

GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION

I. INTRODUCTION

India has one of the largest and diverse education systems, in the world. Privatization, widespread expansion, increased autonomy and introduction of programs in new and emerging areas has improved access to higher education. At the same time it also led to widespread concern on the quality and relevance of the higher education. To address these concerns, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (PoA, 1992) that spelt out strategic plans for the policies, advocated the establishment of an independent National accreditation agency. Consequently, the NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (NAAC) was established in 1994 as an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The mandate of NAAC as reflected in its vision statement is in making quality assurance an integral part of the functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The NAAC functions through its General Council (GC) and Executive Committee (EC) where educational administrators, policy makers and senior academicians from a cross-section of Indian higher education system are represented. The Chairperson of the UGC is the President of the GC of the NAAC, the Chairperson of the EC is an eminent academician nominated by the President of GC (NAAC). The Director is the academic and administrative head of NAAC, and is the member-secretary of both the GC and the EC. In addition to the statutory bodies that steer its policies and core staff to support its activities, NAAC is advised by the advisory and consultative committees constituted from time to time.

Vision and Mission

The vision of NAAC is:

To make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

The mission statements of the NAAC aim at translating the NAAC's vision into action plans and define specific tasks of NAAC engagement and endeavor as given below:

- ◆ *To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;*
- ◆ *To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality in teaching-learning and research in higher education institutions;*
- ◆ *To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;*
- ◆ *To undertake quality-related research studies, consultancy and training programmes, and*
- ◆ *To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance.*

Striving to achieve its goals as guided by its vision and mission statements, NAAC primarily focuses on assessment of the quality of higher education institutions in the country. The NAAC methodology for Assessment and Accreditation is very much similar to that followed by Quality Assurance (QA) agencies across the world and consists of self-assessment by the institution and external peer assessment by NAAC.

II. CORE VALUES

Throughout the world, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) function in a dynamic environment. The need to expand the system of higher education, the impact of technology on the educational delivery, the increasing private participation in higher education and the impact of globalization (including liberal cross-border and trans-national educational imperatives), have necessitated marked changes in the Indian higher education system. These changes and the consequent shift in values have been taken into cognizance by NAAC while formulating the core values. Further to ensure external and internal validity and credibility, it is important to ground the QA process within a value framework which is suitable

and appropriate to the National context.

The accreditation framework of NAAC is thus based on five core values detailed below:

(i) Contributing to National Development

Most of the HEIs have a remarkable capacity to adapt to changes, and at the same time pursue the goals and objectives that they have set forth for themselves. Contributing to National Development has always been an implicit goal of Indian HEIs. The HEIs have a significant role in human resource development and capacity building of individuals, to cater to the needs of the economy, society and the country as a whole, thereby contributing to the development of the Nation. Serving the cause of social justice, ensuring equity, and increasing access to higher education are a few ways by which HEIs can contribute to the National Development. It is therefore appropriate that the Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) process of the NAAC looks into the ways HEIs have been responding to and contributing towards National Development.

(ii) Fostering Global Competencies among Students

The spiraling developments at the global level also warrant that the NAAC includes in its scope of assessment, skill development of students, on par with their counterparts elsewhere. With liberalization and globalization of economic activities, the need to develop skilled human resources of a high caliber is imperative. Consequently, the demand for internationally acceptable standards in higher education is evident. Therefore, the accreditation process of NAAC needs to examine the role of HEIs in preparing the students to achieve core competencies, to face the global requirements successfully. This requires that the HEIs be innovative, creative and entrepreneurial in their approach, to ensure skill development amongst the students. Towards achieving this, HEIs may establish collaborations with industries, network with the neighborhood agencies/bodies and foster a closer relationship between the “world of skilled work” and the “world of competent-learning”.

(iii) Inculcating a Value System among Students

Although skill development is crucial to the success of students in the job market, skills are of less value in the absence of appropriate value systems. HEIs have to shoulder the responsibility of inculcating the desirable value systems amongst the students. In a country like India, with cultural pluralities and diversities, it is essential that students imbibe the appropriate values commensurate with social, cultural, economic and environmental realities, at the local, national and universal levels. Whatever be the pluralities and diversities that exist in the country, there is ample scope for debate about inculcating the core universal values like truth and righteousness apart from other values emphasized in the various policy documents of the country. The seeds of values sown in the early stages of education, mostly aimed at cooperation and mutual understanding, have to be reiterated and re-emphasized at the higher educational institutions, through appropriate learning experiences and opportunities. The NAAC assessment therefore examines how these essential and desirable values are being inculcated in the students, by the HEIs.

