

The Role of Stakeholders and IQAC for Setting Goals to Enhance Quality Culture of Institution

Dr. Meenakshi V. Wasnik,

Assistant Professor,

Dept. of English,

Manoharrao Kamdi Mahavidyalaya, Nagpur

National Council for Assessment and Accreditation (NAAC) follows a very specific and time-bound process for accreditation of HEIs. The IQAC has a definite procedure and timeline. For undergoing Accreditation, the institution has to go through various online submission to fill in the information like Quality Assessment (IIQA), Self-Study Report (SSR), Data Validation and Verification (DVV), and Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS). This is followed by the Peer Team Visit and Grade allocation.

There are a total of 7 Criteria and 34 Key Indicators. The NAAC addresses all the core aspects of quality education such as Curricular aspects; Teaching-Learning and Evaluation; Research, Innovations and Extension; Infrastructure and Learning Resources; Student Support and Progression; Along with quantitative analysis, the institution should also adhere maintain quality culture that comes under qualitative analysis such as Leadership, Management, institutional Values and Best Practices. The role of stakeholders (students, teachers, alumni, parents, top management and society in quality enhancement and quality assurance) and their interdependence and the correct dynamics between all these stakeholders provide a robust and high performing quality ecosystem.

Vision and Mission of the college are reflective of effective leadership. Competent administrators provide effective leadership at the National, State and University levels. At the College level, the Principal, IQAC Coordinator, Vice-Principal, Heads of Departments, C-coordinators of various committees provide leadership. Academic Council Members, Management Council members, Chairman of Board of Studies and Co-coordinator or

Chairpersons of Committees provide leadership at University level.

The fulfilment of the Vision and Mission of the HEI is attained through the strategic planning, setting up broad-based targets and review mechanisms. The Leadership ensures the compliance of academic and administrative processes and procedures along with the continual improvement through regular audits, checks and monitoring. Regular inputs from teaching and non-teaching staff through monthly meetings and brainstorming sessions play a vital role in continuous improvement in the system. New and innovative courses in emerging areas focus on research and innovation, inculcating human values and holistic development of students provides a competitive edge to the college.

E-governance comprises the use of ICT tools such as the internet to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency in the day-to-day operations of the College. E-governance in Planning and Development: Administration, Finance and Accounts; Student Admission and Support; and Examination tracks improves the efficiency of administration significantly. A typical *Enterprise resource planning* (ERP) includes Hostel Management System (LMS); Feedback; Examination Results; on-line Certificate Verification; Alumni Registration forms, etc. E-governance enhances efficiency and creates data repositories for Managerial Information systems (MIS). It provides simplified procedures for maintenance of campus infrastructure also. Trello software, for example, is employed for the tracking planning and development as it is a visual collaboration tool for planning the tasks and project. Participative Management makes the institute high performing and innovative as all the stakeholders are

involved in the progress of the institute. Students actively participate in and hold responsibilities and make the institute agile and innovative. A good leadership sets the direction for a student-focused institute, learning-oriented climate, and visible values through strategies, system, and methods, stimulating innovation, building knowledge and capabilities. Leadership can be groomed at three levels viz. management and administrative level, teaching and non-teaching staff and students.

Perspective/Strategic Plan: is a specific, action-oriented long-term plan for making progress towards the set goals of the institution. It is a blueprint of the objectives and targets. It involves reporting, evaluation, review and re-planning (if necessary). It ensures accountability through the achievement of targets, optimal utilization of resources and organization growth. The Key aspects of the prospective plan are the induction of new academic programs, creation and upgradation of infrastructure and innovative learning resources and development of the eco-friendly campus.

Organizational hierarchy and structure provides help in taking clear and consistent decisions, ensures effectiveness through the involvement of stakeholders in various Committees/Boards and provides a policy framework and direction for the smooth functioning of the institute. This structural organization ensures effective functioning of academic and administrative activities. The Internal Quality Assurance cell (IQAC) ensures the quality of education sustenance and assurance of quality and academic excellence. The College Development Committee (CDC) prepares an overall comprehensive development plan of the college regarding academic, administrative and infrastructural growth. It decides about the overall teaching programs and introduction of new academic courses.

The Institution undertakes various initiatives for the welfare and upgradation of teaching and non-teaching staff. The college needs to undertake various programmes for the employers such as Deputation of faculty for orientation programs, Orientation and Refresher courses, Faculty Development and Faculty Improvement training programs, encouragement to undertake the major and minor research projects, sanctioning the duty

leave and registration fees to present the research work and training of teachers. These are the effective measures for the teacher's welfare. Initiatives such as skill-based training, appointments on compassionate grounds, group insurance, festival advance, bicycle loans, etc. increase the accountability and performance of non-teaching staff.

