression framework:  
<https://aimhigherwm.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Progression-Framework.pdf>  
<https://aimhigherwm.ac.uk/teachers-advisers/>
- University of Bath:  
<https://www.ucas.com/providers/good-practice/emerging-cohorts/students-who-participated-wp-and-outreach-activities#the-shape-and-size-of-outreach-activities-and-programmes-in-the-uk>
- University of Birmingham:  
<https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/teachers/primary/index.aspx>
- Imperial College London:  
<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/be-inspired/schools-outreach/secondary-schools/stem-programmes/stem-potential/>
- Swansea University:  
<https://www.swansea.ac.uk/the-university/inclusivity-and-widening-access/outreach/>
- Perceptions of Outreach and Access activities:  
<https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/media/ddd39369-6072-4b11-b07d-8f3dfdf1da2a/perceptions-of-higher-education-outreach-and-access-activity.pdf>

- Advance HE:  
<https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/higher-education-outreach-widen-participation-toolkits-practitioners>
- University of Warwick:  
<https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/>  
  
[https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/wpatwarwick/app/theuniversityofwarwick\\_app\\_2020-21\\_v1\\_10007163.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/wpatwarwick/app/theuniversityofwarwick_app_2020-21_v1_10007163.pdf)  
  
[https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/wpatwarwick/app/impact\\_report\\_2018.pdf](https://warwick.ac.uk/study/outreach/wpatwarwick/app/impact_report_2018.pdf)

USA example of an advertising campaign aimed at providing ways to inform students about what is necessary to gain access to college:

- KnowHow2Go:  
<http://knowhow2go.acenet.edu/>

Academic Resources:

- Osborne M (2003), Policy and practice in widening participation: a six country comparative study of access as flexibility, *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 22 (1), pp. 50-69
- Hasan, Z. and Nussbaum, M.C. (eds) *Equalizing Access: Affirmative Action in Higher Education in India, United States, and South Africa*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press 2012.

# Appendix: Online Open Day

This appendix provides an alternative to the Open Day presented in this Outreach Activity Resource, in order to cater for the limitations of the Covid-19 Crisis.

It is emphasised that an in-person Open Day is preferable as our research shows that setting foots on campus grounds is more beneficial.

Resources	Open Day (already presented above)	Online Open Day Alternative
<b>Time</b>	Full day (4-6 hours)	Full day or half day
<b>Staffing</b>	Requires substantial staffing: <b>core committee</b> with representation from staff, faculty and students	A range of staff and students to present the different sessions
<b>Activities</b>	Informational sessions, taster lectures and campus tour	Online informational sessions with Q&A, online taster lectures, and online presentation of campus facilities with pictures
<b>Invitation</b>	Open to any class 12 students and family members	Open to any class 12 students and family members
<b>Transport</b>	Buses to ferry students/ families to and from school or village	N/A – The open day takes place as an online event
<b>Refreshments</b>	Water and snacks	N/A
<b>AV</b>	✓	✓
<b>Campus tour</b>	✓	✓ (virtual)
<b>Marketing</b>	Marketing for event: posters in public places/ WhatsApp groups/ in-person invitation to schools, village panchayats/ newspaper advertisements	Marketing for event: on social media/ WhatsApp groups/ in-person invitation to schools, village panchayats/ newspaper advertisements (if possible)
<b>Material</b>	Print out fliers/ college prospectus	Digital fliers and college prospectus
<b>Feedback</b>	Print feedback forms	Online feedback form