



TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND CORRUPTION RISK ASSESSMENT: JOINT ADMISSIONS AND MATRICULATION BOARD (JAMB)

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Abstract

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), established in 1978, regulates admissions into Nigeria's tertiary institutions through the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME). Since 2016, the agency has implemented reforms aimed at modernising its processes and strengthening accountability. While notable progress has been achieved, persistent challenges continue to undermine transparency, inclusivity, and public trust. This report assesses JAMB's performance in promoting transparency, accountability, and mitigating corruption risks. It finds that reforms such as centralised e-payments, biometric verification, and the Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS) have improved financial management and reduced fraud. JAMB's compliance with Freedom of Information (FOI) requests, coupled with expanded use of digital platforms, has further enhanced public communication and oversight. However, weaknesses remain. Limited disclosure of expenditure details and procurement outcomes constrains accountability. Historical corruption scandals and ongoing legal cases highlight governance vulnerabilities, while disparities in access to examination centres for rural and disabled candidates expose gaps in inclusivity. Technical disruptions during examinations also point to infrastructural deficiencies. The report recommends that JAMB enhance transparency by publishing detailed expenditure data and audit reports, while sustaining anti-corruption measures and supporting investigations. Expanding examination centres in underserved regions and improving disability accommodations are critical for equitable access. Investing in resilient infrastructure and engaging proactively in legislative matters is crucial to enhancing credibility and aligning JAMB more effectively with Nigeria's broader educational objectives.

Keywords: Transparency, Accountability, Corruption risk, Educational, Inclusivity, Higher education reform

Introduction

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board plays a crucial role within Nigeria's educational framework, as it is responsible for managing admissions into universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education through the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME).¹ JAMB was established in 1978 and has undergone a significant transformation from an entity beset by corruption to one recognised as among Nigeria's more transparent revenue-generating bodies, primarily attributable to

¹ <https://www.jamb.gov.ng/>

comprehensive reforms initiated in 2016.² These reforms have emphasised enhanced financial accountability, improved examination integrity through digital processes, and strengthened public communication channels.³

Despite these advancements, persistent deficiencies, particularly in areas such as procurement transparency, equitable access to examinations, and comprehensive audit reporting, continued to be a challenge for the board.⁴ For instance, a recent report by Sani (2024) and corroborated by Odenyi (2024) has highlighted challenges in ensuring fair access across regions, including allegations of northern marginalisation in policy implementation and errors in UTME scoring that necessitated public interventions.⁵⁶ The Transparency and Integrity Index (TII) 2022, issued by the Centre for Fiscal Transparency and Public Integrity (CeFTPI), positioned JAMB at 335 out of 466 federal agencies with a score of 120.83, ranking it fourth out of five in the education sector and underscoring substantial vulnerabilities in financial and procurement transparency.⁷⁸

This report, designated TACRA 002, evaluates JAMB's transparency, accountability, and corruption risk profile, utilising data from credible sources such as media analyses, audit reports, and TII evaluations. JAMB's corruption risk score stands at 35 out of 100, indicating notable progress yet highlighting the necessity for additional reforms to mitigate ongoing issues.⁹ The report seeks to guide policymakers, educators, and civil society organisations by recommending targeted interventions to bolster JAMB's operations. Through addressing shortcomings in procurement practices, such as inconsistencies in tender processes and limited public disclosure, which mirror broader challenges in Nigeria's public procurement landscape, financial reporting, and inclusivity measures, JAMB can reinforce its status as an exemplar of public sector reform in Nigeria.

Background and Mandate

JAMB was established on February 13, 1978, under Act No. 2 of the Federal Military Government and subsequently formalised through Decree No. 33 of 1989 following amendments in 1988.¹⁰ JAMB functions as Nigeria's central authority for regulating admissions into tertiary institutions.¹¹ Its core mandate encompasses conducting the UTME, appointing examiners, moderators, invigilators, and associated personnel; allocating qualified candidates to institutions based on available slots, institutional guidelines, candidate preferences, and other pertinent criteria as directed by the Federal Minister of Education; and collating and disseminating information on admissions and related matters. Supervised

2 Bilal, A., & Ibriz, A. (2020). Design and Implementation of P2P Based Mobile App for Collaborative Learning in Higher Education. *International Journal of Interactive Mobile Technologies*, 14(7), 115–132. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijim.v14i07.13167>

3 Jubaerudin, J. M., Supratman, & Santika, S. (2021). Pengembangan Media Interaktif Berbasis Android Berbantuan Articulate Storyline 3 Pada Pembelajaran Matematika di Masa Pandemi. *JARME (Journal of Authentic Research on Mathematics Education)*, 3(2), 178–189. <https://doi.org/10.37058/jarme.v3i2.3191>.

