

A Multidimensional and Holistic administrative functioning of IQAC and NAAC teams in HEI: A Cohesive Alignment

Prof. (Dr.) Umesh Kumar

Director

J.P School of Business, Meerut (U.P).

Abstract

Purpose- *The purpose of the paper is to analyze the administration of IQAC & NAAC teams in a specific HEI and examine their functioning in a multidimensional and holistic environment so as to bring about the efficient cohesive alignment between the two to achieve best accreditation grades.*

Design/Methodology/Approach- *The paper employs exploratory research design with qualitative approach analyzing the secondary data obtained from the coordinator of IQAC and NAAC steering committee of specific HEI.*

Findings- *The findings exhibits the 360 degree quality oriented administration and functioning of IQAC considering all parameters. Throughout the process the IQAC team is in tuned with NAAC team members to serve the quality gaps immediately as recognized and required.*

Practical Implication- *The findings of the study are critically significant for all the HEI's of the concerned location for formation and strengthen their IQAC teams. The ideology here is that- not just the presence of such teams or just preparing the Agenda/Minutes are mandatory but the necessity is for radical transformation to achieve the NAAC objectives in a more realistic manner.*

Originality/Value- *This paper adds value to the existing policies, procedures, administration, functioning and formulation of IQAC and NAAC teams of concerned HEI's aspiring for the best grades.*

Keywords- *Cohesive, Holistic, IQAC, Multidimensional, NAAC, Quality assurance, Transformation*

JEL Classification- *I23 and I21*

Paper Type – *A case study based 'Research Article'.*

Introduction

The Higher education sector ensures quality of the educational process with the help of Accreditation agencies established for the purpose. The main agency which accredits universities and colleges in general education is the National Assessment and accreditation Council (NAAC) established by UGC in 1994 with headquarters at Bangalore. An effective system of quality assurance should -

Make a difference to students – both through the value that has been added and the measurement of the outcomes.

Be owned by the institutions and accepted as valid by them.

Be relevant to the purposes of higher education.

Promote diversity;

Be a cyclical process rather than a series of sporadic snapshots;

Address the question of standards;

Be conducted by national and international peers;

Be conducted at a subject or programme level;

Contain international comparative measures; and

Be reported in terms that are easily understood by a lay audience.

Therefore to achieve the above stated parameters, there must be the formation of IQAC (Internal Quality Assurance Cell) in the HEI to function at every micro aspect and ensure the quality assurance. This IQAC must have the cohesive alignment with NAAC steering committee to have more and more realistic, broad, systematic and multidimensional administrative functioning in all spheres for the achievement of holistic outcomes.

Literature Review

All the studies conducted till dates have taken individual view for NAAC and IQAC. However this paper is derived as a case study transformed into an experienced and practical based research article highlighting the major functioning dimensions of IQAC and NAAC steering teams of a concerned HEI so as to ease out the process of accreditation for the first cycle.

Rationale and Need of the Present Study

As a proliferation of Higher Education Institutions in India, the quality is the enormous challenge for every single student as to progress for attaining higher educational qualifications. Globalized competencies are required in terms of in-depth insights and wide pool of understanding so as to advance the students to new frontiers of practical and applicable knowledge in diverse verticals with differential domains. Being the advent of cut throat competition and to implement the dimensions of NEP-2020, the time is not for introspection rather for critical review, ascertaining deviations, taking corrective actions and benchmarking themselves. This study is a need of an hour as a yardstick to gauge the preparedness and transitional level of these HEI's by highlighting the functioning of IQAC and NAAC steering teams.

Objectives of the Study

To identify the various functional approaches, goals and domains of IQAC and NAAC teams of an HEI.

To portray the comprehensive agenda for the quality teams of concerned HEI to be carried out throughout the process.

To assess the molecular preparedness of a concerned HEI for the achievement of NAAC grades through efficient working of IQAC.

To ensure the concrete level of planning and administration of HEI through IQAC pertaining to all related aspects and domains of NAAC criterions.

To formulate the cohesive alignment between IQAC and NAAC steering teams of concerned HEI.

