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## **Importance of NAAC Accreditation for Higher Education Institutes**

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**Abstract** - Higher education is the backbone of a society. It not only provides qualified human resource to the nation but also enriches the quality of social, economic and intellectual life of the citizens. When we talk about higher education it mainly includes teaching, research, and rigorous practical work and the activities in the arena of social and community service being carried out at colleges and universities. In the sphere of teaching, it involves both the graduate as well as postgraduate-levels. Over the last three decades, India has witnessed speedy and notable growth in the number of Universities and Colleges more so with the increasing involvement of the private individual or agencies. But with this increased number, these Institutes are continually challenged to grow and compete with the global competitive standards. For India with the largest and the most diverse educational systems, high fees, low quality of education, regional disparities, access to technology, etc. are some of the constant challenges. Other than these quality and sustenance are in fact the most important ones and therefore for NAAC also, quality assurance is the prime objective. This paper aims to identify the significance of assessment in improving the quality of teaching, learning and research in HEIs with special reference to NAAC.

**Keywords:** NAAC accreditation, IQAC, AQAR, IQA, SSR

### **I. Introduction**

Higher Education in India is a continually challenging field with so much of diversity, global competition and ever growing benchmarks. Improvement, innovation and accountability are the necessary features of any Higher Education Institute to grow and strive for quality enhancement. Researches across the globe in the field of analyzing the importance of assessment of HEIs reveal that evaluating performance is significant in catering to the quality of teaching - learning and research. If the Institute is assessed and achieves higher grades, it boosts reliability, confidence and responsiveness. In the field of education, the term assessment refers to the methods or tools that educators use to evaluate academic competence, delivery, educational needs of learners and the desired research. In India

Preparatory work for the establishment of an accreditation system was carried out within the framework of the National Policy on Education (1986 and 1992), which culminated in the creation of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in 1994<sup>1</sup>. UGC has made it mandatory for all HEIs having 2 (f) and 12(B) status to get assessed by NAAC. As an autonomous institution NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) is constantly working towards quality assurance in Education Institutions (HEIs). Educational assessment can only truly reap benefits for education if it is conceptualized as having the ultimate purpose of ensuring quality education.

## **II. Methodology**

For the present paper we have broadly taken up the relevance of NAAC accreditation for HEIs and the initial process that Institutes must know before proceeding for assessment. NAAC has systematically discussed this on their website and the manuals available.<sup>2</sup> The complete process of NAAC accreditation in HEIs is broadly divided into the following steps –

1. Establishment and working of IQAC
2. Submission of AQAR
3. Submission of IIQA
4. Submission of SSR
5. DVV and its clarification
6. Peer Team visit and declaration of grade
7. Post NAAC activities

In this paper the eligibility criteria, the process of accreditation and the above mentioned steps are discussed in brief to have a general overview of the systematic procedure of assessment. A detailed analysis and complete process of each will be discussed in the next paper.

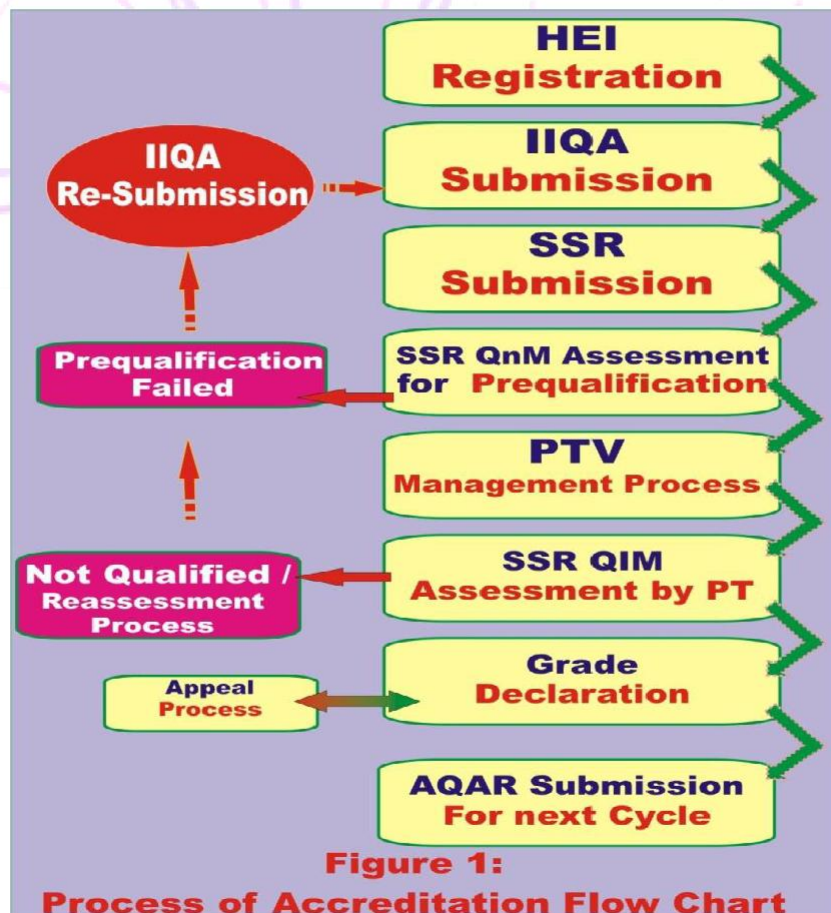
## **III. NAAC Accreditation Eligibility Criteria**

