Quality Aspects of Quantitative Metrics in the Assessment and Accreditation Process

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I.   INTRODUCTION

The Higher education contributes significantly to the overall development of the nation. The quality of the institution, social image and its relevance are some of the important criteria where the higher education institutors are measured for their performance. Good performance of the institutions helps them to attract more research projects, good students, parental support and better social image. If an institution takes up more and more projects, more would be the flow of resource like human resource as well as infrastructure.

NAAC is always in the forefront of undertaking various reforms in accreditation process today's competitive world demand good quality of education, it means good academic environment, knowledgeable teachers , good teaching learning process, research activities, ambient class rooms and infrastructure like good library resources and better campus life.

NAAC Objective:
- Assess and Accredit institutions of higher learning
- Generate awareness of quality in higher education
- Stimulate the academic environment and quality of teaching and research in accredited institutions
- Encourage innovations, self-evaluation and accountability in higher education
- Help institutions to achieves self-actualization on institutional strengths and weaknesses
- Focus on improvement of quality
- Promote necessary changes, innovations and reforms in all aspects of the institution for excellence
- Share information on successful quality strategies.

NAAC Role and Function:
Development and application of quality benchmarks/parameters for various academic and administrative activities of the institution evolving appropriate instruments for Assessment and Accreditation, fine-tuning of Assessment and Accreditation instrument whenever necessary**.** Providing guidance to institutions for preparing their Self-study Reports (SSRs)**,** coordinating the 'on-site' visit to its HEIs for effective completion and develop pre-and post-accreditation strategie**s** to identifying, enlisting and creating a pool of efficient assessors providing appropriate training to assessors. Spreading the NAAC processes and quality enhancement mechanisms through relevant publications and Organizes Seminar/Workshops/Conferences to share and discuss issues related to quality in higher education. Promoting the establishment of Quality Assurance units, Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) (at institutional level)**,** State Quality Assurance Cell (SQAC))at the State level) establish collaborations with other National and International professional agencies involved in Assessment and Accreditation.

Benefits of Accreditation:
- Funding agencies look for objective data for performance funding. Enables funding agencies to look for objective data for performance funding
- Institutions to initiate innovative and modern methods of pedagogy
- Enabled new sense of direction and identity for institutions
- Enabling the society to look for reliable information on the quality of institutions for making informed choices
- Employers look for reliable information on the quality of education offered to the prospective recruits
- Promotion of intra and inter-institutional interactions

Initiative of NAAC:
Promoting holistic academic development of institutions during the Assessment and Accreditation process NAAC is enabling rather than punitive or judgmental, so that all constituencies of institutions of higher learning are empowered to maximize their resources, opportunities and capabilities. Following initiatives of National Assessment and Accreditation Council are given below-

i. **Covering Large Scale Assessment and Accreditation (A&A) of HEIs through end to end ICT Solution:** NAAC has decided to complete the pending as well as ensuring process of A&A of institutions.

ii. **Collegium of Assessors:** Increasing the Collegium of Assessors and organizing training programmes/special sessions for new assessors.

iii. **Videography of Onsite Visit:** As a policy measure, the NAAC has decided to video graph the entire Peer Team Visit.

iv. **Online Assessors Database:** As on date, there are approximately 6000 NAAC Assessors' Portal for peer team selection.

v. **MHRD Dashboard:** The dashboard is a dynamic dashboard and represents the contemporaneous status of higher education institutions in different stages of A&A process.

vi. **NAAC Video Tutorials:** NAAC through its website chose to train the stakeholders through step by step methods through Video Tutorials; available both in English and Hindi to guide the Institutions in Assessment and Accreditation Process.

vii. **In-house Development of Issue Management Software:** Institutions are now enable to use the system to raise their doubts, concerns, and apprehensions through portal at any point of time during the A&A process.

viii. **Centralized Complaints Management Committee (CCMC):** The CCMC is looking at all grievances coming under the purview of the A&A process.

ix. **Establishment of Research and Analysis Wing (RAW):** NAAC has established Research and Analysis Wing to extract the available data that can help in sphere heading policy decisions for the nation.

x. **Establishment of Logistic Division:** NAAC has established exclusive logistic division that takes care of efficient travel needs of NAAC officials and Peer Team Visits. NAAC has a MOU with Balmer Lawrie to have an implant at NAAC for better coordination of logistics activities for Peer Team Visit.

xi. **Collaborations:** In an era where partnerships are extremely important, NAAC collaborates with national and international agencies in order to be relevant and contemporary.

xii. **NAAC at International Fora:** Since its inception, the NAAC has played a pro-active role at the International level. The NAAC was among the founder member of Asia-Pacific Quality Network (APQN) & International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) etc.

xiii. **NAAC Publications:** One of the vibrant activities of the NAAC is its publication activity. NAAC has brought out more than 175 publications of different types such as Manuals, Guidelines for Institutions, and Quality Assurance in Higher Education

Accreditation/Grading outcomes into Policy Planning:

i. Mandatory Accreditation by UGC
ii. For Continuation of Affiliation
iii. UGC is funding IQACs of accredited HEIs to sustain quality culture
iv. UGC, RUSA, DST, DBT, NCTE etc., are using the NAAC Accredited status for further funding
v. Under the scheme of UGC, colleges with potential for excellence and Universities with excellence Open& distance learning accreditation/grading is essential.
vi. Accreditation is desired for Autonomy/ graded autonomy/ Deemed Universitystatus.
vii.