(iv) Promoting the Use of Technology

Most of the significant developments that one can observe today can be attributed to the impact of Science and Technology. While the advantages of using modern tools and technological innovations in the day-to-day-life are well recognized, the corresponding changes in the use of new technologies, for teaching – learning and governance of HEIs, leaves much to be desired. Technological advancement and innovations in educational transactions have to be undertaken by all HEIs, to make a visible impact on academic development as well as administration. At a time when our educational institutions are expected to perform as good as their global partners, significant technological innovations have to be adopted. Traditional methods of delivering higher education have become less motivating to the large number of students. To keep pace with the developments in other spheres of human endeavor, HEIs have to enrich the learning experiences of their students by providing them with State-of-the-Art educational technologies. The campus community must be adequately prepared to make use of Information and

Communication Technology (ICT) optimally. Conscious effort is also needed to invest in hardware, and to orient the faculty suitably.

In addition to using technology as learning resources, managing the activities of the institution in a technology-enabled way will ensure effective institutional functioning. For example, documentation and data management in the HEIs are areas where the process of assessment by NAAC has made a significant impact. Moving towards electronic data management and having institutional website to provide ready and relevant information to stakeholders are desirable steps in this direction. In other words, effective use of ICT in HEIs will be able to provide ICT literacy to the campus community, using ICT for resource sharing and networking, as well as adopting ICT-enabled administrative processes. Therefore, NAAC accreditation would look at how the HEIs have put in place their electronic data management systems and electronic resources and their access to internal and external stakeholders particularly the student community.

(v) Quest for Excellence

Contributing to nation-building and skills development of students, institutions should demonstrate a drive to develop themselves into centre's of excellence. Excellence in all that they do, will contribute to the overall development of the system of higher education of the country as a whole. This 'Quest for Excellence' could start with the assessment or even earlier, by the establishment of the Steering Committee for the preparation of the Self Study Report (SSR) of an institution. Another step in this direction could be the identification of the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning processes as carried out by the institution.

The five core values as outlined above form the foundation for assessment of institutions that volunteer for accreditation by NAAC. In conformity with the goals and mission of the institution, the HEIs may also add to these their own core values.

III. ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

The forces of globalization and liberalization influenced the Indian

Higher Education in a big way. In a situation where Higher education, similar to the goods and other services has to compete internationally, quality assurance becomes inevitable. Further Indian HEIs operate within a larger framework comprising of several agencies, national contexts and societal expectations and each of these have a unique rendition of the goals. At the functional level, the effectiveness of the HEI is reflected in the extent to which all these layers of goals mutually concur. In such contexts the A&A process is a beginning to bring in uniform quality and position HEIs in such a way that they address more directly the quality provision and the expressed needs of the stakeholders.

(i) Focus of Assessment

NAAC assessment lays focus on the institutional developments with reference to three aspects: *Quality initiative, Quality sustenance and Quality enhancement*. The overall quality assurance framework of NAAC thus focuses on the values and desirable practices of HEIs and incorporates the core elements of quality assurance i.e. internal and external assessment for continuous improvement. The value framework of NAAC starts with its choice of unit of evaluation i.e. the Institution as a whole. The A&A process of NAAC which involves a combination of self evaluation and external peer evaluation implicitly or explicitly is concerned with looking at the developmental aspects of the HEIs in the context of quality.

Self-evaluation is crucial in the process of A&A and has a tremendous contribution in promoting objectivity, self-analysis, reflection and professionalism on the part of HEIs. The self-evaluation proforma of NAAC provided as “manuals for self study” maps out different inputs, processes and **outputs and facilitates HEIs to evaluate their strengths, weaknesses and areas** for improvement. The self-evaluation process and the subsequent preparation of the Self-Study Report (SSR) to be submitted to NAAC involves the participation of all the stakeholders –management, faculty members, administrative staff, students, parents, employers, community and alumni. While the participation of internal stakeholders i.e. management, staff and students provide credibility and ownership to the activity and could lead to newer initiatives, interaction with the external stakeholders facilitate the development process of the institution and their educational

services. Overall it is expected to serve as a catalyst for institutional self-improvement, promote innovation and *strengthen the urge to excel*.