The HEIs are classified into three kinds: Universities, Autonomous Colleges, and Affiliated/Constituent Colleges. The two essential requisites to apply for the process of assessment and accreditation are: the HEI must be at least 6 years old or above and it should have produced minimum two batches of graduation. NAAC has displayed the eligibility criteria for all three classifications on its website i.e. Universities (Central / State / Private / Deemed -to-be) and Institutions of National Importance, Autonomous colleges /Constituent Colleges / Affiliated Colleges

(affiliated to universities recognized by UGC as an affiliating University) , and Accredited HEIs applying for Reassessment or Subsequent Cycles (Cycle 2, Cycle 3, Cycle 4) of Accreditation.<sup>3</sup> This classification helps the HEI to identify its place and subsequently apply for assessment and accreditation accordingly. This classification adopted by NAAC is also important in understanding the structure and functioning of the Institute. Furthermore, this classification not only separates the Institutes as per their functioning but also as per the level and cycle of accreditation.

#### IV. Accreditation Process

The process and stage of accreditation relies upon the cycle. Cycle 1 applies to those institutes for whom A&A is seen as an opportunity to assess and initiate measures for quality improvement. When the HEI goes through the accreditation process for the first time, it is referred as Cycle 1. Thereafter every five years the subsequent Cycles 2, 3 ..... are applicable for those HEIs who are keen to evaluate and raise their quality standards. For Cycle 1 the process of accreditation is as displayed in Figure 1. For other remaining cycles, other than the three mandatory requisites, all other things remain the same. As per the NAAC website these three steps include functional IQAC, timely submission of AQARs, and submission of IIQA six months prior to the expiry of accreditation status.<sup>4</sup>



The A&A process of NAAC is very transparent, systematic and suggestive and it starts with the registration of HEI. Following are the steps all HEIs must know before applying for accreditation:

**1. HEI Registration:** - It is mandatory for all HEIs to register themselves on the AISHE portal. The code provided is compulsory to move on to the next step. After all data is uploaded on AISHE (All India Survey on Higher Education), the HEI will get AISHE Reference Code which is a must before applying for A&A. After filling HEI Registration Form, NAAC verifies the Registration and after approval, the Login Credentials are sent to the HEI. In the meantime, the Institute can get to the Portal with Login Credentials to present the necessary vital archives. It ought to be noted cautiously that for all the cycle, it is essential to register through AISHE id.

**2. IIQA Submission:** -Institutional Information for Quality Assessment (IIQA) is the basic information about the Institute. After the HEI registration on the portal and logging in the Institute has to fill the IIQA (Institutional Information for Quality Assessment). Filling of IIQA is a very important step and it should be done very carefully. After filling the necessary information and uploading the documents the Institute needs to pay fee. An approval from NAAC is essential for the next step.

**3. SSR Submission:** -After the acceptance of IIQA, the SSR (Self Study Report) has to be filled. SSR is the most important part of assessment and accreditation process. The SSR speaks about the Institution and covers all the areas significant for maintaining quality standards. The Self Study Report is an exhaustive document containing all the necessary information in a systematic way. While filling the SSR and the preparation of it should be done well in advance since it is like a comprehensive report of the Institution. After filling of the SSR, the Installment Fee is to be paid online. During the evaluation NAAC verifies the SSS (Student Satisfaction Survey), asks for clarifications and data validation (DVV) and other data like Inflibnet, Bibliometric Data etc. QnM (Quantitative Metrics) is evaluated as part of Pre-Qualification Assessment.

