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Fall 9-8-2021

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SENGUPTA, SHANTASHREE, "NAAC Accreditation and Responsibility of College Libraries in India" (2021).
Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal). 6290.
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NAAC Accreditation and Responsibility of College Libraries in India

By

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Abstract:

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore was established by University Grants Commission in 1994 for evaluating the academic, administrative, co-curricular, extra-curricular activities of Universities, Colleges, and Recognized Institutes in India. Since 1994, all the State Governments have taken stringent steps to accredit the Colleges and Universities in their state. The present paper attempts to be a helpful, suggestive guide for the College Library and Information Centres preparing for assessment and accreditation by NAAC, Bangalore. Instead of restricting only to Library, the paper also aims to be fruitful for librarians by mentioning the possible ways through which librarian can help in the institutional assessment and accreditation process of NAAC.

Keywords: National Assessment & Accreditation Council (NAAC), Bangalore; Revised NAAC Manual for Affiliated Colleges; Guidelines for Affiliated and Autonomous College Libraries; Best practices for Library and Information Centres ; Role of Librarian beyond libraries for NAAC.

1. Introduction:

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) was established as an autonomous institution of the University Grants Commission (UGC) under the Ministry of Education in 1994 with its headquarters in Bengaluru. NAAC was established in response to recommendations of National Policy in Education (1986). The main objective of the establishment of NAAC is the assurance of quality in the functioning of higher educational institutions in India through the combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

The NAAC framework promotes extensive use of Information, Communication, and technology which helps in fostering global competencies amongst all the stakeholders of an educational institution.

Since 2017, the NAAC processes have been rendered in an online manner for the assessee institutions as well as for the assessors.

NAAC frequently releases the Revised Manuals for Universities, Autonomous Colleges, Affiliated/ Constituent (UG, PG) Colleges, Health Science Universities, Sanskrit Universities, Open Universities, Dual Mode University and for Teacher Education Institutions.

2. Eligibility Criteria for NAAC:

All the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a record of a minimum of 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 of NAAC. The HEIs need to remember the following points:

- Upload the institutional information on the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) portal. AISHE code (reference number) is one of the requirements for Registration for NAAC Assessment and Accreditation process.
- The NAAC Accreditation does not cover distance education units of HEIs and the offshore campuses.

3. The Assessment Process:

The NAAC assessment process which got revised in July 2017, now takes place in three stages: Self Study Report (SSR), Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS), and the Peer Team Report. Prior to July 2017, 100% of evaluation depended on the 2-3 days visit of peer team members in the educational institution. Post-July 2017, two new metrics namely Qualitative Metrics (Q₁M) and Quantitative Metrics (Q_nM) were introduced in the Manuals of Accreditation. The questions in the Self-Study Report got divided into these two metrics.

Qualitative Metrics require descriptive answers to the questions whereas Quantitative Metrics need facts and figures, statistical data in the response section. Irrespective of the metric, the HEI is expected to upload supporting documents, web links, reports, geotagged photos, etc. depending on the instructions given in the SSR.

From the Academic Year 2020-21, NAAC has revised the Annual Quality Assurance Report (AQAR) format which is made closely in line with the Self-Study Report which is prepared by the HEI at the time of NAAC assessment. The tools and parameters in the new AQAR format have been designed in such a way that the preparation of the AQAR would facilitate the HEI's SSR preparation for the upcoming cycle of accreditation.

The SSR is divided into 07 Criteria which cover all the aspects of HEI. The 07 Criteria comprise several Key Indicators (KIs) which are divided into Qualitative and Quantitative Metrics. The following table provides a clear distribution of Metrics and Key Indicators across the criteria:

Type of HEI	Universities	Autonomous Colleges	Affiliated Colleges	
			Under Graduate	Post Graduate
Criteria	7	7	7	7
Key Indicators (KIs)	34	34	31	32
Qualitative Metrics (Q ₁ M)	36	35	35	36
Quantitative Metrics (Q _n M)	79	72	58	60
Total Metrics (QLM + QNM)	115	107	93	96

Table 1: Distribution of Metrics and Key Indicators across the criteria

The following table presents the details of weightage given to the various Key Indicators and Criteria.

Criteria	Key Indicators	Universities	Autonomous Colleges	Affiliated Colleges	
				Under Graduate	Post Graduate
1. Curricular Aspects	1.1 *(U)Curriculum Design and Development	50	50	NA	NA
	1.1. *(A) Curricular Planning and Implementation	NA	NA	20	20
	1.2 Academic Flexibility	50	40	30	30
	1.3 Curriculum Enrichment	30	40	30	30
	1.4 Feedback System	20	20	20	20
	Total	150	150	100	100
2. Teaching Learning and Evaluation	2.1 Student Enrolment and Profile	10	20	40	40
	2.2 Catering to Student Diversity	20	30	50	50
	2.3 Teaching-Learning Process	20	50	50	50
	2.4 Teacher Profile and Quality	50	50	60	60
	2.5 Evaluation Process and Reforms	40	50	30	30
	2.6 Student Performance and Learning Outcomes	30	50	60	60
	2.7 Student satisfaction Survey	30	50	60	60
	Total	200	300	350	350
3. Research, Innovations and Extension	3.1 Promotion of Research and Facilities	20	20	NA	NA
	3.2 Resource Mobilization for Research	20	10	15	15
	3.3 Innovation Ecosystem	30	10	NA	10
	3.4 Research Publications and Awards	100	30	15	25
	3.5 Consultancy	20	10	NA	NA
	3.6 Extension Activities	40	50	60	50
	3.7 Collaboration	20	20	20	20

