



## **ROLE OF INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE CELL (IQAC) FOR QUALITY ENHANCEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The University Grant Commission (UGC) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 at Bangalore. The prime agenda of NAAC is to Assess and Accredite institutions of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education. Part A of guidelines of XI Plan of University Grants Commission directs all the Higher Education Institutions (HEI's) to have an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). The motive behind setting up of IQAC is to maintain the momentum of quality consciousness which is crucial in HEI's. IQAC is a mechanism to build and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level, and is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) activities of the HEI's*

**Key words:** NAAC, IQAC, Higher Educational Institutions (HEI's), UGC,

### **Introduction**

Quality is the back bone of any education system. It is said that quality of a nation is judged by the quality of its citizens. Quality of citizens directly depends on the system of education of the nation which in turn is determined by quality of teachers. Quality in higher education is the most urgent need as India moves towards becoming an educational hub. All

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levels of education need a strong vertical knit to ensure quality. Academic institutions opt for quality circles and quality efforts at institutional, national and international levels. In addition, various academic bodies like NAAC, MCI, AICTE, NCTE etc. aim at quality enhancement in higher education.

Quality of Education now offered in many institutions of higher education, both general and technical, requires a thorough review and correction by the agencies concerned like NAAC of UGC, NBA of AICTE. Many Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs), specially technical and professional colleges offering Engineering, Pharmacy, MBA and MCA are almost forced to shut down as there are no takers.

Higher education in India is undergoing a transformation. The reason for transformation is mainly due to the expansion of higher education in India and the new demand on system. Education has always been recognised as a major instrument to achieve the objective of social, economic and political development of a nation. Higher education provides leadership by supplying a well developed human resource which ultimately takes the responsibility of operating the systemic developments in India. There have been a number of good human beings, eminent personalities in many fields who have contributed to the inventions, project, developments, arts and culture, science and technology, socio economic and other areas.

The University Grant Commission (UGC) established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994 at Bangalore. NAAC vision and mission statement clearly specifies its functioning highlighting quality assurance mechanism in higher education institutions with the combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance activities and initiatives. The prime agenda of NAAC is to Assess and Accredite institutions of higher learning with an objective of helping them to work continuously to improve the quality of education.

Maintaining the momentum of quality consciousness is of crucial importance. Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), in fact, is conceived as a body which ensures maintenance of momentum created by the accreditation at the institutional level. The NAAC's advocacy of establishment of IQAC by every accredited institution as a post-accreditation measure is thus the first step towards institutionalization and internalization of quality culture. NAAC

has given guidelines to all the accredited institutions to establish an internal quality assurance cell (IQAC) to ensure qualitative growth of the institution. The composition of the cell has been clearly defined so as to be representative of all the constituents of the institution Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is established as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC has become a part of the 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 has made a significant and meaningful contribution in the post-accreditation phase. During the post-accreditation period, the IQAC has channelized the efforts and measures of an institution towards academic excellence.

### **Objectives & Methodology for the Study**

The present paper aims at presenting an overview of IQAC's (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) its basic purposes, functions, benefits, activities organised by IQAC etc., in the various institutions. The data and information is collected form various secondary sources like published journals, research articles, official websites for the present work.

### **The basic purposes of the IQAC**

- a) To ensure continuous improvement in the entire operations of the institution and
- b) 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

### **Functions of IQAC**

As highlighted in the UGC Guidelines, the goals of IQAC shall be:

- 1) To develop a quality system for conscious, consistent and catalytic programmed action to improve the academic and administrative performance of the HEIs; and,
- 2) To promote measures for institutional functioning towards quality enhancement through internalization of quality culture and institutionalization of best practices. To attain these goals, the functions of IQAC shall be:

- 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;
- 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;

### **Benefits of IQAC**

1. Ensure heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement
2. Ensure internalization of the quality culture;
3. Ensure enhancement and integration among the various activities of the institution and institutionalize good practices;
4. Provide a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning;
5. Act as a dynamic system for quality changes in the HEIs;
6. Build an organized methodology of documentation and internal communication.