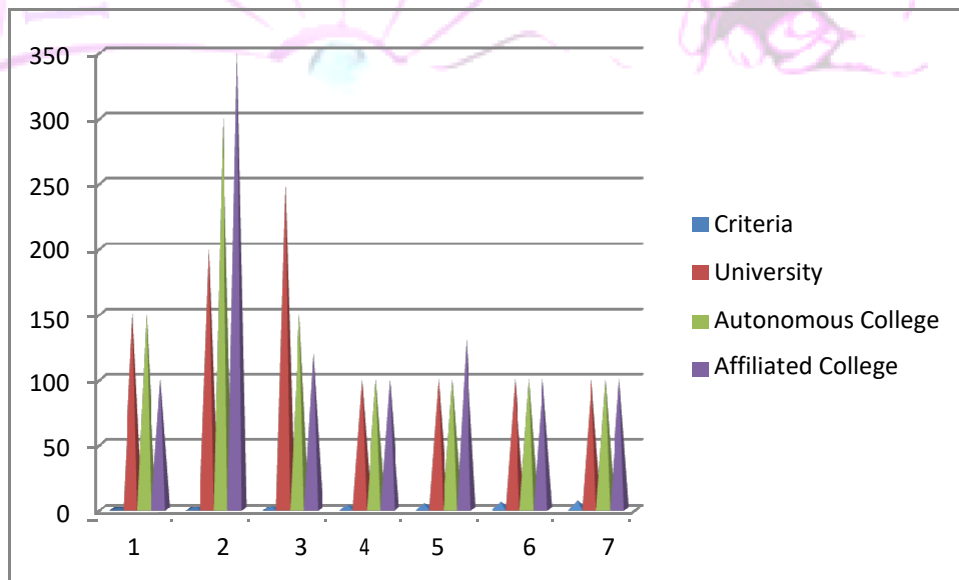
**4. PTV Management Process:** -To add transparency and clarity to the whole accreditation process, NAAC verifies the Institutional Data through a group of experts. This step is also a very sensitive one and has to be handled carefully by the HEI. The PTV presents its report after visiting the Institution.

As we all know that Assessment and Accreditation is not only about grading and evaluation. The main objective of A&A is to let the HEI know as to where it stands. It helps the Institutions assess their pitfalls and areas where they lag behind. It also prepares them to augment and enhance their infrastructure, IT, administrative working and core needs of teaching, learning and research. It works like a feedback to reflect and improve all the major areas. The seven criterions designed by NAAC to assess the HEIs are really significant in extending a vision of planning and

implementation. NAAC evaluates the HEIs on the basis of 7 criterions and 34 key indicators. Each criterion and indicator has been designed meticulously and the Institute seeking for good grades put in their best efforts to get the best score. The below Table 1 and Figure 2 indicate the weightage recognized and displayed on the NAAC website<sup>5</sup> :

**Table 1 Criteria and Weightage for University, Autonomous and Affiliated Colleges**

No Of CRITERIA	CRITERIA	Required KI for University	Required KI for Autonomous College	Required KI for Affiliated College
Criteria 1	Curricular Aspects	150	150	100
Criteria 2	Teaching-learning & Evaluation	200	300	350
Criteria 3	Research, Innovations & Extension	250	150	120
Criteria 4	Infrastructure & Learning Resources	100	100	100
Criteria 5	Student Support & Progression	100	100	130
Criteria 6	Governance, Leadership & Management	100	100	100
Criteria 7	Institutional Values & Best Practices	100	100	100



**Figure 2 Criteria wise weightage**

## V. Grading System of NAAC

Grading System of NAAC is the significant outcome of the assessment and the final institutional grading. After assessment, the Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of an institution is computed for those institutions which clear the grade qualifiers. Grade Qualifiers for HEI's refer to, "A grade qualifier is kept for the institution on qualify for valid accreditation. In order to qualify for any Grade (C to A++) Institution needs to score at least 1.51 CGPA aggregated score (quantitative and qualitative) in each criterion".<sup>6</sup> After clearing the grade qualifier, the CGPA of the institution is calculated. Calculation of Institutional CGPA The CGPA is calculated based on the scores obtained from the three sources, viz., The System Generated Scores (SGS) of the quantitative Metrics which comprise about 70% of the total, the scores from the qualitative, critical appraisal by the Peer Team through on site visit and the scores obtained on the Student Satisfaction Survey. These will be collated through an automated procedure based on 'benchmarks' and assessed on a five-point scale. The Final Grade on the basis of the CGPA obtained by the institution in maximum possible score of 4.00, the final grade is assigned on a seven-point scale. The seven-point scale refers to the seven letter grades each aligned to the seven specific score-range are represented in Table 2.

**Table 2 :CGPA and Letter Grade<sup>6</sup>**

Range of Institutional Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA)	Letter Grade
3.51-4.00	A++
3.26-3.50	A+
3.00-3.25	A
2.76-3.00	B++
2.51-2.75	B+
2.01-2.50	B
1.51-2.00	C
≤ 1.50	D (Not Accredited)

## VI. Conclusion

NAAC accreditation is mandatory for all the higher learning institutes. For this purpose, role of IQAC is very significant in each institution. The work of IQAC and NAAC is a long lasting process which should be done periodically, perpetually and consistently throughout the year as per the vision of NAAC. Accreditation increases the credibility of HEI, it encourages them to initiate innovative quality measures. It also helps them to allocate their resources, modify teaching- learning strategies as per needs, carry on research of local importance, recognize and establish the role of HEI in community development. The whole process and key areas of assessment have been designed as per global parameters by NAAC. Hence this A&A definitely makes the HEIs globally competent.



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