



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL - NAAC IS IT IMPROVING THE STANDARD OF EDUCATION?

KEY WORDS:

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INTRODUCTION:-

Currently the NAC (certification) is being enforced on all the universities and colleges and they being threatened that if they do not comply their registration will get cancelled and be forced to closedown their operations. This researcher has his own doubts about the results of NAC accreditation. For that purpose, he started doing his investigations about the NAC procedures and finding if there are any gaps with the interest of suggesting ways to fill up the gaps and make it full-proof. Let us first look at the WHY and HOW NAC was started and its procedure.

India has one of the largest and diverse education systems in the world. Privatization, widespread expansion, increased autonomy, and introduction of Programmes in new and emerging areas have improved access to higher education. At the same time, it has also led to widespread concern on the quality and relevance of the higher education. To address these concerns, the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1986) and the Programme of Action (PoA, 1992) spelt out strategic plans for the policies, advocated the establishment of an independent National accreditation agency. Consequently, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established in 1994 as an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC) with its Head Quarter in Bengaluru. The mandate of NAAC as reflected in its vision statement is in making quality assurance an integral part of the functioning of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The NAAC functions through its General Council (GC) and Executive Committee (EC) comprising educational administrators, policy makers and senior academicians from a cross-section of Indian higher education system. The Chairperson of the UGC is the President of the GC of the NAAC, the Chairperson of the EC is an eminent academician nominated by the President of GC (NAAC). The Director is the academic and administrative head of NAAC and is the member-secretary of both the GC and the EC. In addition to the statutory bodies that steer its policies and core staff to support its activities NAAC is advised by the advisory and consultative committees constituted from time to time.

| | First Cycle | Second Cycle | Third Cycle | Fourth Cycle | Fifth Cycle | Number of Accreditations |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------------------|
| Universities | 441 | 250 | 122 | 40 | --- | 853 |
| Colleges | 9413 | 4330 | 1794 | 350 | 3 | 15890 |
| Total | 9854 | 4580 | 1916 | 390 | 3 | 16743 |

Assessment and Accreditation

Education plays a vital role in the development of any nation. Therefore, there is a premium on both quantity (increased access) and quality (relevance and excellence of academic programmes offered) of higher education. The NAAC has been set up to facilitate the volunteering institutions to assess their performance vis-a-vis set parameters through introspection and a process that provides space for participation of the institution.

Benefits of Accreditation

- Institution to know its strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities through an informed review process

- Identification of internal areas of planning and resource allocation
- Collegiality on the campus
- Funding agencies look for objective data for performance funding
- Institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy
- New sense of direction and identity for institutions
- The society look for reliable information on quality education offered
- Employers look for reliable information on the quality of education offered to the prospective recruits
- Intra and inter-institutional interactions

Eligibility Criteria

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), with a record of at least two batches of students graduated, or been in existence for six years, whichever is earlier, are eligible to apply for the process of Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) of NAAC, and fulfil the other conditions or are covered by the other provisions, if any, mentioned below

1. Universities (Central / State / Private / Deemed-to-be) and Institutions of National Importance

- Provided the Institutions /Deemed-to-be Universities and their off-campuses if any are approved by MHRD/UGC. NAAC will not consider the unapproved off-campuses for A&A.
- Provided that these institutions have regular students enrolled in to the full-time teaching and Research programmes offered on campus.
- Provided further that the duly established campuses within the country, if any, shall be treated as part of the Universities / Institutions of National Importance for the A&A process.
- NAAC will not undertake the accreditation of off-shore campuses

2. Autonomous colleges /Constituent Colleges / Affiliated Colleges (affiliated to universities recognised by UGC as an affiliating University)

- Provided the Colleges are affiliated to a university recognised by UGC for the purposes of affiliation. Constituent colleges of a Private and Deemed- to be Universities are considered as the constituent units of the University and thus will not be considered for A&A independently. Such constituent colleges need to come along with the University
- Provided the colleges / institutions not affiliated to a university are offering programmes recognized by Statutory Professional Regulatory Councils and have been recognised by Association of Indian Universities (AIU) or other such Government agencies concerned, as equivalent to a degree programme of a university

3. Accredited HEIs applying for Reassessment or Subsequent Cycles (Cycle 2, Cycle 3, Cycle 4) of Accreditation

- Institutions, which would like to make an improvement in the accredited status, may apply for Re-assessment, after a minimum of one year and before three years of accreditation subject to the fulfilment of other conditions

specified by NAAC from time to time for the purpose.

