



Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat
Department of Higher Education, Government of Gujarat
JOURNAL OF MULTI-DISCIPLINARY
ISSN : 2279-0268

Year-1 | Issue-2 | Continuous issue-2 | August-September 2012

IQAC in Improving Quality in Higher Education

Introduction

During the last sixty years of independence, Higher Education has expanded remarkably in terms of size of the network of HEI and enrolment therein, causing problems such as lack of oneness among the stakeholders, communication gap between students and teachers, unorganized conduct of education, lack of support services of the students, outdated syllabus, non-availability of adequate infrastructure, faculty and learning resources. To address this problem the National Action plan of NAAC, Bangalore proposes that every accredited Institution establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure.

In pursuance of the National Action Plan of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council Bangalore, for performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation and quality up gradation of institutions of higher education, the NAAC proposes that every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell as post-accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, The IQAC will become a part of an institution's system and work towards realizing the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance.

The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of institutions. The IQAC will make a significant and meaningful contribution in the post-accreditation phase of institutions. During the post accreditation period, the IQAC will canalize the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence. The work of the IQAC is the first step towards the internalization and institutionalization of quality enhancement. Its success depends upon the sense of belongingness and participation it can inculcate in all the constituents of the institution. It will not be yet another hierarchical structure or record keeping exercise in the institution; it will be a facilitative and participative voluntary system/unit/organ of the institution. The IQAC has the potential to become a vehicle for ushering in quality by working out intervention strategies to remove deficiencies and enhance quality. Quality circles in industries operate on similar lines.

The University Grants Commission established in November 1956 as a statutory body of the Government of India through an Act of Parliament, has the unique distinction of being the only grant-giving agency in the country which has been vested with two responsibilities: that of providing funds and that of coordination, determination and maintenance of standards in institutions of higher education.

The UGC's mandate includes Promoting and coordinating university education; Determining and maintaining standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities; Framing regulations on minimum standards of education; Monitoring developments in the field of collegiate and university education; Disbursing grants to the Universities and Colleges; Serving as a vital link between the Union and State Governments and institutions of higher learning; Advising the Central and State Governments on the measures necessary for improvement of education. To monitor standards of the higher educational institutions it has established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council as an autonomous body, under section 12 (CCC) of its Act in September 1994. NAAC is entrusted with the task of performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation of Universities and Colleges in the Country. The philosophy of NAAC is ameliorative and enabling rather than punitive or judgmental, so that all constituencies of institutions of higher learning are empowered to maximize their resources, opportunities and capabilities.

NAAC has been instilling a momentum of quality consciousness amongst Higher Educational Institutions aiming for continuous improvement. NAAC is triggering a 'Quality Culture' among the various constituents of the HEI, as well as enhancing the awareness of Institutional Quality Assurance

with all stakeholders.

STRUCTURE OF IQAC:

The IQAC shall be constituted under the chairmanship of the head of the HEI. He/She may be assisted by a Director (in case of a university) or a Coordinator (in of a college) who shall be a senior faculty member. This position may be held as an additional charge by the faculty member concerned, or a new position of a full-time Director/Coordinator may be created and a person is selected and appointed or a senior faculty member is posted by redeployment.

OBJECTIVES OF THE IQAC:

- To ensure continuous improvement in the entire academic process of the University.
- To ensure stakeholders connected with higher Education, namely parents, teachers, staff, would be employers, funding agencies and society in general, of its own quality and probability.

FUNCTION OF THE IQAC:

- Development and application of quality benchmark/parameters in various activities of the institution.
- Acting as a nodal agency of the institution for quality-related activities.
- Preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report and such other reports as many be decided from time to time.
- Dissemination of information on quality aspects.
- Organization of discussions, workshops, seminars and promotion of quality circles.
- Recording and monitoring quality measures of the institution.
- Development and application of quality benchmarks/parameters for the various academic and administrative activities of the HEI.
- Facilitating the creation of a learner-centric environment conducive for quality education and faculty maturation to adopt the required knowledge and technology for participatory teaching and learning process.
- Arrangement for feedback responses from students, parents and other stakeholders on quality-related institutional processes; Dissemination of information on the various quality parameters of higher education.
- Organization of inter and intra institutional workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circles.
- Documentation of the various programmes/activities of the HEI, leading to Quality improvement.
- Preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report of the HEI based on the quality parameters/assessment criteria developed by the relevant quality assurance body (like NAAC, NBA, AB) in the prescribed format.
- Bi-annual development of Quality Radars and Ranking of Integral Units of HEIs based on the AQAR.
- Interaction with SQACs in the pre and post accreditation quality assessment, sustenance and enhancement endeavors.
- Acting as a nodal agency of the HEI for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of good practices.
- Development and maintenance of Institutional database through MIS for the purpose of maintaining /enhancing the institutional quality.
- Development of Quality Culture in HEI.

FOLLOW UP:

- The AQAR shall be approved by the statutory bodies of the HEIs (such as Syndicate, Governing Council/Board) for the follow up action for necessary quality enhancement measures.
- The Universities shall regularly submit the AQARs to the NAAC/other accreditation bodies. The Colleges shall regularly submit their AQARs to the affiliating University, state level quality assurance bodies, NAAC / other accreditation bodies.
- All HEIs shall submit AQARs and/or Quality Radars and follow up reports of AQARs to the UGC as and when called for.
- The IQAC must create its exclusive window on its institutional website, to regularly report on its activities, as well as for hosting the AQAR.