Research Methodology

Research Methodology applied in this research paper is quite simple and easy to understand and can be depicted as follows:

Research Design is Exploratory being the author has explored his/her vast pool of expertise, wisdom and knowledge in the same article.

Research Approach is Qualitative in nature as the key aspects related to the functioning of IQAC teams has been outlined.

Data Collection is all “Secondary” which after necessary editing and sorting has been framed in thirty one (31) in the findings part.

Sampling frame is one of the recognized HEI located in Meerut city based in Uttar Pradesh. Sampling Method is “Convenience Sampling Method” observing the easy availability of required data based on author’s experience itself.

5.6 Time frame of the study is based on the functioning of eighteen months (18) of IQAC and NAAC steering teams of HEI covering the COVID-19 duration majorly. August 2019 to December 2020 is the period concerned.

5.7 Experience based data has been edited by listing all the functional procedures and policies primarily related to the concerned HEI. In the second stage, the data has been refined and grouped under the various heads and subheads. In the third and final stage, the required data is presented in a sophisticated manner so as to fulfill the outcomes of the research article.
Data Analysis and Findings

Data thus obtained has been subjected to be framed under the following thirty one (31) heads so as to demonstrate its realistic sense in achieving the outcome of the research.

6.1 MOU’s: Signing ‘Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)’ with other universities and institutions aims for 360 degree academic excellence. Through these tie-ups, various students exchange programs as well as the faculty exchange programs will be arranged in order to enhance the knowledge in all academic spheres. More and more national & international tie-ups (MOU’s) to be built up, to strengthen the knowledge pool of the HEI. It also includes the MOU’s signed for membership of various societies, organizations and associates. IQAC and NAAC teams are supposed to obtain the progress reports of the same on the consistent basis.

6.2 In trodution of new courses: HEI has to undergo a research to analyze the requirement of the new courses and programs under the umbrella of various schools/departments of HEI. All stakeholders are expected - to whom schools/departments any new courses have been added, to prepare the complete details, course curriculum (Syllabus), Current progression on the same for session 20-21.

6.3 Online Teaching Methodology: Online Teaching Methodology is essential and integral part of all educational institutions all over the globe in the current pandemic situation. Schools are advised to appraise the said process as per the requirements of their schools/department/courses and suggest measures for its excellence in terms of transparency, attendance increment, monitoring, lecture delivery etc.

HEI is advised to prepare the complete checklist for the exact delivery/monitoring of online classes and complete SOP for the same has to be prepared.

6.4 Library Facilities: Library facilities must comprise of inclusion of latest books (reference & text), journals and other study material for the students as well as for the faculty members. Access to the online journals must be available to the students & faculty members. HEI's are expected to provide the latest book requirements to the library for their courses. HEI must has a central library with mini libraries at all schools as well. Facilities of E-books, E-library, E-journals and access to online resources like J-Gate, NDL, and DELNET & AIR Combo pack (especially for Law) is available.

6.5 Quality Audit Schedule: The objective of the Quality Audit is to determine whether the institution, since its last audit has acted in compliance with the provisions of IQAC. HEI's are hereby suggested to implement 'Internal Quality Audit Schedule' in their respective schools/department for the same. The tree tier audit system must be in place as follows:

Pre-Semester Audit

Mid-Semester Audit

End-Semester Audit

6.6 Admission Process: Admissions - the bread and butter of any institution must be aligned with Standard Operating Procedures as laid down by the Admission Committee detailing the parameters of eligibility, intake, fees, selection process, PI details, Admission policy for international students etc. HEI's must be in the process of admissions through online, offline and mixed mode complying with all COVID-19 essentials. IQAC and NAAC teams are supposed to track the details of this aspect on continuous basis.

6.7 Alumni Connect Program: All HEI's are advised to conduct "Alumni Connect Programs in a substantial number but in fair quality so as to reach the Alumni of the HEI and let them share their views, opinions and expertise so that the current students will be benefited in multiple domains. Even the students will be motivated enough and will get opportunities for placement in diverse fields. Alumni associations, clubs and updated database must be available at all times.