4 Pellegrini, L. & Gerlagh, R. (2004). Corruption's Effects on Growth and Its Transmission Channels. *Kyklos* 57(3), 429–456.

5 Sani S. (2024). JAMB's Mercy: A Blatant Betrayal of Equity and Northern Marginalisation

6 Odenyi P. (2024). NOA Commends JAMB's Transparency, Urges Further Action on UTME Errors. National Orientation Agency, Nigeria's post, <https://www.facebook.com/nationalorientationagency/posts/press-release-15-05-2025noa-commends-jambs-transparency-urges-further-action-on-1128159499339792/>

7 Transparency and Integrity Index (2022). <https://www.fiscaltransparency.org/transparency-and-integrity-index/>

8 <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/national/mdas-urged-to-embrace-transparency-as-ceftpi-presents-index/>

9 [MDAs urged to embrace transparency as CeFTPI presents index.](#)

10 https://www.jamb.gov.ng/PDFs/Non_regular_advisory_edited_6th_July_2024.pdf

11 <https://www.jamb.gov.ng/>

by the Federal Ministry of Education, JAMB derives its funding primarily from examination fees and ancillary revenue sources, rendering its financial oversight a vital component of its governance.¹²

Commencing in 2016, JAMB has implemented a series of reforms aimed at fostering transparency and operational efficiency, resulting in substantial remittances of operating surpluses to the federal government, over N55 billion cumulatively by earlier accounts, in stark contrast to the mere N50 million remitted between 2010 and 2016, or approximately N60 million over the preceding 38 years as stated by Dansu (2025).¹³¹⁴ These initiatives include the adoption of digital examination management systems, anti-fraud protocols such as biometric verification, and enhanced revenue tracking mechanisms. According to the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2024), in 2024, JAMB generated N22 billion. It remitted more than N6 billion to the federal coffers, while introducing measures like a "Profiled Email" service to replace lost SIM cards for candidates and a 2024-2028 Strategic Roadmap for Inclusive Access to Quality Higher Education.¹⁵ JAMB has also enforced a minimum admissible age of 16 years for candidates and issued public disclaimers against fraudulent platforms, enhancing trust and accessibility.

Despite these strides, JAMB's history includes notable corruption incidents, such as the 2018 scandal involving allegations of N36 million being "swallowed by a snake" at a regional office, which prompted investigations and leadership changes as reported by Ojoko (2025).¹⁶ Ongoing challenges include procurement transparency gaps, where Nigeria's broader procurement system suffers from inconsistencies in application and limited transparency, which potentially exacerbates risks in JAMB's contracting processes. Equitable access remains a concern, with disparities in examination centre distribution, technological barriers in rural areas, and recent controversies over UTME technical glitches and regional equity in admissions policies.¹⁷ The TII 2022 evaluation commends JAMB's performance in website integrity (58.33%) and citizen engagement (50%) but assigns a zero score in financials and procurement, emphasising the imperative for targeted improvements.¹⁸

Transparency and Accountability Indicators

Budget Transparency

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) has demonstrated marked improvements in financial transparency since 2016,¹⁹ With cumulative remittances of operating surpluses to the Federal

12 Maduabum, C (2001). Reforming the Public Bureaucracies, Badagry: ASCON

13 Dansu P. (2025). From Inefficiency to Excellence: The Oloyede JAMB's Remittance Story. https://www.badagrytoday.com/2025/02/from-inefficiency-to-excellence-oloyede.html#google_vignette

14 JAMB News, (2013). A Quarterly Publication of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Vol . 4 No. 23, January-March 2013.