NAAC's role in steering assessment does not stop with the coordinating function but extends to the *post-accreditation activities* especially in facilitating establishment of strategic quality management systems for ensuring continuous improvement. One of the major contributions of NAAC towards this is the promotion of *Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)* resulting in building a quality culture. The IQACs are not only expected to facilitate the internalization and institutionalization of quality, but also to activate the system and raise the institutional capabilities to higher levels ensuring continuous quality improvement.

(ii) Criteria and Key Aspects for Assessment

The criteria-based assessment of NAAC forms the backbone of the A&A. The seven criteria represent the core functions and activities of an institution and broadly focus on the issues which have a direct impact on teaching-learning, research, community development and the holistic development of the students. The NAAC has identified the following seven criteria to serve as the basis for assessment of HEIs:

1. Curricular Aspects
2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation
3. Research, Consultancy and Extension
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources
5. Student Support and Progression
6. Governance, Leadership and Management
7. Innovations and Best Practices

The Criteria-based assessment promotes judgment based on values. For example the Criterion on "Governance, Leadership and Management" promotes the values such as participation, transparency, team work, systems view, justice, self-reliance and probity in public finance.

The Key Aspects identified under each of the seven criteria reflect the processes and values of the HEI on which assessment is made. The questions under each of the Key Aspects focus in particular on the outcomes, the institutional provisions which contribute to these and their impact on student learning and development.

The strengths or weaknesses in one area may have an effect on quality in another area. Thus the issues addressed within the Criteria and Key Aspects are closely inter-related and may appear to be overlapping. The criteria and the Key Aspects are not a set of standards or measurement tools by themselves and do not cover everything which happens in every HEI. They are the levers for transformational change and provide an external point of reference for evaluating the quality of the institution under assessment.

NAAC uses the same framework across the country. Using the same framework across the country provides a common language about quality and makes it much easier for everyone to go in one direction and in evidence based policy making.

1. Criterion I - Curricular Aspects:

Depending on the responsibilities of various Institutions, this criterion deals with curriculum development and implementation process. The criterion looks into how the curriculum either assigned by a University or marginally supplemented or enriched by an institution, or totally remade, depending on the freedom allowed in curricular design, aligns with the institutional mission. It also considers the practices of an institution in initiating a wide range of programme options and courses that are in tune with the emerging national and global trends and relevant to the local needs. Apart from issues of diversity and academic flexibility, aspects on career orientation, multi-skill development and involvement of stakeholders in curriculum updation, are also gauged under this criterion. The focus of this criterion is captured in the following Key Aspects:

KEY ASPECTS

- 1(U)* Curriculum Design and Development**
(For Universities and Autonomous Colleges)
- 1.1(A)* Curriculum Planning and Implementation**
(For Affiliated/Constituent Colleges)
- 1.2 Academic flexibility**
- 1.3 Curriculum Enrichment**
- 1.4 Feedback System**

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(U)- applicable only for Universities and Autonomous Colleges

(A)- applicable only for the Affiliated/Constituent College

1.1(U) Curriculum Design and Development *(This key aspect is applicable only for Universities and Autonomous Colleges)*

Universities and Autonomous colleges play a major role in the Curriculum Design and Development and thus are expected to have processes, systems and structures in place to shoulder this responsibility. Curriculum Design and Development is a complex process involving several steps and experts. It is a process of developing appropriate need-based curricula in consultation with expert groups, based on the feedback from stakeholders, resulting in the development of relevant programmes with flexibility, to suit the professional and personal needs of the students and realization of core values.

The key aspect also considers the good practices of the institution in initiating a range of programme options and courses that are relevant to the local needs and in tune with the emerging national and global trends.

1.1(A) Curriculum Planning and Implementation

(This key aspect is applicable only for the Affiliated/Constituent Colleges)

The affiliated/constituent colleges' curriculum is given by the affiliating University or other regulatory agencies. However, the colleges have to work out details for effectively operationalising the given curricula. The process involves orientation of the teachers who would handle the curriculum and proper planning of the transaction. It also requires an understanding on the various teaching-learning practices and their appropriate use.

Since acquisition of competencies occurs at different paces for

different learners it is required that the institutions have specific implementation plans identifying the time to be spent on specific components. In addition if the institution is providing specially designed courses it also has the responsibility to develop appropriate need based curricula in consultation with stakeholders.