II.   TERMS OF REFERENCE

Cycle: - When an institution undergoes the accreditation process for the first time it is referred to as cycle 1 and the subsequent A & A process are referred as cycle 2, 3, etc.

Validity: - The validity period of NAAC accreditation for third / fourth cycle institutions will be extended from five years to seven years, with a condition that they have obtained highest grade for immediate preceding two cycles continuously, in addition provided the institution again obtains highest grade in the third / fourth cycle also.

Reassessment: - Re-assessment only after one year and before three years from the date of declaration of result

IQAC: - As quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC will become a part of the institution's system & work towards realization of the goals of quality enhancement & sustenance.

Vision and Mission: - To make quality the defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives

Understanding the requirements: Basics guidelines and process of NAAC

Schemes of Application (Class of Institution): NAAC has separate schemes of manuals for different type of institutions like University, Autonomous, Post Graduate and Under Graduate type of institutions, accordingly HEI should fill the application.

Academic Planning on Quantitative Metrics (QnM):

It is important to understanding of metrics definition, data, information of NAAC manual and guidelines. Submission of both Quantitative and Qualitative metrics along with uploading of relevant Supporting documents, data templates, supporting documents

and Links, standard operating procedure (SOP) helpful in SSR submission and DVV clarification. File size of documents should not exceed 5 MB otherwise HEI needs to upload the same on Institutional website and provide the particular link in the response box provide particular URL(s) instead of generic website address without password protection. Google drive links must be avoided. There are no other means of communication between HEI and DVV partner except response box provided against each metric where queries are raised. English translated Version of documents needs to be submitting along with original policy documents. Extract of audited statements certified by Charted Accounted and head of the institution instead of complete audit report for different metrics.

III.   ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF DATA VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION (DVV) IN ACCREDITATION PROCESS

DVV partner verifies input for extended profile questions and Quantitative Metrics based on templates for complete details validating the same with uploaded documents links and also with external web sources like AISHE, NIRF, UGC, Institutional website etc. on portal. DVV partner raises the queries to extended profile questions and / or Quantitative metrics wherever it founds mismatch or discrepancy in the data after initial verification and validation. 15 days time will be given to clarify all the queries; upload relevant documents; provide revised clarification input and submit DVV clarification on portal only. HEI can go through Standard Operating Procedure document for better clarity on what kind of relevant supporting documents to be uploaded for DVV queries; which are considerable; and which are not considerable etc. No extension of time will be given to submit DVV clarification unless for natural calamities, political disturbances and likewise no second level clarification. If the input is more, the document(s) may be provided for a small random selection of data as sought by DVV partner. DVV will take a decision of pro-rata basis.

Highlights of current Assessment &Accreditation Process:-
- Complete automation of A & A process
- Data Driven A & A framework
- Validation of data by external agency
- System Generated scores(SGS) with combination of online evaluation and peer judgment
- Online Student Satisfaction survey
- System selection of Integration of logistics through External Agency.
- Introduction of Pre qualifier
- Total confidentiality till visit date.
- Focus on institutional values, innovations, issues of inclusion and distinctiveness.
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Complete automation of Assessment & Accreditation process: NAAC whole assessment and accreditation process is completely through online process. Institutions apply online registration. Once they successfully completed the registration the next process is preparation of IIQA application; along with all supporting documents like affiliation compliance, SRA, Undertaking, self-declaration, functional website etc… After the submission of IIQA by institutions, Clarification regarding IIQA, then Acceptance or rejection of IIQA happens. After the acceptance of IIQA, there will be 45 days to submit the self-study report (SSR), along with the details of various data required for filling up the online format of the Self - Study Report, viz., Executive Summary, Profile of the Institution, Extended Profile of the Institution, Quality Indicator Framework (QIF), Data Templates / Documents (Quantitative Metrics) and Optional Metrics. Optional metrics are not applicable to Universities. As of now it is applicable for Affiliating UG, PG and Autonomous colleges.

Data Driven Assessment & Accreditation framework: In Self Study Report, Quality indicator framework consists of two type of metrics, Quantitative metrics (QnM) and Qualitative metrics (QlM). Quantitative metrics (QnM) needs data in the form of numbers along with relevant supporting documents on the basis of standard operating procedure (SOP). For Qualitative metrics (QlM) information needs to be provided in the form of description/summary a prescribed word mentioned in each metric with supporting documents and links.-Extended profile contains all the questions related to programs, students, academics and Institutions which are basically the figures of denominators of the formulas used for calculation of various Quantitative Metric values.

Kinds of Quantitative metrics: First kind (last five years); Quantitative metrics which seeks year wise data for last five years. Second kind (Block year) Quantitative metrics which seeks Block year data collectively for the last five years. Third kind (OPTION) Quantitative metrics which seeks the input data based on options Fourth kind:(Data for the latest completed academic year) Quantitative metrics which seeks the input data for latest completed academic year. Fifth kind: Quantitative metrics which automatically calculates the response for the metric using the data provided in extended profile.