15 International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2024). JAMB remits N6bn to FG out of nearly N23bn generated in 2024. <https://www.icirnigeria.org/jamb-remits-n6bn-to-fg-out-of-nearly-n23bn-generated-in-2024/>.

16 Ojoko I. (2025). U.S. report says Nigeria's National Assembly lacks transparency in procurement processes. Nairametrics. https://nairametrics.com/2025/04/14/u-s-report-says-nigerias-national-assembly-lacks-transparency-in-procurement-processes/#google_vignette

17 Adeniran A. & Williams S (2024). Reforming public procurement in Nigeria: What needs to change

18 See TII 2022. <https://www.fiscaltransparency.org/transparency-and-integrity-index/>

19 Arop, F.O, Akpang, E.M., Nwannunu, B.I. & Owan, V.J (2018). Personnel Management and Corrupt Academic Practices in Universities in Cross River State, Nigeria. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, 6(9), 405- 419.

Government exceeding ₦55 billion by early accounts.²⁰ In 2024, JAMB generated approximately ₦22.9 billion in revenue and remitted ₦6,034,605,510.69 to the federal coffers, reflecting efficient management of examination fees and ancillary income streams.²¹ This figure incorporates a subsidy of ₦1,500 per registration form for candidates, amounting to an additional ₦2.9 billion in practical support, which, if included, would elevate the total contribution to approximately ₦9 billion for the year.²² These remittances stand in sharp contrast to the minimal ₦50 million transferred between 2010 and 2016, underscoring the impact of reforms, including enhanced revenue tracking and cost controls. Breakdowns of registration fees are periodically disclosed through official bulletins, further evidencing a commitment to fiscal responsibility, as reported by outlets including Premium Times and The Punch.²³ However, a 2024 Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) deployment by the Bureau of Public Service Reforms (BPSR) rated JAMB at 70%, indicating progress in internal accountability mechanisms.²⁴ This opacity in expenditure details restricts stakeholders' ability to thoroughly scrutinise resource allocation, potentially eroding gains in other financial domains.

Freedom of Information (FOI) Compliance

JAMB maintains moderate-to-high compliance with Nigeria's Freedom of Information Act, outperforming many peer agencies in proactive disclosure.²⁵ The agency routinely publishes annual bulletins, examination statistics, and strategic documents, such as the updated 2024–2028 Strategic Roadmap for Inclusive Access to Quality Higher Education, which outlines initiatives for equitable admissions and digital enhancements. The TII 2022 awarded JAMB 50% for citizens' engagement, acknowledging effective communication while identifying opportunities for enhanced disclosure in procurement and audit data.²⁶ Recent efforts include disclaimers against fraudulent platforms and the introduction of services such as profiled emails for SIM recovery, further promoting transparency. Comparative assessments, such as the 2024 National FOI Ranking by civil society coalitions, evaluate over 200 MDAs on responsiveness and disclosure. However, detailed JAMB-specific metrics from this exercise are not publicly available in available sources.²⁷ These practices foster public trust but require deeper proactive releases to address lingering gaps.

Open Procurement

JAMB's procurement activities are subject to oversight by the Bureau of Public Procurement (BPP), with advertisements aligning with the Public Procurement Act 2007.²⁸ For example, the 2024 ICT

20 Meshioye S. (2025). 2024 UTME: JAMB remits N6b to FG coffers. Guardian. https://guardian.ng/features/education/2024-utme-jamb-remits-n6b-to-fg-coffers/#google_vignette

21 Odiniyi S. (2025). JAMB remits over N6bn to FG in 2024. Punch News. <https://punchng.com/jamb-remits-over-n6bn-to-fg-in-2024/>.