1.2 Academic Flexibility

Academic flexibility refers to freedom in the use of the time-frame of the courses, horizontal mobility, inter-disciplinary options and others facilitated by curricular transactions. Supplementary enrichment programmes introduced as an initiative of the college, credit system and choice offered in the curriculum, in terms of programme, curricular transactions and time-frame options are also considered in this key aspect.

1.3 Curriculum Enrichment

Every academic institution translates the curriculum framework and the specified syllabus by rendering them into practical forms, in which the main focus is on the student attributes and on holistic development of the students so that he/she can display multiple skills and qualities. For effective transaction of the curriculum it is required it is up-to date. For keeping the curriculum up-to-date and introduce appropriate changes within the given curriculum, several inputs are provided parallelly or sequentially. All these would be possible through introduction and use of quality materials which would enrich the curriculum and provide concrete referents for organizing the curriculum.

1.4 Feedback System

The process of revision and redesign of curricula is based on recent developments and feedback from the stakeholders. The feedback from all stakeholders in terms of its relevance and appropriateness in catering to the needs of the society/ economy/ environment are also considered in this key aspect.

2. Criterion II - Teaching-Learning and Evaluation:

This criterion deals with the efforts of an institution to serve students of different backgrounds and abilities, through effective teaching-learning experiences. Interactive instructional techniques that engage students in higher order 'thinking' and investigation, through the use of interviews, focused group discussions, debates, projects, presentations, experiments, practicum, internship and application of ICT resources, are important considerations. It also probes into the adequacy, competence as well as the continuous professional development of the faculty who handle the programmes of study. The efficiency of the techniques used to continuously evaluate the performance of teachers and students is also a major concern of this criterion. The focus of this criterion is captured in the following Key Aspects:

KEY ASPECTS

- 2.1 Student Enrolment and Profile**
- 2.2 Catering to Student Diversity**
- 2.3 Teaching-Learning Process**
- 2.4 Teacher Quality**
- 2.5 Evaluation Process and Reforms**
- 2.6 Student Performance and Learning Outcomes**

2.1 Student Enrolment and Profile

The process of admitting students to the programmes is by a transparent, well-administered mechanism, complying with all the norms of the concerned regulatory/governing agencies including state and central governments. Apart from the compliance to the various regulations the key aspect also considers the institutions efforts in ensuring equity and wide access as reflected from the student profile having representation of student community from different geographical area and socio-economic, cultural and educational backgrounds.

2.2 Catering to Student Diversity

The programmes and strategies adopted by institutions to satisfy the needs of the students from diverse backgrounds including backward community as well as from different locales. Gender equity and admission opportunity for differently-abled students are also considered.

2.3 Teaching-Learning Process

Diversity of Learners in respect of their background, abilities and other personal attributes will influence the extent of their learning. The teaching-learning modalities of the institution are rendered to be relevant for the learner group. The learner-centered education through appropriate methodologies facilitates effective learning. Teachers provide a variety of learning experiences, including individual and collaborative learning. The teachers employ interactive and participatory approach creating a feeling of responsibility in learning and makes learning a process of construction of knowledge.

2.4 Teacher Quality

'Teacher quality' is a composite term to indicate the quality of teachers in terms of qualification of the faculty, teacher characteristics, the adequacy of recruitment procedures, faculty availability, professional development and recognition of teaching abilities. Teachers take initiative to learn and keep abreast of the latest developments, to innovate, continuously seek improvement in their work and strive for individual and institutional excellence.

2.5 Evaluation Process and Reforms

This Key Aspect looks at issues related to assessment of teaching, learning and evaluative processes and reforms, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the system. One of the purposes of evaluation is to provide development-inducing feedback. Further it should also help the teacher to plan appropriate activities for enhancing student performance. The qualitative dimension of evaluation is in its use for enhancing the competence of students.

Innovative evaluation process is to gauge the knowledge and skills acquired at various levels of the programmes.

2.6 Student Performance and Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are the specifications of what a student should learn and demonstrate on successful completion of the course or the programme. It can also be seen as the desired outcome of the learning process in terms of acquisition of the skills and knowledge. They are embedded in the curriculum. Achieving Learning Outcomes needs specific experiences to be provided to the students and evaluation of their attainment. A programme that states Learning Outcomes that are not evaluated or assessed gets neglected in implementation. Hence all the stated Learning Outcomes must be part of the evaluation protocol of the programme. Student assessment provides an indication of the areas where learning has happened and where it has to be improved upon.