The Performance Management System (PMS) is aligned with the strategic objectives of individual staff members. It ensures a continuous learning process for performance advanced technologies. It has a formalized and structured performance evaluation system (with well-defined KPIs/APIs) for faculty members. Annual appraisal is based on performance, promotions received, revision of designations, individual career development plans, research contributions and plans, performance improvement plans and student feedback-based aspects. It improves the overall performance of faculty and students in academic and research.

Grievance redressal mechanisms introduce a fair, impartial and consistent mechanism for redressal of various issues faced by the students/parents. The Grievance redressal Cell tries to stimulate a harmonious atmosphere in the institution and ensure that grievances are resolved promptly, neutrally in confidential manner. This mechanism also upholds the dignity of the institute by promoting a cordial student-teacher relationship. Proper mobilization of funds and optimal utilization of resources is important in the development of a robust and sustainable institute. This is achieved through the receipt of grants from the government agencies as well as funds received from non-government bodies, individuals and philanthropists. Training and Consultancy, sponsorships for various events, conferences, seminars, the establishment of industry-sponsored laboratories, endowments generate funding for college. Regular conduct of internal and external audits and monitoring by the CDC regarding financial matters keep a good financial health of the institute.

The Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) contributes significantly to institutionalizing the quality assurance strategies and processes. Annual academic planning, development, reviewing

teaching-learning process, structures and methodologies of operations and learning outcomes at periodic intervals through IQAC, Development of Institutional Self-Assessment Tool, Stakeholders feedback, process Performance and Conformity ensures quality education in colleges. Timely submission of the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR), collection and analysis of feedback for improvements also contribute to effective monitoring. The Academic Administrative Audit (AAA), participation in National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF), ISO Certification, etc., ensures quality education in colleges.

Gender Audit helps to find out areas where gender balance exists, examines the policies of colleges rules/actions toward the need and interests of both genders, it prevents the sexual harassment and fosters the gender equality in all aspects of college life and after that also. Measures such as data compilation of proportions of male and female students and staff members, hostels facility for girls and boys, Earn and Learn Scheme for economically marginalized girl students, Day Care facility for employees children, training and professional development for staff and students, health check-up camps and Internal Complaints Committee.

Initiatives like biodiversity audit, water audit, environment audit, solid waste audit ensure the concerns towards the environment. Biodiversity audit is related to the mapping of flora and fauna on the college campus. Rare and endangered species of plants and animals can be geotagged and appropriate conservation initiatives are taken.

Post-accreditation quality initiative include Preparation of the Vision Document (1 Year), Perspective Plan (next 5 years) and their execution; Setting up of formal Management Information System (MIS); experiential learning in key areas of science in collaboration with foreign Universities; active participation of students in organizing and conducting intercollegiate cultural events and sports events, entrepreneur skill development programs, MOUs with international institutions, state of art sports facilities are some of the post NAAC initiatives.

Formation of IQAC and Execution by IQAC

The IQAC is intended to be the nerve centre of a college/institution and is attributed with the

presence of members who constitute the think tank of the college/institution. The IQAC is responsible for all Quality Assurance giving attention to every stage of educational process and support system in colleges. In IQAC, the Quality Assurance stands for process oriented and Quality Control stands for product oriented. The Quality Control activities focus on identifying defects in actual products, deploying remedial measures, validation and testing, which is a key role of the IQAC.

The present course deliberations are directed towards the NAAC Revised Accreditation Framework (2017), its implementation and more importantly submission of the Self Study Report by Colleges. The entire action plan of internal and external activities of the institution and procedures for accreditation lies on the IQAC. Hence, the operations and working of the IQAC has become vitally important and critical thinking and expression is essential. The recent Maharashtra Universities Act (MUA), 2016 [Mah. Act. No. VI of 2017, Section 97 (g)] has stated the inclusion of the Coordinator of the IQAC in the College Development Committee, a statutory body of the College. It is therefore implicit to say that IQAC is the centrifugal body of the college.

The responsibilities of the IQAC

- The role of IQAC is multifaceted. The administrative, directorial, executive and supervisory responsibility is vested on IQAC.
- The IQAC is the prime source of overall enhancement of institutional quality based on the benchmarks set for all academic and support service activities in the institution.
- The work exposure of the IQAC comprise of all activities on campus, thereby interacting with all task and legal committees and work areas.
- The ultimate goal of the IQAC should be to develop a consistent IQAS, whose goals are
- To guarantee that the quality of teaching programs is well documented, verifiable and assessable.
- To facilitate access to information for all stakeholders (students, parent, employers, alumni ad regulating agencies)

- To promote a process of continuous improvement in all academic, co-and extracurricular activities of the college.

