

# PRESENT SCENARIO OF ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE AUDIT IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

**Dr.A.ANALA,**  
Associate Professor,  
C B R National College of Law, Shivamogga

## INTRODUCTION

Audit is an independent and systematic external evaluation. It assesses whether the quality system of a higher education institution is fit for purpose and functioning and whether it complies with the agreed criteria. Some institutions may record a grade of "audit" to those who have elected not to receive a letter grade for a course in which they are typically awarded. In this case, 'audit' indicates that the individual merely has received teaching, rather than being evaluated as having achieved a given standard of knowledge of the subject. The term 'audit' is Latin, translating as, 'he heard'. In other words, the student has experienced the course, but has not been assessed.

An audit focuses on the procedures that the institution uses to maintain and develop the quality of its operations. The purpose of the audit visit is to verify and supplement the observations made of the HEI's quality system based on the audit material. The goal is to make the visit an interactive event that supports the development of the institution's operations. In addition to conducting interviews during the visit, the audit team examines any other material it may have requested from the institution.

Administrative Audit is the process of checking analytical regulator continuously. Aspects of financial and administrative activities and evaluation of goals and plans, policies and procedures, organizational structure and methods of measurement and evaluation of performance and methods of financial control and management and the results achieved in the light of the potential physical and human resources, and measure the reflection effects of non-financial aspects of the institution and the relevant authorities using methods updated.

Audit needs to focus on the strategic management process, evaluating how the quality management of the University plays its role in improving the quality of higher education. In this context, the audit needs to review the institutional mission, institutional policies, strategies and operational procedures as well as institutional resources and organization. The quality culture of the institution has to be the focus and its role in management of teaching and learning, research and provision of extension services. The emphasis on the exercise of institutional leadership in quality enhancement programs and improving professional activities are other aspects of consideration.

Audits focus on the quality system that HEIs develop for themselves based on their own needs and goals. To evaluate the quality system, the audit focuses on:

- The quality policy of the higher education institution
- Strategic and operations management
- Development of the quality system

- Quality management of the higher education institution's basic duties:
- Degree education (including first-, second- and third-cycle education)
- Research, development and innovation activities, as well as artistic activities
- The societal impact and regional development work (incl. social responsibility, continuing education, Open University of applied sciences education, as well as paid-services education)
- Optional audit target
- Samples of degree education: degree programmes
- The quality system as a whole.

The audit evaluates how well the quality system meets strategic and operations management needs, as well as the quality management of the HEI's basic duties and the extent to which it is comprehensive and effective. In addition, the audit focuses on the institution's quality policy and the development of the quality system, as well as on how effective and dynamic an entity the system forms.

### **Purpose of the Academic and Administrative Audit**

The purpose of the Academic and Administrative Audit is to evaluate the performance of the university departments, schools and the centers and appreciate their achievements and give suggestions for further improvement of the quality of teaching, research, administration, and curricular and extra-curricular activities. The after visiting the departments, schools and centers, and interacting with the HODs/Directors/Coordinators, teaching and non-teaching faculties, students, alumni and parents and validating the data the committee would give valuable suggestions on the following points.

- Availability of teaching and non-teaching faculty.
- Infrastructural facilities available for carrying out academic and administrative activities.
- Efforts taken for curricular development.
- Teacher quality.
- Teaching methods adopted and use of ICT in teaching, learning process.
- Feedback mechanism used for assessing the performance of teachers by students and for curricular development.
- Faculty development programmes implemented by the department.
- Strengths, Weaknesses. Opportunities and Challenges of the department.
- Research facilities and research output in the form of publications and patents.
- Computer, internet and library facilities available.
- Mentoring system, introduction of Remedial classes, Bridge courses, guidance for NET/SET and competitive examinations.
- Skill development and personality development programmes.
- Generation of funds and optimum utilization.
- Evaluation methods adopted for internal and external examinations.

- Future plans of the department.

## Objectives

- ❖ To facilitate awareness among Colleges/Universities in the State about processes and systems that can ensure quality enhancement and realization of goals set in higher education.
- ❖ To move in the direction of an accreditation and audit system that enables mentoring more than monitoring.
- ❖ To review the implementation of Government schemes in all Colleges/Universities of the State.
- ❖ To evaluate the performance of the institution and to identify the issues that is to be attended to in order to improve the quality of Teaching and Research.
- ❖ To arrive at a AAA Score
- ❖ The AAA Score to be used as a tool to identify the areas for special focus and improvement.
- ❖ To ensure academic accountability.
- ❖ To define quality of each component of the functionalities and to ensure quality of technical education throughout the system.
- ❖ To safeguard functionalities of technical education.
- ❖ To define effectiveness of teaching – learning process and to devise methodology to confirm maximum output from faculty members as well as students.