3. Criterion III - Research, Consultancy and Extension:

This criterion seeks information on the policies, practices and outcomes of the institution, with reference to research, consultancy and extension. It deals with the facilities provided and efforts made by the institution to promote a 'research culture'. The institution has the responsibility to enable faculty to undertake research projects useful to the society. Serving the community through extension, which is a social responsibility and a core value to be demonstrated by institutions, is also a major aspect of this criterion. The focus of this criterion is captured in the following Key Aspects:

KEY ASPECTS

- 3.1 Promotion of Research**
- 3.2 Resource Mobilization for Research**
- 3.3 Research Facilities**
- 3.4 Research Publications and Awards**
- 3.5 Consultancy**
- 3.6 Extension Activities and Institutional Social Responsibility**
- 3.7 Collaborations**

3.1 Promotion of Research

The process of promoting research culture among faculty and students is ensured by facilitating participation in research and related activities, providing resources and other facilities

3.2 Resource Mobilization for Research

The institution provides support in terms of financial, academic and human resources required and timely administrative decisions to enable faculty to submit project proposals and/ approach funding agencies for mobilizing resources for Research. The institutional support to its faculty for submitting Research projects and securing external funding through flexibility in administrative processes and infrastructure and academic support are crucial for any institution to excel in Research. The faculty are empowered to take up research activities utilizing the existing facilities. The institution encourages its staff to engage in Interdisciplinary and interdepartmental research activities and resource sharing.

3.3 Research Facilities

Required infrastructure in terms of space and equipment and support facilities are available on the campus for undertaking research. The institution collaborates with other agencies/ institutions/ research bodies for sharing research facilities and undertaking collaborative research.

3.4 Research Publications and Awards

Exploration and reflection are crucial for any teacher to be effective in his/her job. Quality research outcome is beneficial for the discipline/ society/ industry/ region and the nation. Sharing of knowledge especially theoretical and practical findings of research, through various media enhances quality of teaching and learning.

3.5 Consultancy

Activity organized or managed by the Faculty for an external agency for which the expertise and the specific knowledge base of the faculty becomes the major input. The finances generated through consultancy are fairly utilized by the institution. The faculty taking up the consultancy is properly rewarded.

3.6 Extension Activities and Institutional Social Responsibility (ISR)

Learning activities have a visible element for developing sensitivities towards community issues, gender disparities, social inequity etc. and in inculcating values and commitment to society. Mutual benefit from affiliation and interaction with groups or individuals who have an interest in the activities of the institution and the ability to influence the actions, decisions, policies, practices or goals of the organization. Processes and strategies that relevantly sensitize students to the social issues and contexts. Sustainable practices of the institution leading to superior performance resulting in successful outcome in terms of generating knowledge which will be useful for the learner as well as the community.

Extension also is the aspect of education, which emphasizes community services. These are often integrated with curricula as extended opportunities, intended to help, serve, reflect and learn. The curriculum-extension interface has an educational value, especially in rural India.

3.7 Collaborations

There are formal agreement/ understanding between the institution and other HEIs or agencies for training/student exchange/faculty exchange/ research/resource sharing etc.

4. Criterion IV - Infrastructure and Learning Resources:

This criterion seeks to elicit data on the adequacy and optimal use of the facilities available in an institution to maintain the quality of academic and other programmes on the campus. It also requires information on how every constituent of the institution - students, teachers and staff - benefit from these facilities. Expansion of facilities to meet future development is included among other concerns. The focus of this criterion is captured in the following Key Aspects:

KEY ASPECTS

- 4.1 Physical Facilities
- 4.2 Library as a Learning Resource
- 4.3 IT Infrastructure
- 4.4 Maintenance of Campus Facilities

4.1 Physical Facilities

Adequate infrastructure facilities are key for effective and efficient conduct of the educational programmes. The growth of the infrastructure thus has to keep pace with the academic developments in the institution. The other supportive facilities on the campus are developed to contribute to the effective ambience for curricular, extra-curricular and administrative activities.

4.2 Library as a Learning Resource

The library holdings in terms of books, journals and other learning materials and technology-aided learning mechanisms which enable students to acquire information, knowledge and skills required for their study programmes.

4.3 IT Infrastructure

The institution adopts policies and strategies for adequate technology deployment and maintenance. The ICT facilities and other learning resources are adequately available in the institution for academic and administrative purposes. The staff and students have access to technology and information retrieval on current and relevant issues. The institution deploys and employs ICTs for a range of activities.