Apart from these for metrics related to finance/Budget, the data to be consolidated for financial year (1st April to 31st March). For publication related metrics data to be consolidated for preceding calendar year data (1st January to 31st December) While providing the data and for the other metrics, the academic year to be considered (1st June-31st May).

Process Flow for BIBLIOMETRIC Data Validation: - INFLIBNET is performing the Data Validation of publications, citation and h-index of corresponding to metric ID for Universities and autonomous Colleges on behalf of NAAC. The Bibliometric data and metric values are dependent on the data given by INFLIBNET. The data values provided are used for calculation of the metric as per the formula.

System Generated scores (SGS): - The results of institutions will be declared by taking into consideration of System Generated Scores on all Qualitative Metrics, Score on the Student Satisfaction Survey and Scores given by Peer Team

Online Student Satisfaction survey: - Online Student Satisfaction Survey will be conducted by NAAC with regard indicator of the effectiveness of Teaching Learning Process. The Survey will capture student responses through the list of students provided by the institutions. The students will remain anonymous throughout the process. At least 50% of students' details have to be mandatorily uploaded for submitting the SSR online failing which the SSR will not be submitted online. Stratified random sample of students will be chosen for the survey. On initiation of survey, auto-generated emails will be sent to student email addresses which contains link to be active for attending the survey. Link has to be activated in 7 days failing which the link cannot be activated later, student can attend the survey within date of completion of survey after activating the link, in sample, students would be spread evenly across different classes, year of enrolment and gender as far as possible. Maximum two survey attempts will be made Minimum target response will be 10% of students (of total number of students in IIQA) attended the survey or 100 students attended the survey whichever is less in colleges and in universities 10% of students (of total number of students in IIQA) attended the survey or 500 students attended the survey whichever is less in University. Time period for Initial attempt of Survey is 10 days with 30% of students will receive emails for survey; second attempt will be made if the minimum target response is not achieved within 10 days by sending emails to remaining 70% of students.

Peer Team Visit, System selection of Peer Team Members and Integration of logistics through External - Agency: - NAAC has a large database of experts, who are reputed academicians, senior educational administrators and researchers, these experts undergo an Assessors Orientation Programme prior to being inducted as Peer Team Members. Automated Peer Team Selection will be carried out by the system. Composition, duration and other details of three Member team, are delineated as follows: Chairperson – Vice Chancellor, Member coordinator – Professor of a University, Member – Principal of an accredited College / Professor of a University. They are from different states, different subjects / faculty. Two days visit for Colleges and 5 days for university then finalized dates for visit will be visible on portal

Peer Team Report: - Analysis of various Qualitative aspects, Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Challenges of the Institution and Suggestions for Improving Quality in Academic and Administrative procedures of the Institution.

Requirements on HEI Portal: - Auto-generated email for payment and selection of three slots of dates for PTV, details of nearest Airport / Railway station, distance from the college etc. details of three choices of nearby Hotels, distance from Airport / Railway station, college etc. Payment of second installment of SSR fees and Payment of logistics fee, submit within 10/15 days from date of Pre-Qualification

Introduction of Pre qualifier: - After completion of DVV process, the scores will be generated to all the Quantitative metrics basing on the Benchmarks. As of now, Benchmarks are confidential with NAAC and will not be disclosed to public. If an institution scores at least 25% in overall Quantitative metrics, then the Institution will be declared as Pre- qualified for the Peer Team Visit. Not Pre-qualified institutions may reapply for A & A process after six months from the date of declaration about Pre-qualification.

Total confidentiality till visit date: - Details of Peer Team Members – Only Three working days before visit, No Money transaction by any means between Peer Team Members and College, Logistics arrangements by NAAC. No Hard copies will be sent to College, no communication between Members and College till three days before the visit.

Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in the New Framework:

It is required to cope up with the current changes and upcoming trends. External and internal assessment, internal quality assurance refers to the policies and practices, academic institutions themselves monitor and improve the quality of their education provision and external quality assurance refers to leading institutional policies and practices whereby the quality of higher education institutions and programs are assured. The impact of quality assurance on educational institutions framework is required for quality evaluation and standards Parameters for skill development, program enhancement, institutional network, collaborative learning, out bound hands on experience. It is also improvised course work and syllabus, workshops, curricular and co-curricular academic programs, conferences and seminars, forms checklist at the academic levels, up gradation of syllabus, faculty development programs, student staff ratio and activity based benchmarking etc

Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) - An inward look into improvement:

AQAR not applicable for first cycle institutions after the first cycle, Submission of AQAR is mandatory for all institutions, every year. Institution often goes into hibernation after NAAC Accreditation practice to assimilate data every year would ease the approach towards SSR. Institution's opportunity to compare their data, identify and strategise area of improvement. Ensuring the suggested area of growth as per recommendations of Peer Team and AQAR provides continuous introspection on instructional performances in different areas. Every 1st of June the window opens of AQAR submission till 31st of December every year.

IV.   REFERENCE

www.gov.in