22 International Centre for Investigative Reporting (2025). JAMB remits N6bn to FG out of nearly N23bn generated in 2024. <https://www.icirnigeria.org/jamb-remits-n6bn-to-fg-out-of-nearly-n23bn-generated-in-2024/>

23 Adevale Z. (2025). JAMB generates N22 billion, remits N6 billion in 2024 — Official. Premium Times. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/top-news/765685-jamb-generates-n22-billion-remits-n6-billion-in-2024-official.html>

24 BPSR (2024). <https://bpsr.gov.ng/bpsr-scores-joint-admission-matriculation-board-70-percent-at-sat-deployment/>

25 <https://www.jamb.gov.ng/>

26 Ibid

27 <https://dailypost.ng/2025/09/10/examination-fraud-nigerian-education-sector-in-trouble-epelle/>

28 Public Procurement Act 2007. <https://www.bpp.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Public-Procurement-Act-2007pdf.pdf>

consultancy tender notice emphasised compliance and invited bids through official channels.²⁹ However, transparency remains inconsistent; the TII 2022 scored JAMB 0% in procurement transparency due to limited public disclosure of tender results and contract outcomes.³⁰ Historical audits from 2012–2013 uncovered ₦7.3 billion in unauthorised contracts, including ₦7.1 billion exceeding approval thresholds and ₦247 million fragmented to bypass controls, as queried by the Senate.³¹ Recent data indicate ongoing vulnerabilities, with calls for greater openness in Nigeria's procurement landscape. While reforms have streamlined processes, the absence of comprehensive disclosures continues to pose risks to accountability.

Corruption and Oversight Issues

Past Malfeasance (Pre-2016)

Before 2016, JAMB was plagued by systemic corruption, exemplified by the 2018 incident where a staff member claimed a snake swallowed ₦36 million in exam card revenue, as reported by Punch.³² This scandal highlighted a lack of financial controls and accountability. Scandals, reported by the International Centre for Investigative Reporting (ICIR), exposed a series of questionable activities associated with Jamb, ranging from unauthorised contracts, funds misallocated through contract splitting and approvals exceeding thresholds.³³ These incidents severely undermined public confidence in JAMB's ability to manage resources effectively.

Post-2016 Reforms

Since 2016, JAMB has implemented transformative reforms, including centralised e-payments, biometric verification, the Central Admissions Processing System (CAPS), and real-time dashboards. These measures, documented in a 2018 e-governance impact study, have reduced fraud and improved exam integrity. CAPS, for instance, ensures transparent candidate placement by aligning with institutional guidelines and preferences. Despite these advancements, infrastructure deficits, such as unreliable power supply at Computer-Based Test (CBT) centres, continue to hinder operations, particularly in rural areas, limiting the reach of these reforms.³⁴

Audits and Anti-Corruption Actions

Historical audits revealed the payment of 7.3 billion in unauthorised contracts to ghost workers, underscoring systemic weaknesses. Recent audit reports are not publicly accessible, earning JAMB a score of 6 on the TACRA 002 indicator for unavailable Auditor-General reports and a 0% TII score for financial transparency.³⁵ Anti-corruption agencies have pursued high-profile cases: the former registrar faces a ₦5.2 billion fraud charge, with his case adjourned to October 2025 after failed settlement talks.

²⁹ <https://www.jamb.gov.ng/Tender-Procurement>

³⁰ Ibid

³¹ https://jamb.gov.ng/PDFs/2024//ADVERT_CONSULTANCY_AUGUST_2024_094059.pdf

³² <https://punchng.com/jamb-suspends-worker-over-n36m-swallowed-by-snake/?amp>

³³ <https://www.icirnigeria.org/major-scandals-surrounding-jamb-in-recent-years/>

³⁴ <https://www.seahipublications.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/IJIDPS-M-5-2023.pdf>

³⁵ <https://blueprint.ng/exposed-how-jamb-paid-ghost-workers-n110m/>

A former member of the House of Representatives was re-arraigned in 2022 for a ₦46 million fraud involving e-facility cards related to Jamb, according to EFCC reports. These cases reflect ongoing efforts to address past corruption, but they also highlight persistent risks.³⁶³⁷

Legislative Oversight

In 2020, the Senate Public Accounts Committee queried JAMB over the ₦7.3 billion in unauthorised contracts flagged by the Auditor-General. JAMB's responses were considered inadequate, reflecting weaknesses in addressing oversight concerns. In 2024, the National Assembly Joint Committee on Finance queries Jamb over excessive spending.³⁸³⁹ TII 2022's low financial transparency score (0%) reinforces the need for stronger legislative engagement.⁴⁰ While recent scrutiny has been less prominent, the lack of robust follow-up on audit findings suggests parliamentary oversight remains insufficient to ensure full accountability.