4.4 Maintenance of Campus Facilities

The institution has sufficient resources allocated for regular upkeep of the infrastructure. There are effective mechanisms for the upkeep of the infrastructure facilities and promote the optimum use of the same.

5. Criterion V - Student Support and Progression :

The highlights of this criterion are the efforts of an institution to

provide necessary assistance to students, to acquire meaningful experiences for learning at the campus and to facilitate their holistic development and progression. It also looks into student performance and alumni profiles and the progression of students to higher education and gainful employment. The focus of this criterion is captured in the following Key Aspects:

KEY ASPECTS

- 5.1 Student Mentoring and Support**
- 5.2 Student Progression**
- 5.3 Student Participation and Activities**

5.1 Student Mentoring and Support

Facilitating mechanisms like guidance cell, placement cell, grievance redressal cell and welfare measures to support students. Specially designed inputs are provided to the needy students with learning difficulties. Provision is made for bridge and value added courses in relevant areas. Institution has a well structured, organized guidance and counseling system in place.

5.2 Student Progression

The Institutions 'concern for students' progression to higher studies and/or to employment is dealt with under this Key Aspect. Identify the reasons for poor attainment and plan and implement remedial measures. Sustainable good practices which effectively support the students facilitate optimal progression. The institutional provisions facilitate vertical movement of students from one level of education to the next higher level or towards gainful employment.

5.3 Student Participation and Activities

The institution promotes inclusive practices for social justice and better stakeholder relationships. The institution promotes value-based education for inculcating social responsibility and good citizenry amongst its student community.

The institution has the required infrastructure and promotes active participation of the students in social, cultural and leisure activities. Encouraging students' participation in activities facilitates developing various skills and competencies and foster holistic development.

6. Criterion VI - Governance, Leadership and Management :

This criterion helps gather data on the policies and practices of an institution in the matter of planning human resources, recruitment, training, performance appraisal, financial management and the overall role of leadership in institution building. The focus of this criterion is on the following Key Aspects:

KEY ASPECTS

- 6.1 Institutional Vision and Leadership**
- 6.2 Strategy Development and Deployment**
- 6.3 Faculty Empowerment Strategies**
- 6.4 Financial Management and Resource Mobilization**
- 6.5 Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)**

6.1 Institutional Vision and Leadership

Effective leadership by setting values and participative decision-making process is key not only to achieve the vision, mission and goals of the institution but also in building the organizational culture. The formal and informal arrangements in the institution to co-ordinate the academic and administrative planning and implementation reflects the institutions efforts in achieving its vision.

6.2 Strategy Development and Deployment

The leadership provides clear vision and mission to the institution. The functions of the institution and its academic and administrative units are governed by the principles of participation and transparency. Formulation of development objectives, directives and guidelines with specific plans for implementation by aligning the academic and administrative aspects improves the overall quality of the Institutional provisions.

6.3 Faculty Empowerment Strategies

The process of planning human resources including recruitment, performance appraisal and planning professional development programmes and seeking appropriate feedback, analysis of responses and ensure that they form the basis for planning. Efforts are made to upgrade the professional competence of the staff. There are mechanisms evolved for regular performance appraisal of staff.

6.4 Financial Management and Resource Mobilization

Budgeting and optimum utilization of finance, including mobilization of resources are the issues considered under this key aspect. There are established procedures and processes for planning and allocation of financial resources. The institution has developed strategies for mobilizing resources and ensures transparency in financial management of the institution. The income and expenditure of the institution are subjected to regular internal and external audit.

6.5 Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

The internal quality assurance systems of HEIs are Self-regulated responsibilities of the higher education institutions, aimed at Continuous improvement of quality and achieving academic excellence. The institution has mechanisms for academic auditing. The institution adopts quality management strategies in all academic and administrative aspects. The institution has an IQAC and adopts a participatory approach in managing its provisions.

7. Criterion VII - Innovations and Best Practices:

This criterion focuses on the innovative efforts of an institution that help in its academic excellence. An innovative practice could be a pathway created to further the interest of the student and the institution, for internal quality assurance, inclusive practices and stakeholder relationships.

KEY ASPECTS

7.1 Environment Consciousness

7.2 Innovations

7.3 Best Practices

7.1 Environment Consciousness

The institution displays sensitivity to issues like climate change and environmental issues. It adopts environment friendly practices and takes necessary actions such as – energy conservation, rain water harvesting, waste recycling, carbon neutral etc.

