

***Guidelines for the Creation of the
Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC)
and Submission of Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) in
Accredited Institutions***

Introduction

In pursuance of its action plan for performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation and quality up-gradation of institutions of higher education, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bengaluru proposes that every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC will become a vital part of the institution's quality assurance system and work towards ensuring quality enhancement and sustenance. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the overall performance of its institution. For this, during the post-accreditation period, institutions need to channelize their efforts towards promoting holistic academic excellence including the implementation of peer team's recommendations.

The guidelines provided in the following pages will facilitate the institution in the creation and operation of the IQAC. The establishment of the IQAC is the first step towards institutionalization and internalization of quality enhancement initiatives. Its success depends on its sense of belongingness and participation in all the activities of the institution. It will not be yet another hierarchical structure or a record-keeping unit of the institution but will be a facilitative and participative unit of the institution. It has the potential to become a vehicle for ushering in quality enhancement through its planned and interventionist strategies to remove deficiencies and enhance quality, as in Quality Circles in industries.

IQAC – Vision

To promote quality culture as the prime concern of Higher Education Institutions through institutionalizing and internalizing all the quality-enhancing and sustaining initiatives taken with internal and external support.

Objectives

The primary aims of the IQAC are:

- To develop a mechanism to promote conscious, consistent and catalytic action plans to improve the academic and administrative performance of the institution.
- To promote institutional quality enhancement and sustenance through the internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of the best practices.

Strategies

IQAC shall evolve a mechanism and procedures for:

- a) Ensuring timely, efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial units;
- b) Adoption of relevant and quality academic and research programmes;
- c) Ensuring equitable access to and affordability of academic programmes for various sections of the society;
- d) Optimization and integration of modern methods of teaching and learning;
- e) Ensuring credible assessment and evaluation processes;
- f) Ensuring the proper allocation, adequacy and maintenance of support structure and services; and
- g) Sharing of research findings and networking with other institutions in India and abroad.

Functions

- a) Development and application of quality benchmarks;
- b) Setting parameters for various academic and administrative activities of the institution;
- c) Facilitating the creation of a learner-centric environment conducive to quality education and faculty development to adopt the required knowledge and technology for participatory teaching and learning process;
- d) Collection and analysis of feedback from all the stakeholders on quality-related institutional processes;
- d) Dissemination of information on various quality parameters to all the stakeholders;
- e) Organization of intra- and inter-institutional workshops and seminars on quality-related themes and promotion of quality circles;
- f) Documentation of various programmes/activities leading to quality improvement;
- g) Acting as a nodal agency of the institution for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of the best practices;
- h) Development and maintenance of institutional database through MIS for the purpose of maintaining and enhancing institutional quality;
- i) Periodical conduct of Academic and Administrative Audits along with their follow-up activities; and
- j) Preparation and submission of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) as per the guidelines and parameters of NAAC.

Benefits

IQAC will facilitate / contribute to

- a) Ensuring clarity and focus in the institution's march towards quality enhancement;
- b) Ensuring internalization of quality culture;
- b) Ensuring enhancement and coordination among the various units and activities of the institution and institutionalizing all good practices;
- c) Providing a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning;
- d) Acting as a dynamic system for quality changes in HEIs; and
- e) Building a sound methodology for documentation and internal communication.

Composition of the IQAC

The IQAC should be constituted in every institution under the chairpersonship of the Head of the Institution with heads of key academic and administrative units and a few teachers and a few distinguished educationists and representatives of the local management and stakeholders as members.

The composition of the IQAC should be as follows:

1. Chairperson: Head of the Institution
2. Teachers to represent all levels (Assistant Professor and Associate Professor) (Three to eight)
3. One member from the Management
4. The senior administrative officer (Office Superintendent/Manager)
5. One nominee each from the Local Society/Trust, Students and Alumni
6. One nominee each from the Employer/Industrialists/Stakeholders
7. One of the senior teachers as the Coordinator of the IQAC
8. Student representatives (?)

The composition of the IQAC will depend on the size and complexity of the institution and accordingly the representation of teachers may vary. The IQAC helps the institution in planning and monitoring quality-related activities. It ensures the various stakeholders' and beneficiaries' cross-sectional participation in the institution's quality-enhancement activities. The guidelines given here are only indicative and will help the institutions in their quality-sustenance activities.

The membership of the nominated members shall be for a period of two years. The IQAC should meet at least once in every quarter. The quorum for the meeting shall be two-thirds of the total number of members. The Agenda, Minutes and Action Taken Reports are to be documented and maintained electronically in a retrievable format.

While selecting these members, several precautions need to be taken. A few of them are listed below:

- ♦ It is advisable to choose persons from different backgrounds who have earned respect for their integrity and excellence in their teaching and research. Moreover, they should be aware of the ground realities of the institutional environment. They should be known for their commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning.
- ♦ It is advisable to change the Coordinator every two/three years to usher in new thoughts and activities in the institution.
- ♦ It would be appropriate to choose senior administrators and persons in charge of institutional services such as library, computer centre, estate office, student welfare, administration, academic tasks, examination and planning and development.
- ♦ The management representative should be aware of the institution's objectives, strengths and limitations, and should be committed to its improvement. The local Society/Trust representatives should be of a high social standing and should have made significant contributions to society and to education, in particular.

The Role of the Coordinator

The role of the Coordinator of the IQAC is crucial in ensuring the effective functioning of all the members. The IQAC Coordinator may be a senior and competent person with rich experience and exposure to quality aspects. He/She may be a full-time functionary or a senior academician/administrator entrusted with additional responsibility as the IQAC Coordinator. Secretarial assistance should be ensured by the administration. It is essential that the coordinator has a sound knowledge of computers and data management.

Operational Features of the IQAC

Quality assurance is a by-product of the ongoing efforts of an institution to define its objectives and the Institution should chalk out a work plan to achieve them and also specify the checks and balances to evaluate the degree to which each of the tasks is fulfilled. Hence devotion and commitment to improvement rather than mere institutional control is the basis for devising procedures and instruments for assuring quality. The IQAC has to ensure that whatever is done in the institution for higher education is done efficiently and effectively. In order to do this, the IQAC will have to first establish procedures and modalities to collect data and information on the various aspects of the functioning of the institution. The IQAC Coordinator has a major role in implementing these functions. The IQAC may derive support from the already existing units and mechanism that contribute to the functions listed above.

Institutions are requested to submit the AQAR every year and the submission should start after one year from the date of accreditation. A functional IQAC and timely submission of the AQAR are the minimum institutional requirements to go in for the second, third and subsequent cycles of accreditation. During the institutional visit, the NAAC peer team will