Performance vs. Public Expectations

Revenue and Remittances

The agency's remittances of over ₦55 billion since 2016, including ₦6 billion in 2024, demonstrate efficient resource generation. Subsidising registration fees by ₦1,500 per candidate, costing approximately ₦3 billion annually, to enhance affordability for millions of candidates.⁴¹ These efforts align with public expectations for fiscal responsibility, positioning JAMB as a model for revenue-generating agencies. However, TII's 2023 0% financial transparency score indicates that such selective disclosure of expenditure details may not be a true reflection of transparency, especially as this information is not publicly available on websites and portals for public scrutiny, because the actual ghost in the machine - the general expenditure, remains opaque, limiting full accountability.⁴²

Digital Exam Management

JAMB successfully conducted the 2025 UTME for approximately 1.97 million candidates across nationwide CBT centres, leveraging biometric verification and CAPS to ensure efficiency and fairness. Sanctions against fraudulent CBT centres reinforce accountability.⁴³ TII's recent 58.33% score for website integrity reflects JAMB's effective use of digital platforms to share exam information. However, infrastructure challenges, particularly in rural areas, hinder exam delivery, impacting candidates in underserved regions and highlighting a gap in operational reach.⁴⁴⁴⁵

36 <https://www.efcc.gov.ng/efcc/news-and-information/news-release/7721-efcc-re-arraigns-jamb-official-for-alleged-n46m-fraud>

37 <https://thenationonline.net/efcc-probes-n8-7b-fraud-in-jamb/amp/>

38 <https://allafrica.com/stories/202010260830.html>

39 <https://dailytrust.com/nass-queries-jamb-over-n1-85bn-spending-on-meals-insecticide-others/>

40 Ibid

41 <https://www.icirnigeria.org/major-scandals-surrounding-jamb-in-recent-years>

42 Ibid

43 <https://guardian.ng/featured/jamb-uncovers-4251-cases-of-biometric-fraud-in-2025-utme/>

44 <https://punchng.com/2025-utme-jamb-uncovers-high-tech-malpractice-blames-parents-cbt-operators-for-complicity/>

45 <https://www.fiscaltransparency.org/transparency-and-integrity-index-2024-methodology-handbook/>

Equity Concerns

JAMB faces persistent challenges in ensuring equitable access to UTME. Candidates in rural and conflict-prone zones, as well as those with disabilities, encounter barriers due to limited CBT centre availability and inadequate accommodation. JAMB's Weekly Bulletins outline efforts to address these issues, such as partnerships with state governments to expand access, but progress remains slow. TII's 12.50% score for human resource inclusion underscores these inclusive gaps, which hinder alignment with inclusive education goals and public expectations for fairness.⁴⁶

2025 UTME Glitch

In 2025, a software update failure disrupted UTME for 379,997 candidates across 157 CBT centres, primarily in Lagos and the Southeast. JAMB promptly admitted faults, issued a public apology, and organised free resits, as reported by TheCable.⁴⁷ Despite 21,000 absentees, independent reviews confirmed that the results aligned with historical trends, earning commendation from universities and the public, as reported in The Premium Times.⁴⁸ This transparent response, bolstered by JAMB's 50% TII score for citizens' engagement, underscores improved accountability but highlights the need for robust contingency planning to prevent future disruptions.⁴⁹

Recommendations

To sustain JAMB's progress and address its challenges, the following evidence-based recommendations are proposed:

1. Enhance Financial Transparency: Publish detailed expenditure breakdowns on a public portal to ensure stakeholders can scrutinise resource allocation.
2. Improve Procurement Transparency: Fully disclose tender results and contract outcomes, aligning with the Public Procurement Act 2007.
3. Publish Recent Audits: Release 2024–2025 audit reports to close the accountability gap.
4. Expand Equitable Access: Increase CBT centres in rural and conflict-prone areas and enhance accommodations for candidates with disabilities, aligning with the 2024–2028 Strategic Roadmap.
5. Strengthen Anti-Corruption Measures: Sustain reforms like CAPS and biometric verification while supporting EFCC and ICPC efforts to resolve ongoing fraud cases, reinforcing anti-corruption initiatives.
6. Enhance Infrastructure: Partner with private and public sectors to address power supply and connectivity issues at CBT centres, ensuring seamless exam delivery and supporting digital exam management.
7. Improve Legislative Engagement: Provide comprehensive responses to oversight queries, such as the 2020 Senate probe, to build trust and demonstrate accountability.