7.2 Innovations

The institution is geared to promote an ambience of creativity innovation and improving quality.

7.3 Best Practices

Practices of the institution leading to improvement and having visible impact on the quality of the institutional provisions are considered in this Key Aspect.

IV. THE ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

The assessment by NAAC takes a holistic view of all the inputs, processes and outcomes of an institution and thus the HEIs are expected to demonstrate how they achieve the objectives of the core values through the data and information detailed in the self study reports (SSR). The Assessment and Accreditation outcome includes a qualitative and quantitative component. The qualitative part of the outcome is the Peer Team Report (PTR) and the quantitative part includes a Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and a letter grade.

(i) Weightages

Taking cognizance of the diversity in institutional functioning, HEIs have been grouped under three major categories i.e. Universities, Autonomous colleges and Affiliated colleges and differential weightages are assigned for each of the seven criteria as detailed in the table below:

Criteria	Key Aspects	Universities	Autonomous Colleges	Affiliated Colleges
1. Curricular Aspects	1.1 *(U)Curriculum Design and Development	50	50	NA
	1.1. *(A) Curricular Planning and Implementation	NA	NA	20

	1.2 Academic Flexibility	50	50	30
	1.3 Curriculum Enrichment	30	30	30
	1.4 Feedback System	20	20	20
	Total	150	150	100
2. Teaching-Learning and Evaluation	2.1 Student Enrolment and Profile	10	30	30
	2.2 Catering to Student Diversity	20	40	50

	2.3 Teaching-Learning Process	50	100	100
	2.4 Teacher Quality	50	60	80
	2.5 Evaluation Process and Reforms	40	30	50
	2.6 Student Performance and Learning Outcomes	30	40	40
	Total	200	300	350
3. Research, Consultancy and Extension	3.1 Promotion of Research	20	20	20
	3.2 Resource Mobilization for Research	20	20	10
	3.3 Research Facilities	30	20	10
	3.4 Research Publications and Awards	100	20	20
	3.5 Consultancy	20	10	10
	3.6 Extension Activities and Institutional Social Responsibility	40	50	60
	3.7 Collaboration	20	10	20
	Total	250	150	150
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources	4.1 Physical Facilities	30	30	30
	4.2 Library as a Learning Resource	20	20	20
	4.3 IT Infrastructure	30	30	30

	4.4 Maintenance of Campus Facilities	20	20	20
	Total	100	100	100

5. Student Support and Progression	5.1 Student Mentoring and Support	40	40	50
	5.2 Student Progression	40	40	30
	5.3 Student Participation and Activities	20	20	20
	Total	100	100	100
6. Governance, Leadership and Management	6.1 Institutional Vision and Leadership	10	10	10
	6.2 Strategy Development and Deployment	10	10	10
	6.3 Faculty Empowerment Strategies	30	30	30
	6.4 Financial Management and Resource Mobilization	20	20	20
	6.5 Internal Quality Assurance System	30	30	30
	Total	100	100	100
7. Innovations and Best Practices	7.1 Environment Consciousness	30	30	30
	7.2 Innovations	30	30	30
	7.3 Best Practices	40	40	40
	Total	100	100	100
	TOTAL SCORE	1000	1000	1000

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(U) - applicable only for Universities and Autonomous Colleges

(A) - applicable only for the Affiliated / Constituent Colleges

(ii) Grading System

A significant outcome of the Assessment is the final Institutional grading. After Assessment, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of an Institution is computed and the institution is assigned appropriate grade on a seven point scale.

The revised Grading System which came into effect from 1st July 2016 is as given below:

Range of Institutional Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	Letter Grade	Status
3.76 - 4.00	A++	Accredited
3.51 - 3.75	A+	Accredited
3.01 - 3.50	A	Accredited
2.76 - 3.00	B++	Accredited
2.51 - 2.75	B+	Accredited
2.01 - 2.50	B	Accredited
1.51 - 2.00	C	Accredited
≤ 1.50	D	Not Accredited

The system of descriptors for letter grades, i.e., Very Good, Good, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory is discontinued in the revised grading system.

Institutions which secure a CGPA equal to or less than 1.50 are notionally categorized under the letter grade "D" Status: Not Accredited. Such unqualified institutions will also be intimated and notified by NAAC as "Assessed and Found not qualified for Accreditation".