- Institutions opting for Subsequent Cycles (Cycle 2, Cycle 3, Cycle 4) of Accreditation can submit the Institutional Information for Quality Assessment (IIQA), during the last 6 months of validity period subject to the fulfilment of other conditions specified by NAAC from time to time for the purpose

4. Any other HEIs at the discretion of NAAC How to get NAAC accreditation?

There is an EIGHT step process for getting NAAC accreditation. These steps are as follows

1. Registration on the official NAAC website– To proceed for registration with NAAC, the very first step is to create a profile for your institute, here is how to start
2. What is AQAR (Annual Quality Assurance Report)? What is its role in NAAC accreditation?
3. IIQA (Institutional Information of Quality Assessment) in the NAAC accreditation process
 - For Colleges:
 - For Universities:
4. SSR (Self Study Report) submission as part of NAAC
5. DVV (Data Validation & Verification) and pre-qualifier score
6. The SSS (Student Satisfaction Survey)
7. Onsite visit by NAAC
8. NAAC announcement of Institutional Grading
9. Comments

Getting NAAC accreditation is not an easy task as it involves a lot of challenges. In this blog, we will discuss the challenges of NAAC accreditation and its solutions

Challenges of NAAC Accreditation:

1. Documentation:

One of the biggest challenges in getting NAAC accreditation is documentation. NAAC requires a vast amount of documentation, including institutional data, self-assessment reports, academic and administrative audit reports, and student feedback. Preparing these documents can be time-consuming and requires a lot of effort.

2. Quality of Teaching and Learning:

NAAC assesses the quality of teaching and learning in the institution, which is a significant challenge. The institution needs to ensure that the faculty members are well-qualified, experienced, and skilled in their subject areas. The teaching methods should be innovative, and the curriculum should be up-to-date.

3. Infrastructure:

NAAC accreditation also requires institutions to have adequate infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and sports facilities. The infrastructure should be of high quality and should meet the standards set by NAAC.

4. Financial Resources:

The institutions need to have sufficient financial resources to support their academic and research activities. NAAC assesses the financial resources of the institution and its ability to generate revenue.

Objectives:

- a) Can these conditions be manipulated by Institutes?
- b) How the manipulations can be stopped?
- c) How can this procedure guarantee quality of teaching and learning?

Facts:

First challenge documentation:

If we look in to the need for documentation it is time consuming if you are preparing it yourselves, but when the quality of your institution is to be decided on these reports one can always hire a consultant and ask him to prepare it or

just borrow other institute's documents and make necessary changes making it easy.

One can always make the reports first and make changes in the institute later to ensure you are not caught (the procedure used in ISO, documentation first and changes later). As the committee that comes to inspect can always be managed (as done for University LIC and AICTE). This will ensure that ON PAPER your institute is the best but reality can be different.

Second challenge -Quality of Teaching and Learning:

Quality of teaching and learning is a fact that cannot be objectively assessed easily. The objective method has following factors

1. Qualifications and experience of the faculty members:

- i) It has been proved that even a university topper is unable to teach and make students attentive and ready to learn. So how do we decide the quality of teaching based on qualifications of a teacher?
- ii) The aspect of qualifications of the teacher is the work experience and approval by university. Getting university approval for the teacher is the easiest thing by managing the LIC. The work experience can be cumulative FOUR/FIVE years with TEN organizations where the person has not retained his/her job for more than six months because of inefficiency, but does not get reflected in bio-data and not questioned by LIC also.
- iii) Long-term work experience in any organization with regular promotions leading to higher level, does not get any HIGHER rating in the education field (I was not approved for post of director as I did not have 13 years approved teaching experience though I had 25 years Industry experience in world-class organizations starting as sales officer ending as Marketing head of an organization).
- iv) Teacher's additional certificate courses is also one of the factors, but there are many organizations that are giving ON-LINE courses to make money. The only assessment is the attendance? (you are on-line but may not attend). If your attendance is more than 80% you get the certificate.
- v) The only method of teacher's qualification is the number of research papers published in International/referred journals and paper presentations in international conferences. Few years ago, I had done study at IMM Ahmadabad and Bengaluru where I had found that the teachers were required to work hard to retain their position by getting at least 3 points out of 5 from students and must publish at least one paper in international journal and two in Indian referred journals (they were being paid hefty amount towards their research expenses annually).
- vi) Another aspect of teacher's experience is the consultations they are doing to Industry.
- vii) Teachers attending faculty development programs (FDP) should have passing standards and not attendance certificate.