6.8 Parents – Teacher Interaction: All HEI's are advised to conduct the regular 'Parents-Teachers' interaction program in their schools and keep a proper record of it so as to outreach

the final decision makers and make the parents aware of actual performance of their wards in multiple aspects. Parents must also be timely aware regarding the academic activities of the universities and the concrete involvement of their ward in the same like online class attendance. Parents of the students have been regularly in contact through the following modes as:

Messages(SMS) & Email

Whatsapp

Letters on regular intervals.

Regular Zoom meeting with parents

6.9 Employer – Student Feedback: Proper record, through a standard feedback planner must be ensured by every school/department regarding employer’s viewpoint for our students. In this way we will be able to bridge the gap regarding the latest industry requirements and enrich the student’s personality more competitively for future. A comprehensive feedback mechanism must be adopted through the feedback from which contains various parameters to judge the professional abilities of the students.

6.10 USR/Extension and outreach Activities: University Social responsibility activities specifically aimed at delivering the social message all-around so as to integrate the essential stake holders of the society with academic domain. HEI’s are required to design more innovative USR activities for their departments by involving every student, being the part of their course curriculum.

6.11 GRC - COVID-19 counseling of Faculties: The role of Governance, Risks and Compliance (GRC) in the COVID – 19 times must be ensured by all Schools/Departments as a means of counseling of all faculties associated with that school/department. Seeing the pandemic situation rising on a daily basis as per the national statistics regular counseling, monitoring and health check up of all faculty members are highly essential. All faculties, along with parents and students have been personally counseled for following all essentials and safety measures for COVID-19. IQAC and NAAC teams must ensure the same and obtain data on a regular basis.

6.12 Proctorial Board: The proctorial board at the school/department level must ensure the discipline among the students, Students Grievance Readressal, all rules/regulations are understood & followed, prevention of students in indulging any political/unmoral/ragging activities, to build up the good character of the students etc. All HEI’s must have proper record at micro level for their respective schools/departments in order to channelize the proctorial board activities more smoothly.

6.13 Purchase Committee: Purchase Committee must be a part of centralized purchase system for entire HEI and there is a placement of building infrastructure/Maintenance In-charge in every school/department so as to monitor the same and forward their purchase requirement to central committee on regular basis. Purchase committee working protocol must be regularly reframed by administrative head for the same. All purchase requirements on regular basis like New Course requirements, Inspection and other maintenance requirements are fulfilled through concerned authority and further indenting for the same to warehouse through proper channel.

6.14 Research – Plagiarism Report: Research plagiarism report is highly essential for all the research work conducted in all schools. HEI central library must be equipped with the latest

software for the same. Therefore all the departments of HEI must ensure the proper research plagiarism report procedure for all the research work carried out in their concerned schools/ departments.

6.15 Measures to minimize Covid-19 spread: Proper measures/actions must be taken by all schools/departments regarding to minimize the COVID-19 spread, at their level as well either physical measures or measure to create awareness for the same. HEI must keep a proper record of the same and continue their actions in future as well. Proper and regular sanitization must be carried on with complete social distancing, mask distributions with personal counseling.

6.16 National Education Policy Awareness: Moreover, all schools of HEI is conducting the webinars on New Education Policy 2020 through eminent speakers and creating sound awareness regarding the same. Even then the schools that have not planned yet must be requested to conduct the same so as to make NEP-2020 as a robust success in near future.

6.17 Planning of Activities & Formation of Clubs: All departments are expected to plan and execute various academic activities (Extracurricular & Co curricular/Webinar/Workshops/FDP/SDP/Seminars/Industrial Visits etc) in more innovative and creative manner with adding a certain extra value even to the repeated activities like debate, extempore, poster making. Schools must maintain and report the proper data of all activities in a chronological manner. Similarly the formation of various clubs like cultural, literary, research, extension, recreational, academic etc must be formed and function properly.

6.18 Consultancy Revenue: All schools of HEI must ensure to generate consultancy revenue in their concerned fields through various revenue generating streams as per their specific fields and keep the proper and update record of the same. This demonstrates the practical utility and implementation of practical aspects of the concerned school/department.