CONTRIBUTION OF IQAC:

- Development and application of quality benchmark/ parameters in various activities of the institution.
- IQAC is responsible for the quality related initiatives of the college.
- Preparation and submission of Annual Quality Assurance Report to NAAC based on the quality parameters is done every year.
- Workshops on quality related theme are organized and promotion of quality circles leads to quality improvement.
- Ensuring timely, efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks.
- Optimization and integration of modern methods of teaching, learning and evaluation.
- Ensuring the adequacy, maintenance and functioning of the support

BENEFITS OF IQAC:

- Ensure heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement
- Ensure internalization of the quality culture;
- Ensure enhancement and integration among the various activities of the institution and institutionalize good practices;
- Provide a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning;
- Act as a dynamic system for quality changes in the HEIs;
- Build an organized methodology of documentation and internal communication.
- To a heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning onwards quality enhancement and facilitate internalization of the quality culture
- To act as a change agent in the institution
- To better internal communication

Internal Quality Assurance Cell as a post-accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC will become a part of an institution's system and work towards realizing the goals of quality enhancement and sustenance. The prime task of the IQAC is to develop a system for conscious, consistent and catalytic improvement in the performance of institutions. The IQAC will make a significant and meaningful contribution in the post-accreditation phase of institutions. During the post-accreditation period, the IQAC will canalize the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence. The guidelines provided in the following pages will facilitate the institution in the creation and operation of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell.

THE BASIC PURPOSES OF THE IQAC ARE:

- To ensure continuous improvement in the entire operations of the institution
- To assure stakeholders connected with higher education – namely, students, parents, teachers, staff, would-be employers, funding agencies and society in general - of the accountability of the institution for its own quality and probity.

THE IQAC WILL EVOLVE MECHANISMS AND PROCEDURES FOR ENSURING THE FOLLOWING:

- Timely, efficient and progressive performance of academic, administrative and financial tasks
- The relevance and quality of academic and research programmes.
- Equitable access to and affordability of academic programmes for various sections of society.
- Optimization and integration of modern methods of teaching and learning.
- The credibility of evaluation procedures
- The adequacy, maintenance and proper allocation of support structure and services.
- Research sharing and networking with other institutions in India and abroad IQAC usually prepared Annual Plan of Action and try to implement these. Action plan gives the direction to the whole system of education.
- IQAC should see that teachers are preparing and teaching according to the academic plan (Calendar) in which syllabuses have been unitized.
- Teaching – Learning process is the main activity in any HEI. The same old syllabus & teaching methods must be replaced by some new updated items of teaching and learning centric methods of teaching such as group discussion, project work, field visits, case study, debates, ex tempore, addressing current academic problems etc. as supplement to class room teaching.
- At the beginning of an academic year, IQAC send a format to the Heads of Departments and

support services to the students to be undertaken throughout the year. This will help IQAC to know the working of each Department and will help to prepare an Action Plan of the Institution. Monitoring of the working of the Departments may be done through meeting of the IQAC and this will direct the future course of action.

- It is the responsibility of the IQAC to motivate and to maintain Academic Diary day wise to the faculty members. It will help ensuring quality of teaching and accountability.
- A teacher finds it difficult to cope with the rapid advances in knowledge today. However it is his duty to update his subjects' knowledge in the present scenario of technological advances because at the click of the mouse students can get more information through internet. Further, the new generation of students demands new skills from the teacher. Only with lecture methods it is difficult to impress upon the students. If a teacher wants to be a good teacher, he should introduce some changes in his approach of teaching. The teacher must be a facilitator, a counsellor, a negotiator & a communicator par excellence.
- Thus if a teacher is to discharge his duty to the satisfaction of students, IQAC has to organize various activities such as faculty development programme which will contribute to the knowledge. The use of advanced teaching aids by the teachers & the use of updated and quality teaching will benefit the learner and make teaching more learners centric. In any HIES, students are primary stakeholder. So IQAC should encourage students to participate in various activities of the institution. To do this, the 1st step is to display the students' charter in the notice (students') board & at various places. This will help them to know that it is their right to receive quality education. This will also help the institution to know its responsibilities towards students and vice – versa. In many institutions, proper attention is not given to the problem of students'. Policies become more teacher friendly than student friendly. This creates misunderstanding between teachers and students. IQAC should arrange meetings with the students to listen the problems faced by the students and action plan will be taken to solve the problems. Students should realise that they are given importance which grows confidence among the students about the institution and will be a step towards furtherance of quality. We should know that no educational experiment is meaningful without the proper participation of students.
- IQAC should organize and deliver lectures from time to time to make the students aware of the changing global scenario. Students should be given supports services in seeking jobs opportunities not only locally but also globally. It is the duty of the IQAC to cultivate skills, competencies and value among students. These should be imparted to the students through courses and activities. This is the primary function of IQAC.
- IQAC should also see that partnership with overseas and other institutions will help in training and developing students and to make our students internationally competitive. Partnership & collaboration with industries will help in linking with the world of work. All these things will make students innovative, creative and entrepreneurial.
- IQAC should see that the activities in the HEI must be student centred. Students need to have greater say in the decision making process in education. Students must be given responsibilities on academic and administrative bodies. It is in the HEI that students should get opportunities to develop qualities of leadership among them. Freedom should be given to students to lead, plan and organise various activities on their own where teachers will be only supervisors. As such, it will produce double results - personality development of students and minimizing other problems relating to students such as absence in the class and misconduct in the college campus.
- IQAC should see that changes are also required in the testing and evaluation procedures. The old method of evaluation should be supplemented by new and innovative method. IQAC has a role in the functioning of development programme of the Non-teaching staff who is also a stakeholder in HEI.

The education always aims at quality life, so for enhancing the standard of quality life there is constant need of improving standards of education. So there must be constant efforts in finding means quality sustenance. IQAC is the process to include all those who work for Higher Education to think about how to raise the standards for sustaining quality and improvement in it.

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