⁴⁶ Ibid

⁴⁷ <https://www.thecable.ng/jamb-and-the-2025-utme-scandal/>

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/tag/utme-2025>) (<https://www.icirnigeria.org/tag/utme/>

8. Expand Public Communication: Leverage JAMB's Weekly Bulletins and digital platforms to share performance metrics, reinforcing transparency proactively.
9. Upgrade Digital Infrastructure: Invest in advanced server systems and build redundancies to prevent technical glitches, particularly in high-volume examination regions.
10. Establish Rapid-Response Protocols: Develop detailed procedures for swift investigation, communication, and remediation of operational failures during examinations.
11. Create Open Appeals and Feedback Mechanisms: Implement transparent, candidate-friendly systems for submitting appeals and providing input on examination processes.
12. Strengthen Digital Crisis Communication Units: Establish or enhance dedicated teams to monitor, manage, and respond to public discourse during operational disruptions.
13. Integrate Digital Feedback into Policy Design: Formalise mechanisms to incorporate social media sentiment and public input into ongoing policy refinements.
14. Invest in Technological Redundancies: Conduct scenario-based stress testing and deploy third-party monitoring systems to safeguard against future technical mishaps.
15. Develop Social Media Literacy for Leaders: Train senior officials in effective digital communication and online public opinion management to ensure credible responses during crises.
16. Institutionalise Transparency and Public Engagement: Proactively publish reports on system failures, mitigation steps, and accountability measures to restore and maintain public trust.
17. Promote Integrity Role Models: Support and amplify individuals demonstrating values of transparency and public service within JAMB to foster a culture of integrity.
18. Collaborate with Reformers: Engage cross-sector reformers to address underlying norms perpetuating corruption and enable sustainable changes in agency operations.

Conclusion and Call to Action

The Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board has undergone a remarkable transformation since 2016, emerging as a beacon of transparency and accountability within Nigeria's public sector. Through innovative reforms, including the adoption of digital examination systems, centralised payment mechanisms, and proactive public engagement, JAMB has significantly enhanced its operational and service delivery. Its swift and transparent response to operational challenges, such as the 2025 UTME technical glitch, is a commitment to public trust and institutional excellence. These strides have positioned JAMB as a model for other Nigerian agencies striving for reform and demonstrating the potential for systemic change even within historically challenged institutions.

However, persistent shortcomings in financial transparency, procurement processes, and equitable access to information demand urgent action to sustain and build upon this progress. The absence of comprehensive expenditure disclosures and inconsistent procurement reporting continues to obscure full accountability, limiting stakeholders' ability to scrutinise resource allocation. Similarly, barriers to equitable access, particularly for rural, conflict-affected, and disabled candidates, highlight the need for inclusive policies that align with JAMB's strategic vision for quality education. These gaps, if left unaddressed, risk eroding the public's hard-earned trust and undermining the agency's broader contributions to Nigeria's educational landscape.

As part of the call to action in this report, the Centre is urging JAMB to prioritise strategic investments in examination infrastructure, ensuring reliable power and connectivity at testing centres to support seamless digital operations. Policymakers, under the oversight of the Federal Ministry of Education, should champion initiatives that expand access to underserved regions and enhance accommodations for candidates with disabilities. Civil society organisations must amplify advocacy efforts, utilising platforms such as national media to hold JAMB accountable and demand greater openness in financial and procurement practices. Also, anti-corruption agencies should expedite the resolution of pending cases to reinforce deterrence and uphold institutional integrity. The implementation of the targeted recommendations outlined in this report can further strengthen JAMB's credibility, ensuring that the tertiary admissions process remains fair, accessible, and transparent for millions of Nigerian students.

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