Academic and Administrative Audit: The Criteria considered for HEIs

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Abstract: The Higher Education sector in India has witnessed a tremendous increase in its institutional capacity since Independence it is one among the major areas of development, which is undergoing a fantastic change. The country is becoming a global hub for educational activities and a feeder for all kinds of international man-power requirement. There is a growing demand for, and also concern to, provide quality education with standard curriculum and globally acceptable system of education. Everywhere the idea of increasing Gross Enrollment ration, Generating more human resource with intellectual inputs are given much thrust. The NAAC(National Assessment and Accreditation Council) of India has evolved certain benchmarks for ascertaining and ensuring quality at different levels of Higher Education and for its continued sustenance. During the last ten years, Universities in India have taken serious note of these emerging needs and demands and trying to update the curriculum, design new Programs and offer better educational services while maintaining high quality. By establishing Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQAC) and conducting External Quality Assurance checks it is possible to go for a Total Quality Management in an Academic Institution.. The monitoring and evaluation of the institutional processes require a carefully structured system of internal and external introspection. Thus this paper discusses the factors considered under the Academic and administrative Audit of Higher education Institutes.

Keywords: IQAC,AAA,TQM ,EQA,NAAC

Introduction

Academic and administration audit can be understood as the process of evaluating the progress undertaken by Higher Education Institutions. It is the process of monitoring and reviewingthe quality of education provided in the Higher Education Institute. It is undertaken to verify whether all factors of Academic Audit Indicators are carried on as per the guidelines provided by the authorized authority. It further, assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of all the administrative departments of the institutions, the administrative departments are responsible for all the proper implementation of policies, procedures, regulations and strategies framed by the Institutions.

Need for AAA

The Academic and Administrative Audit is needed for following

- To confirm that the arrangements for quality assurance are fit for purpose and adapt to the institution's role and mission.
- To provide assurance that the standards of higher education (at degree level and above) align with expectations.
- To ensure that students have access to appropriate learning opportunities.
- To promote and enhance high quality teaching learning environment.
- To confirm that students are fully supported in their academic and personal development.
- To encourage strategic developments that enriches the curriculum and enhances students' opportunities for employment and career development.

NAAC in AAA

The NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL (NAAC) is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. It is an outcome of the recommendations of the National Policy in Education (1986) which laid special emphasis on upholding the quality of higher education in India. To address the issues of quality, the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Plan of Action (POA-1992) advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation body. Consequently, the NAAC was established in 1994 with its headquarters at Bangalore.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), Bangalore proposes that every accredited institution should 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 the institution's system and work towards realization of 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 overall performance of institutions. For this, during the post-accreditation period, it will channelize all efforts and measures of the institution towards promoting its holistic academic excellence

Criteria in AAA

NAAC has identified the following seven criteria to serve as the basis of its assessment procedures:
- Curricular Aspects
- Teaching-Learning and Evaluation
- Research, Consultancy and Extension
- Infrastructure and Learning Resources
- Student Support and Progression
- Governance, Leadership and Management
- Innovations and Best Practices

The Seven Criteria is further divided into "Key Aspects". Certain important Assessment Indicators are identified under the Key Aspects and the Seven Criteria which encompasses them, as probes or leads for the Peer Team members of NAAC to capture the micro-level quality parameters. These indicators facilitate the computing of the Key Aspect-wise Grade Points (KA-GPS) and the Criterion-wise Grade Point Averages (CR-GPAs) in order to arrive at the quality status of the institution.

Curricular Aspects
- To find whether the institution has clearly stated its goals and objectives that they are communicated systematically to all its constituencies. Vision and mission of the institution and the awareness of students, teachers, staff and other stake holders on these.
- Mission statement in terms of addressing the needs of the society, the students institution's traditions and value orientation. Academic programmes in line with institutions goals and objectives.
- The curriculum caters to inclusion/integration of Information and communication Technology(ICT). Initiatives and contributions of the institution in curriculum design and development process. The key aspects under this are
- Curriculum design and development
- Academic Flexibility
- Feedback on curriculum
- Curriculum update
- Best practices in curricular aspects

Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

The institution needs to have a transparent admission process. The programmes of teaching and learning cater to individual differences amongst learners. The institutions need to facilitate the effective conductof the teaching-learning processes. The provision for the use of ICT tools in theenhancement of teaching process and a well-conceived plan, for continuouslymonitoring the student progress. The institution needs to have an effective mechanism to recruit adequatequalified faculty. The student evaluation processes are reliable and valid. Further, have anopen and participative mechanism for evaluation of teaching and promoting work satisfaction ofthe faculty. The teachers need to have opportunities for continued academic growth and professionaldevelopment. The ability of

institutions in having sustainable good practices in teaching, learning and evaluationto achieve academic excellence is examined in this level. Thus it contains the following in detail

- Admission Process & Student profile
- Teaching learning process
- Teacher quality
- Evaluation process and reforms
- Best practices in teaching learning

Research, Consultancy and Extension

The institutions need to promote research culture among faculty and students. The institutions have to encourage faculty to publish in academic journals. The institutions need toencourage faculty to participate in professional academic programmes. The institutions should promote faculty participation in consultancy work. The institution must be responsive to community needs and conducts relevant extension programmes. The ability of institutions in having sustainable good practices in research, consultancy and extension to achieve academic excellenceis examined in this level. Thus it contains the following in detail

- Promotion of research
- Research and publication output
- Consultancy
- Extension activities
- Collaborations
- Best Practices in research, consultancy and extension

Infrastructure and Learning Resources

The institution has to have adequate physical facilities for the conduct of the educational programmes efficiently. The growth of the infrastructure should keep pace with the academic growth of the institution. The institution has to have effective mechanisms for maintenance and optional use of infrastructure. The institution should poses adequate library, computer facilities and other learning resources, with easy access to all its constituencies. The ability of institutions in having sustainable good practices for ensuring adequate infrastructure and learning resources and its optimum use to facilitate student learningis examined in this level. Thus it contains the following in detail

- Physical facilities
- Maintenance of Infrastructure
- Library as a learning resource
- ICT as learning Resources
- Other facilities
- Best practices in development of infrastructure and Learning resource

Student Support and Progression

The institution has to provide clear information to students about admission, completion requirements for all programmes; the fee-structure and refund policies; financial aid and student support services. The institution should have sufficient and well-run support services for all its students. Student progression needs to be monitored effectively. Institution needs to poses mechanisms for student counseling and placement services. The institution must have an effective mechanism to use student feedback for quality enhancement. The ability of institutions in having good sustainable practices for effective student support and progressionis examined in this level. Thus it contains the following in detail.

- Student progression
- Student support
- Student activities
- Best practices in student support and progression

Governance, Leadership and Management

The leadership needs to provide clear vision and mission to the institution. The functions of the institution and its academic and administrative units are to be governed by the principles of participation and transparency. Academic and administrative planning in the institution must move hand in hand. The institution should practices relevant welfare schemes for all its constituencies and see to it thatthere are fair and expeditious grievance redressal

mechanisms at all levels of the institution's functioning. The institution must be effective in resource mobilization and planning developmental strategies. The finance of the institution isto be judiciously allocated and effectively utilized by adopting a proper budgeting system. Auditing procedures and the follow up actions are to be systematized. The ability of institutions in havingsustainable good practices for governance and leadershipis examined in this level. Thus it contains the following in detail.

- Institutional vision and leadership
- Organizational arrangements
- Strategy development and deployment
- Human resource management
- Financial management and resource mobilization
- Best Practices in governance and leadership

Innovations and Best Practices

The institutions needs to displays sensitivity to changing educational, social and market demands. The institution must be geared to promote an ambience of creativity innovation and improving quality. The institution needs to promote inclusive practices for social justice and better stake holder relationships. The institution must adopt quality management strategies in all academic and administrative aspects. The institution needs to promote value-based education for inculcating social responsibilities and good citizenry amongst its student community. It contains the following in detail

- Institutional Ambience and Initiatives
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- Inclusive practices
- Stakeholder relationships

Conclusion

All Higher Educational Institutions in India are expected to go through this stringent quality assessment procedure by an external peer review, and series of accreditation based on a set of predetermined academic and administrative audit criteria as stated above. Accreditation and Reaccreditation have now become regular processes among Higher education Institutions for showing continuous improvements. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) expects all the Institutions to undertake continuous Academic and Administrative Audits by external peers, after every Assessment and Accreditation. As this is attributed as an important step to evaluate independently as to how well the improvement processes are taking place and what more needs to be done by the institution to uphold its quality standards.

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