To achieve these core functions, the following are necessary:

- Formal strategies should be developed and implemented for continuous QE with involvement of students and other stakeholders.
- The college should have formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programs.
- Continuous periodical quality assurance of teaching, administrative and other support staff.
- Every programme needs to be conducted keeping in view the adequate provisions for learning resources and student support facilities.
- Information system (MIS) should be strong to ensure that relevant data and information is collected, analysed and used for effective management of academic programs and other activities.
- All the reports, activities and information of the programs should be published in the public domain. (e.g. Website). The information should be up to date, impartial and factual in regards to all campus activities and academic programs.

The planning of IQAC work contemporarily is compliance based, and within the frame of the NAAC Self-Study Report (SSR) and Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) format, a sort of reverse-engineering or Z-A approach. These approaches are not entirely institutional quality enhancement (QE) based.

The A-Z approach requires strategic planning, which typically involves a review and examination of the institution's mission, vision, values, goals and objectives. The IQAC needs to brainstorm and strategically plan QE activities with an overall goal of the creating / molding a "market-ready" product", to students.

Steps in Planning:

- Understanding the "market requirement" for you students.

- Creating robust curricular, co-and extra-curricular process to groom student's skill sets (Technical, Functional and Employability Skills)
- Assessing the monetary requirements to accomplish the task required.
- Decisive prioritization of process through, at least, 10 years of progression.
- Benchmarking for all the processes.
- Brainstorming the issues with all stakeholders (Higher Management, Teachers, Alumni, Student-Council Potential Employers and Parents).
- Preparing appropriate academic calendars to deploy the plans.

At the end of the planning stage, the IQAC should come up with processes of integrative planning has to be done through the curriculum (academic syllabus) of study. Though the institute may have a several varieties of academic courses, the functional and employability skills needs to be fairly imparted. Hence, there is a need for integrative planning.

These steps will not fulfil all the objectives of Quality Enhancement, as they are student oriented. Other quality improvement measures could be grouped within the umbrella of activities oriented in interactions where global scenarios in subjects are brought to the campus. These could include Conferences, seminars, Workshops and the like, where both students and teachers benefit from the exercise. Careful annual planning is required to avoid duplicity and strain on expenditure and other resources. Colleges mostly organize conferences for different subjects, and sometimes of inter or multidisciplinary nature.

It is necessary for us to understand that the word "Internal" in IQAC is very significant and most, if not all, such QE conferences / workshops, are conducted to address issues of the college, with intra-college training / discussion sessions. Some activities in this context could be:

- Training of teachers to create-content.
- Website handling for all teachers.
- Digitizing important text and making it available for teachers and students on the college website.

- Use of college facilities /expertise for the benefit of the population around the college.
- Conceptualizing inter-departmental investigative work/research.
- “Innovation Forum” for students and teachers.

Probably, the most important work of the IQAC is to organize and maintain records/documents of all relevant developmental and activities of the institution/college. Most commonly referred to as “Documentation”, this task is often the most difficult, not because it is cumbersome but because there may not be clear guidelines and uniformity in formats of different agencies for which it is required, i.e. the same data/information is required in different formats by the University, State Government, and now NAAC or any other accrediting agency.

It is therefore necessary for the IQAC to seek raw data from all sources in the college (Office, Departments, etc.) and prepare its own formats such that data is interchangeable with least effort, universally, number data can be managed in EXCEL while documents can be in word or PDF formats. Necessary software, such as NITROPDF can be used for interchanging from one format to other with minimum data distortion. Expertise for this is definitely available within the institute / college (Office and / or Computer Science Department). If necessary, one or two members of the IQAC could be trained for this.

The institute/college authorities should make sure that the IQAC office is equipped with computer systems (High efficiency computers, Scanner/Printers, UPS, internet facilities) and be connected / have access to other data generating areas such as the college office and examination cell. The IQAC office should also have access to the college website for directly editing purposes, to facilitate uploading and updating information. Storage facilities for paper documents should be adequate and provide easy access.

Timeline also become a part of a *Perspective Plan* of the College/ Institute. These plans help the College/Institute to implement all required inputs (monetary and otherwise) judiciously in a phase-wise manner. Short-term timelines become

applicable in the year of “final preparation” for accreditation. In this period, shorter and deadline oriented timelines are necessary (micro-planning). Several such work-oriented timelines are prepared easily, but sometimes the integration of these timelines is necessary, as the work is interconnected. In such cases, useful Gantt charts become useful tools. PERT charts, though rarely used could also be useful in activities planned for fulfilling recommendations stated in NAAC and other reports.

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