6.19 Start up and Patents: Entrepreneurship development and skill enhancement in the concerned fields of study must be embedded in every school/department so as to bring out new start-ups and ventures. New inventions must be patented to have more conformity and transparency on the same.

Some of the achievements in this regard are as follows:

Constitution of IPR Cell.

Any start ups by Home Science – Pickles, Snacks, Bakery items etc.

Obtaining particular ‘Trade Mark’ – Immunoherbs (for pharmacy products and processed food products).

Obtaining particular ‘Trade Mark’ - Immunoherbs (for pharmacy products and process.

Patent granting and publishing by the stake holders.

Constitution of IIC (Institution Innovation Council) is highly mandatory.

6.20 Research & Development: No educational institutions will survive without consistent R & D activities; therefore it is mandatory for all schools to have aligned research activities in their labs/departments. The academic fraternity of HEI including students must continuously strive to write and publish goods research papers and publish them in journals of repute. The PhD cell of the university must be completely modified with new research work course module and new research initiatives as per the UGC Guidelines.

6.21 Finance and Accounts: Finance and Accounts department serves a backbone for any HEI. However main concern here is the timely collection of fees, recovery of pending dues, disbursement of salaries, vendors payments, preparation of reports, reconciliation of accounts etc.

6.22 Human Resource Data: Proper recruitment, selection and deployment as per the relevant qualifications must be well planned and especially the personal files of every employee must be completed with all relevant documents. Comprehensive records in all HR related aspects must be completed beforehand. All critical positions of the HEI's must be duly filled pertaining to all parameters.

6.23 Sports/NCC Facilities and Initiatives: Sports are highly essential and integral part of any academic institutions. Similarly there must be separate unit for NCC related activities in an Institution. Calendar of sports activities must be planned in advance and events must be organized accordingly. Proper record with necessary evidences must be organized for the same.

6.24 Examination Cell: Controller of Examination - COE office is highly responsible and critical domain for IQAC and NAAC consideration in terms of organization of all examinations (mid semester, semester, yearly) which should be highly transparent and reliable. Setting up of question papers, assembling them, reviewing and moderation must be well planned. Policies related to the overall assessment must be highly fair in terms of conduction of examination. All records, reports and minutes must be duly organized by COE office as NAAC and IQAC coordinators can any time require the same.

6.25 CRIC Activities: Corporate Resource and Interface cell is a vertical which covers the Placement Activities, Development of interface with the corporate world, shaping the students as per the industry requirement in terms of 'Aptitude, Attitude and Personality Development'. This vertical serves as a nerve in leveraging the key indicators of NAAC criterion.

6.26 Revision in Course Curriculum: Any revision in the course curriculum in terms of addition, deletion, modification in any course must be decided in advance, preceding to the start of academic term. All changes must be duly approved in the concerned Board of Studies meeting and record must be maintained in a proper manner to be presented to IQAC and NAAC team anytime.

6.27 Academic Council Integration: Academic Council is one of the most significant bodies to undergo the key decisions related to all key parameters related to academics of any HEI. Some of the parameters are like International Students, Fee Structure and Deposition policy, Ordinance and Syllabus of all Programs especially the Doctorate, Examination System, Scholarship, Examination Committee, Academic Plan & Calendar, Result Declaration etc.

6.28 Hostel/Transport Facilities: Hostel facilities in terms of proper maintenance, cleanliness, safety and security, health concerns, proper food plan, quality check and inspection, maintenance of attendance, incoming and outgoing registers etc must be duly taken care off. Similarly transport facilities must be equipped with proper GPS and with latest equipments. IQAC team must have the routine audit of the same.

6.29 Infrastructural Requirements, Maintenance & Sanitation: Premises of an HEI must be well equipped with required infrastructure in terms of power back up, water treatment and harvesting plants, solar panels, plantations, fire safety, earth quake resistant, pollution free environments, proper labs and equipments, cafeteria, gardens and lawns, playground, classrooms, conference

rooms, faculty rooms, common rooms, seminar halls, reception area, toilets, branding of walls building maintenance on consistent basis must be done and after all in COVID-19 times proper sanitation and hygiene measures must be ensured in every spheres. Maintenance registers must be prepared by all building in charges and the department concerned.

