

CONCEPT, OBJECTIVE AND STRATEGIES OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL

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ABSTRACT

In pursuance of the National Action Plan of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore, for performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation and quality up-gradation of institutions of higher education, the NAAC proposes that every accredited institution establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) 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 (National and Assessment and Accreditation Council, 2014). 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 channelize the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence (BIT Mesra, 2014).

INTRODUCTION

The University Grants Commission (UGC), India has (in the XI Plan) made a policy decision to direct all Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) to establish Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and to provide seed financial assistance for the same (Gulbarga University, 2013). It has also issued Guidelines for the establishment and monitoring of IQACs. Maintaining the momentum of quality consciousness is crucial in universities. Internal Quality Assurance Cell, an internal quality assurance mechanism of the institution, is conceived as a mechanism to build and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level. Every university should have an internal quality assurance system, with appropriate structure and processes, and with enough flexibility to meet the diverse needs of the stakeholders (North-Eastern Hill University, 2014). The IQAC is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) activities of the Universities. The

IQAC may channelise and systematize the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence. It should not be yet another hierarchical structure or record-keeping exercise in the institution; it would be a facilitative and participative organ of the institution. The IQAC should become a driving force for ushering in quality by working out intervention strategies to remove deficiencies and enhance quality (Mizoram University, 2014).

THE OBJECTIVES OF THE IQAC ARE: (MAHIDA, 2012)

1. To ensure continuous improvement in the entire operations of the University.
2. 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 probity.
3. To develop a quality system for conscious, consistent and catalytic programmed action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the Jawaharlal Nehru University(JNU);
4. To promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement through internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of best practices.
5. IQAC will facilitate / contribute:
 - To a heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement and facilitate internalization of the quality culture.
 - To the enhancement and integration among the various activities of the institution and institutionalize many good practices.
 - To provide a sound basis for decision making to improve institutional functioning.
 - To act as a change agent in the institution.
 - To better internal communication.

THE FUNCTIONS OF THE IQAC ARE: (DEVI AHILYA VISHWAVIDYALAYA, 2014)

1. Design and implementation of annual plan for Institution – level activities for quality enhancement
2. Arrange for feedback responses from students for quality – related institutional processes
3. Development and Application of quality bench marks /parameters for the various Academic and Administrative activities of the Institution
4. Retrieval of Information on various quality parameters of Higher Education and best practices followed by other Institutions

5. Organization of workshops and seminars on quality – related themes and promotion of quality circles and institutions – wide dissemination of the proceeding of such activities
6. Development and application of innovative practices in various programmes / activities leading to quality enhancement
7. Participation in the creation of learner – centric environment conducive for quality education
8. Work for the development of Internationalization and Institutionalization of quality enhancement policies and practices
9. Act as a nodal unit of the Institution for augmenting quality – related activities
10. Development and application of quality benchmarks/parameters for the various academic and administrative activities of the University;
11. 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;
12. Arrangement for feedback responses from students, parents and other stakeholders on quality-related institutional processes;
13. Dissemination of information on the various quality parameters of higher education;
14. Organization of inter and intra institutional workshops, seminars on quality related themes and promotion of quality circles;
15. Documentation of the various programmes/activities of JNU, leading to quality improvement;
16. Acting as a nodal agency of JNU for coordinating quality-related activities, including adoption and dissemination of good practices;
17. Development and maintenance of Institutional database through MIS for the purpose of maintaining /enhancing the institutional quality;
18. Development of Quality Culture in JNU;
19. Preparation of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) of the University based on the quality parameters/assessment criteria developed by the relevant quality assurance body (like NAAC, NBA, AB) in the prescribed format;
20. Bi-annual development of Quality Radars (QRs) and Ranking of Integral Units of JNU based on the AQAR;

21. Interaction with SQACs in the pre and post accreditation quality assessment, sustenance and enhancement endeavors.

22. In terms of UGC Regulations 2010, IQAC shall act as the Documentation and Record-Keeping cell, including assistance in the development of the API criteria based Performance Based Appraisal System (PBAS) proforma using the indicative template separately developed by the UGC. In order to facilitate the process, all teachers shall submit the duly filled-in PBAS proforma to the IQAC annually;

23. Any other assignment by the Vice-Chancellor.

STRATEGIES (KUVEMPU UNIVERSITY, 2014): IQAC shall evolve mechanisms and procedures for

- Ensuring 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

COMPOSITION (BUNDELKHAND UNIVERSITY, 2014): The IQAC may be constituted in every institution under the chairmanship of head of the institution with heads of important academic and administrative units, a few teachers and a few distinguished educationists/representatives of local committee. The composition of the IQAC may be as follows:

- 1.** Chairperson: Head of the Institution
- 2.** A few senior administrative officers
- 3.** Three to eight teachers
- 4.** One or two members from the Management
- 5.** One/two nominees from local society
- 6.** One of the teachers as the coordinator of the IQAC.

Though NAAC suggests the composition, the institutions can customize it to suit their size and complexity. IQACs would facilitate better planning, coordinator and monitoring of various functions within an institution. It would also give the stakeholders an opportunity to participate in a cross-sectional functioning of the institution to promote quality enhancement initiatives and activities.

BENEFITS (ADHIYAMAAN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, 2014)

- 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 universities.

Universities and Colleges which are under section 2(f) & 12B of the UGC Act will be eligible to receive the financial support for establishing and strengthening of the IQACs in them. The UGC will provide seed money during the XI plan of Rs.5.00 lakh to each University and Rs.3.00 lakhs to each College as one time grant, to meet the establishment and strengthening expenditure of the IQAC (UGC, 2012).

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