## Methodology

Questionnaire/ Self Appraisal Form formulated to collect data in areas related to:

- Academic Management
- Academic Practices
- Infrastructure and other facilities
- Government Initiatives

The institutions will be marked for each aspect under these four categories to get a composite AAA Score. AAA focuses on the process by which an institution monitors its own academic standards and acts to assure and enhance the quality of its teaching and support for student learning. Therefore the Academic and Administrative Audit is based on the concept that periodic internal assessment can effectively provide quality assurance to all the deserving learners and will eventually lead to a high level of knowledge and skills in the respective areas of specialization. It is a new Concept, which is envisaged by the UGC in order to make the university teaching departments and also administrative sections of the university accountable. Just like financial experts audit financial aspects, academic experts need to audit whether the University meets the objective for which it is established, the academic programs, its usage, its transactions, its assessment strategies, its student support, governance and management. It is also intended to assess whether

the teachers who are appointed in the University meet the objectives of the University in imparting quality education.

The purpose of the Academic and Administration Audit is to strengthen the internal quality assurance culture with the help of external experts.

<b>Inputs</b>	<b>Transforming Process</b>	<b>Outputs</b>
Programs	Design inputs	Graduation, Postgraduation,
Curriculum transaction	Delivery	Employments,
Facilities	Data system	Achievements
Student characteristics	Feedback	Success rate, drop out
Faculty Characteristics	Analysis	rates
Financial Resources	Review	Academic, Co-curricular
Support Services	Exam reforms	Faculty achievements
	Technology use	Awards, Honours
	Decision making process	Research outcome
	Educational planning	Program improvement
	Team building	Facilities improvement
	Governance	Community Impact
	Leadership	Contribution to society
		Contribution to industry
		National Development

With the conceptual clarity about the relationship between quality improvement and AAA, it is important to derive the methodology of assessing the context, content and processes for realizing the status and what needs to be done to transform the system to achieve the desirable outcome in terms of quality improvement. It would be of great importance of HEIs to realize the vision and mission of NAAC and UGC by focusing the needs of academic and administration audit to inculcate quality culture and organizational culture for the development of nation.

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an organization that assesses and accredits institutions of higher education in India. It is an autonomous body funded by University Grants Commission of Government of India headquartered in Bangalore. Accreditation is a process of assuring an acceptable institutional quality and it is a tool for improving educational standards. The process intends to improve and sustain the quality and relevance of education, and it is for improving transferability and marketability of students nationally and internationally. It is a process of assuring acceptable institutional quality and a tool for improving educational standards. It is also expected that the institution will maximize its strengths and overcome the challenges identified during the accreditation process. It will also implement the suggestions made by the Peer Review Team and the Board for improvement.

At present in India, accreditation is voluntary for Higher Education Institutions. Out of 612 Universities in the country. Only 174 of them have been accredited by the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC). Out of the Universities accredited, 67 have been placed in Grade A, 99 Universities in Grade B and only 6 in Grade C, based on scores awarded during the process of accreditation. There are softwares and services available to manage NAAC data and generate NAAC SSR reports online. E-Paathsala provides software to generate SSR and help in academic, administrative, gender and green audits.

### **Quality Assurance, Assessment and Accreditation**

In present day's technological society, large number of trained scientists and technologists are required. To meet this demand, many new institutions have been established recently/ are being established even now. With rapid expansion of institutions and students for higher education, broadening of purpose and increased amount of public funding involved, methodological approaches were required for quality assurance. Quality assurance in higher education is defined as the totality of the system, resources and information devoted for maintaining and improving the quality and standards of teaching, learning, research and scholarship. Assessment means the performance evaluation based on certain criteria. Accreditation is a mechanism by which both intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions of quality in higher education are addressed through self-evaluation and peer review. Accreditation is a self-regulation and peer review process, adopted by educational community to improve and sustain the quality and relevance of higher education. Accreditation differs from recognition for funding where the emphasis is on availability of minimum infrastructures. Recognition is one time process, where as accreditation is a time bound and recurring process. There may be institutional accreditation or specialized program accreditation. Accreditation may be voluntary or compulsory. An institution/program can be accredited by more than one agency.