6.30 Systems &IT Integration: Systems and IT is one of the indispensable aspect of any HEI leading to internet connectivity, implementation of ERP, original software's, hardware requirements, implementation of online class application etc. IQAC and NAAC teams must have a routine check on all these parameters.

6.31 Scholarships, Rebates, Consultancy, Discount Data, Annual Increments etc:All the data related to scholarship (internal and external), any fee rebates or discounts of any types, annual increment data off all employees must be recorded and maintained properly as IQAC and NAAC teams must conduct audit of the same any time.

Suggestions and Recommendations

Some of the suggestions related to IQAC and NAAC teams for functioning more coherently in such a competitive, multidimensional and holistic environment are as follows:

In HEI's Admission, Academics and Administration must be separate verticals all over and the NAAC objectives must be embedded from the very first day of HEI's inception.

Attainment of academic goals of an institution must not be hampered by any means taking all the factors and variables in consideration.

All the curricular, extracurricular and co curricular activities are planned in such a manner that they must be completely aligned with some learning objectives and outcomes. Repetitive and routine activities must be avoided.

Adequate digital infrastructure/resources must be available if ICT enabled leanings have been promoted in HEI's being a need of an hour. Availability of latest software's, packages and applications is highly necessary.

HEI's especially the self financed one's are fully transparent in their recruitment policies which must be governed by uniform norms related to qualification mix, salaries, promotion and advancement policies etc.

Especially in COVID times it is mandatory to provide adequate support and facilities for their professional, academic and intellectual development.

HEI's must develop the culture of innovativeness in each and every aspect by infusing the creative mindset in all stakeholders of their HEI's. Even a single act can be performed differently by the innovative thought process.

Multidimensional and Holistic development of the students is highly necessary. IQAC and NAAC teams will continuously strive to have frequent meetings for gaps assessment and fulfilling the same.

Management of the institution must motivate the core IQAC and NAAC teams for their performance by reviewing them time to time.

All the HEI's from the very first day of their inception and function must be determined to practice as per the requirement of NAAC requirements.

Conclusion

Quality consciousness in HEI's all across has initiated the narrowing down the gaps between the formation and the functioning of IQAC and NAAC teams. The IQAC must be overall responsible for all the molecular in depth analysis of each and every quality parameter considering the NAAC objectives. The role of IQAC can be easily extended just by stimulating, reorganizing and streamlining overall all stakeholders' efforts in more innovative and achievable approach. IQAC team will be having more multidimensional functioning attitude with holistic empowerment. It must be kept in mind as well that the last minute preparation will be avoided if IQAC teams will tie their seatbelts just from the start itself to achieve sustainable long term accreditation objectives for an HEI.

Limitations of the Study

The present study is accompanied with many limitations. However one of major one is that particular research article is just confined to single HEI of the concerned area. Even data obtained have the possibility of manipulation and window dressing as well being data has been collected on the basis of inputs received from the concerned person and the framework for the article has been framed out.

Scope for Future Research

Being NEP-2020 to be implemented and HEI's institutions to be governed with new mandates of self regulations which need to strengthen their accountability and procedural aspects therefore the scope of further research in this domain is unlimited. The research could be conducted more minutely in each domain and quality consciousness pertaining to HEI's with the help of primary data. The positivity factors related to IQAC and NAAC process can be highlighted so that even the dormant HEI's of all-around will come up for the obtaining quality assessment grades and ranks.

References

1. Gupta, A.K., Goyal, R. & Panjla, A.K (2016). IQAC as a tool for improving Quality Education in Higher Educational Institutes (HEI). *International Journal of Latest Trends in Engineering & Technology*. 7(2).
2. NAAC manual retrieved from www.naac.gov.in on 02/06/2021.
3. Sawant, D.G(2016). Role of IQAC in maintaining quality standards in teaching, learning and evaluation. *Pacific Science Review B: Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2(3).
4. Singh, T.R (2018). Role of NAAC in Enhancing Quality on Higher Education in India: Issues & Challenges. *International Journal of Science & Research*.7 (11) 1483-87.