2. Teaching and learning quality:

This is done through following aspects, but they are not the reality, we need to have better factors that will get better methods.

I. By students rating the quality of teaching on the rating scales. It has been observed that more and more students are not interested in learning but are only interested in getting a FIRST-CLASS degree and support in securing job. So, any teacher that allows the students to keep playing PUBG and LUDO on mobile is best teacher and gets high rating.

In Kaun Banega Crorepati (KBC)- a popular program on Sony where Amitabh Bachchan is anchor, an Engineering student said he has completed his BE but has more than 20 backlogs with eight years to clear them and was very happy about it and

could win Rs. 12,50,000/- .What does this suggest?

ii. The other aspect is any teacher telling them jokes is also a good teacher.

iii. The teacher putting on a ppt or AV (audio-visual) without any explanations and questions is also treated as a good teacher.

iv. Learning quality is judged by the passing percentage of the students or failing percentage if it is below 10%. More and more institutes are going in for easy question papers and low passing marks (mostly 40%) and adding internal marks leading to every student getting FIRST CLASS. One should question as to why is no one is failing and OR getting second class?

v. Learning is also dependant on the quality of students, as we say for DATA, “Garbage in Garbage out” not all the institutes are getting best of the students (IIMs) so how can anyone expect best of the learning and passing percentages? These questions are not coming to the committee awarding NACC ratings like AA, BB+ etc.

3. Third Challenge-Infrastructure:

This is not really a challenge as AICTE requirements are as it is ensuring best infrastructure (if the LIC has not been managed). The only problem is Urban areas where they cannot provide adequate(?) sporting/recreational infrastructure. But many institutes circumvent this issue by providing contract with nearby sports complex for use of the facility whenever required.

The major problem is for rural institutes if they have not provided proper educational, hostel facilities and sporting and recreational facilities. But it should be treated as negligence by the institute and challenge, when you select rural area, it is because availability of land at much cheaper price than urban area and one should be penalised for not providing such infrastructure.

4. Fourth challenge- Financial Resources:

This is also not treated as challenge as this can be managed easily if the other factors are taken care of. Finance will be available may be at little at higher rate.

We saw that many conditions can easily manipulated, this researcher will not be surprised if the inspecting committee is found to be giving out methods of manipulations for considerations (University LIC members do it for considerations).

What can be solutions for this?

To this researcher the meanings of the grades be explained properly to all and sundry. E.g., when we call a hotel THREE STAR, we know that they have following facilities like, A/c and non-A/c attached bath rooms with house phone and television and good dining restaurant, small conference facility.

When we say hotel FOUR STAR it has following additional facilities like, refrigerator in the room, Gym., swimming pool and a multi-cuisine restaurant, large conference facility and travel desk.

When we say hotel is FIVE STAR it is having following additional facilities like 24-hour coffee-shop, pick-up and drop facilities.

Let people know what is NACC grades denote and why all the institutes are not getting AA grades? Students may choose a C grade institute on the bases and may be ready to accept certain deficiencies. Why everyone should be looking for A grade?

The researcher agrees that there should be official ranking system but let us understand that Bajaj, Symbiosis, IIMs, have

not been ranked by government machinery but still have world class reputations. Reputations are based on alumni associations and what alumni are doing. These rankings keep going up and down with changes of results and faculty. In many institutes the moment a faculty leaves the student join the institute he /she joins (my brother doing BE Mech. In Walchand college Sangli got himself transferred to GCOE Karad for better faculties)

CONCLUSIONS

1. Can the conditions be manipulated- the answer is YES, with our social character and ZERO conviction/action against the culprits' people will help manipulations and make money
2. Can manipulations be stopped- The answer is NO in current conditions. Let the institutes be given free hand to tell what makes them best and judge their claims based on facts and not measure them against your footrule.
3. Measuring quality of teaching learning is not possible objectively and must be done subjectively on the public opinions and their intakes (high CAT score students applying)

REFERENCES

1. <http://naac.gov.in/index.php/en/>
2. <https://www.learnqoch.com/naac-accreditation-challenges-solutions/>