NAAC have evolved certain benchmarks for ascertaining and ensuring the quality at different levels of Higher Education. Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) are established in almost all Higher Educational Institutions (HEI) to identify the benchmarks required for achieving the quality. Thus, IQAC plays an important role in improving the quality of academic and administrative activities of the Institution. The academic, administrative, curricular and extra-curricular activities carried out by the faculty of the university needs to be assessed by internal committee as well as by external academicians and peers as their appreciations and valuable suggestions boost the confidence of the faculty. Higher Education Institutes play a vital role in the development of the nation. In India, it is need of the hour that the quality of academic and administration should be maintained to provide quality ambience for the all round development of its stakeholders. To achieve this, it becomes imperative to have close scrutiny of current academic and administration audit. University Grants Commission and NAAC have taken initiatives for such audits. The qualities of HEIs depend on its efficiency, coordination effective implementation of its academic and administrative plans. HEIs have focused on the technical resources as well as human resources to find out the potential to be used utilized for the quality enhancement and sustenance in their day to day affairs. It has

helped to seriously address the issues in the respect. UGC provides financial assistance to improve quality in academic (Faculty Development Programme, Major and Minor Research Projects, Seminar etc.) and administration (CPE, Development Grants, etc.) of HEIs. NAAC has played great role in examining the implementation for quality parameters in HEIs. Since the quality of Higher Education depends predominantly on the adequacy of faculty in numbers as well as the teaching quality. Staff development has to be given priority along with this staff appraisal to assess the development requirement in a priority needs to try all departments at par. The Academic Staff College has a significant role to play in this regard. Unfortunately the number of programs conducted by the Academic Staff College is not adequate or relevant for effective staff development. Since the student satisfaction level is decreasing in many departments as revealed from the student interactions, it is important to conduct the staff appraisal systematically and assess the training needs for staff development. Workshops may be organized to motivate teachers for writing research proposals and obtain funds. Managing research funds effectively is another consideration in this capacity building programs. Appointment of qualified and competent teachers, ICT enabled teaching and adopting measures which will facilitate the use of excellent library facilities need immediate attention. Any Quality related areas should be taken up by the Quality Assurance cell and Academic College may be actively involved in implementing the decisions especially the training programmes. In pursuance of its Action Plan for performance evaluation, assessment and accreditation and quality upgradation of institutions of higher education, the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore proposes that every accredited institution should establish an Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) as a post accreditation quality sustenance measure. Since quality enhancement is a continuous process, the IQAC will become a part of the institution's system and work towards realization of 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 overall performance of institutions. For this, during the post-accreditation period, it will channelize all efforts and measures of the institution towards promoting its holistic academic excellence.

### **Higher Education Institutes Academic and Administrative Audit Process**

The process has the following main stages:

- Identification and notification of a date for the audit
- Appointment of Panel members and identification of College Liaison Officer
- College workshop for writing of Self- Evaluation Document (SED)
- College submission of the draft SED for comment
- College submission of a SED, with any relevant supporting documentary evidence
- Scrutiny of the SED and supporting evidence by the Audit Panel Preliminary Meeting of the Audit Panel
- Visit by the Audit Panel to the College, normally lasting 2.5 working days
- College informed of key judgments within 5 days of the end of the Audit
- Production of a report including recommendations for enhancement
- Production of a College Action Plan

- Audit report submitted to the Boards of the Faculties
- Follow up meeting 12 months after the Audit to monitor and record progress, and monitored annually thereafter if required.

### **Benefits of AAA**

- a) Ensure heightened level of clarity and focus in institutional functioning towards quality enhancement.
- b) Ensure internalization of the quality culture.
- b) Ensure enhancement and coordination among various activities of the institution and institutionalize all good practices.
- c) Provide a sound basis for decision-making to improve institutional functioning.
- d) Act as a dynamic system for quality changes in HEIs.

### **Conclusion**

In present day's technological society, large number of trained scientists and technologists are required. The Academic and Administrative Audit focuses on the process by which an institution monitors its own academic standards and acts to assure and enhance the quality of its teaching and support for student learning. Accreditation is a process of assuring an acceptable institutional quality and it is a tool for improving educational standards. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an organization that assesses and accredits institutions of higher education in India. The qualities of HEIs depend on its efficiency, coordination effective implementation of its academic and administrative plans. To facilitate awareness among Colleges/Universities in the State about processes and systems that can ensure quality enhancement and realization of goals set in higher education. Education that crosses national borders, mobility, competition as well as the commercialization and internationalization of education are reasons why a country's trust in the level and quality of its own national higher education is no longer sufficient in itself. Recognition is one time process, where as accreditation is a time bound and recurring process. There may be institutional accreditation or specialized program accreditation. Accreditation may be voluntary or compulsory. The Higher Education Institutions (HEI) shall submit the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) regularly to NAAC. The IQACs is to create its exclusive window on its institutional website and regularly upload/ report on its activities, as well as for hosting the AQAR. The challenge is to demonstrate quality in an understandable and reliable way, to the outside world as well.

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