### **Internal Quality Assurance Cell**

Part A of guidelines of XI Plan of University Grants Commission directs all the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) to have an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC). The motive behind setting up of IQAC is to maintain the momentum of quality consciousness which is crucial in HEIs. IQAC is a mechanism to build and ensure a quality culture at the institutional level, and is meant for planning, guiding and monitoring Quality Assurance (QA) and Quality Enhancement (QE) activities of the HEIs. Complying with the aim of UGC, IQAC has been constituted in the University to review the performance for the entire gamut of academic programmes encompassing the faculty, research scholars and students.

IQAC was constituted strictly as per the guidelines of UGC, and Prof. K.V.S. Sharma was given the responsibility to act as the coordinator the cell. IQAC started to function immediately with clarity of vision and plan of action.

### **Plan of Action**

1. To review the performance of the entire array of academic programmes encompassing the faculty, research scholars and students
2. To promote research in new and advancing fields of relevance. For this Research and Development Cell and University Research board were instituted.
3. Dissemination of information on the activities of the University for the benefit of general public and elite of the society.
4. Constitution of Quality Circles at all the levels of University to involve the entire cross section of University for the quality improvement.
5. Adoption of a Student Charter in the University to bring awareness among the students of their own responsibilities and the functions of the institution
6. Obtaining Feedback from the alumni, retired staff and students, and making the analytical data available to the concerned teaching staff and administration.
7. To ameliorate the issues concerning the welfare of student community.
8. It was recognized that the academic activities in the University need to be improved keeping the global perspective in view
9. Restoration of Academic year and early publication of results.

### **Quality Enhancement Activities in education**

#### **i) Academic Activities**

Semester System, Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), several new courses at PG level and ridge Courses have been introduced.. 5-year Integrated P.G. courses in Physics and Chemistry have been introduced. Language labs have been established to impart training to students in communication and soft skill, modernizing the class rooms and laboratory facilities. An Academic Calendar provides the entire academic schedule including the dates for internal tests and external examinations. Examination results published within 2-3 weeks. Implemented the teachers' evaluation by the students which served the teachers to enhance their performance.

## **(ii) Research Activities**

University provided functional autonomy to the faculty by way of simplifying the administrative procedures concerning the execution of research projects. Research in thrust areas like Bio pesticides, for Rural Development. The faculty, who secure major research projects, are provided an incentive. Faculty is encouraged to participate in or organize seminars / conferences/ workshops in India and abroad. Qualified faculty in the affiliated colleges are encouraged to guide the candidates pursuing Ph.D. and M.Phil. Programmes. University Research Board has been constituted to periodically monitor the quality of research work carried out by the research scholars and encourage them to undertake research in potential areas. University has embarked on a proactive strategy of forging collaboration with the industries and research organizations all over the world, keeping in view the challenges of globalization demands of the society. University is bringing out research journals in areas of specialization encompassing major disciplines.

## **iii) Extension Activities**

University has organized seminars/conferences/workshops to elicit the views of various sections of the society in the form of University-Community interaction, University – Industry Partnership and University-Farming Community meet. Students have been actively involved in the community development programmes in the villages adopted by the University. Among various programmes undertaken by the University include health awareness, child labour I seminar eradication, family planning drive, environmental protection and literacy campaign. A Viral Diagnostic Centre was established in the University (Department of Virology) to diagnose plant, animal and human viral diseases. All the students are actively involved in the “Clean and Tidy Programme” in the campus on fourth Saturday of every month. Under the “Open House” concept and Exhibition, University has showcased the activities and potentialities of the University in various fronts for developing awareness among the public and creating interest among students in pursuing higher education. University Law Department offers counselling to the public on legal issues; Psychology department on Psychiatric problems and Home Science on health and Nutrition.

## **Conclusion**

Finally, it should be remarked that quality assurance is essential for improving institutional efficiency and effectiveness, and also increasing public accountability. Internal Quality Assurance Cell's providing a benchmarking performance in the higher education

institutions, where high priority will be given to quality education for the youngsters. To meet the challenges of implementing quality assurance systems, institutions must therefore be ready and willing to adapt, change, and innovate. Quality assurance activities must be clear and transparent and, more importantly, they must be achievable and able to meet customer expectations. When quality assurance systems and procedures are clear and activities well defined, it is only then, that higher education institutions (HEI's) will be able to meet high quality standards.

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