	Total	250	150	110	120
4. Infrastructure and Learning Resources	4.1 Physical Facilities	30	30	30	30
	4.2 Library as a Learning Resource	20	20	20	20
	4.3 IT Infrastructure	30	30	30	30
	4.4 Maintenance of Campus Infrastructure	20	20	20	20
	Total	100	100	100	100
5. Student Support and Progression	5.1 Student Support	30	30	50	50
	5.2 Student Progression	40	30	30	25
	5.3 Student Participation and Activities	20	30	50	45
	5.4 Alumni Engagement	10	10	10	10
	Total	100	100	140	130
6. Governance, Leadership and Management	6.1 Institutional Vision and Leadership	10	10	10	10
	6.2 Strategy Development and Deployment	10	10	10	10
	6.3 Faculty Empowerment Strategies	30	30	30	30
	6.4 Financial Management and Resource Mobilization	20	20	20	20
	6.5 Internal Quality Assurance System	30	30	30	30
	Total	100	100	100	100
7. Institutional Values and Best Practices	7.1 Institutional Values and Social Responsibilities	50	50	50	50
	7.2 Best Practices	30	30	30	30
	7.3 Institutional Distinctiveness	20	20	20	20
	Total	100	100	100	100
Total Score		1000	1000	1000	1000

(U) - applicable only for Universities and Autonomous Colleges

(A) - applicable only for the Affiliated / Constituent Colleges

NA - Not Applicable

Table 2: Details of weightage given to the various Key Indicators and Criteria

4. Key Indicator 4.2 Library as a Learning Resource:

From the above Table, it is clear that Key Indicator 4.2 Library as a Learning resource carries a weightage of 20 in Universities, Autonomous and Affiliated Institutions. The Key Indicator 4.2 covers 04 Questions out of which 4.2.1 is Qualitative Metric (Q₁M) and 4.2.2, 4.2.3 and 4.2.4 are Quantitative Metrics (Q_nM). It is very important for the Library and Information Science professionals to understand that while preparing for NAAC, they need to consider these 20 points as equivalent to 1000.

Library is considered the strongest support system for any educational institution. The four questions of 4.2 Key Indicator cover all the aspects of a library and information centre viz. library collection, library budget, audit report, e-resource and database access, library automation using Integrated Library Management System (ILMS), library digitization facility available, usage of library resources and library footfalls. Depending on the type of institution, the weightage for the questions varies. NAAC has published Guidelines for Libraries of Affiliated College, Autonomous Colleges/Universities. These guidelines also cover the best practices for library and information centres.

The 04 questions covered in 4.2 Key Indicator from the Manual for University/ Autonomous Colleges/Affiliated Colleges are as follows (some of the questions need the data for the last five academic years):

4.2.1 - Library is automated using Integrated Library Management System (ILMS)

This is a Qualitative Metric wherein the respondent needs to describe the automation status of the library.

Pratheepan (2012) mentioned that ‘an Integrated Library Management System is a computer-based system used to manage internal and external resources including tangible assets, financial resources, materials, and human resources. It performs library automation and collection development tasks broken down into different modules that are focused on simplifying tasks such as acquisition, cataloging, and circulation commonly done in any library. It is built on a centralized database and normally utilizes a common computing platform and consolidates all library operations into a uniform and enterprise-wide system.’ An Integrated Library System usually comprises a relational database, software to interact with that database, and two graphical user interfaces (one for patrons, one for staff). Most of the Integrated Library Systems, separate software functions into discrete programs called modules which are integrated with a unified interface. Examples of modules are:

- acquisitions (ordering, receiving, and invoicing materials)
- cataloging (classifying and indexing materials)
- circulation (lending materials to patrons and receiving them back)
- serials (tracking magazine, journals, and newspaper holdings)
- online public access catalog or OPAC (public user interface)

Each patron and item has a unique ID in the database that allows the ILS to track its activity. Depending on the status of the automation, the institute needs to mention partial or fully automated. Only having a computerized database of books and not using other modules of ILMS should never be considered a fully automated library. Also, it is very important to understand that going for advanced and costly technologies like RFID is not feasible for every institution due to budget constraints. Proper software selection is essential which will be helpful in generating several reports required for NAAC as well as it should be user-friendly in nature. Few examples of ILMS are Koha, e-Granthalaya, NewGenLib, Libsys, and SOUL.

4.2.2 Institution has access to the following: 1. e-journals 2. e-ShodhSindhu 3. Shodhganga Membership 4. e-books 5. Databases 6. Remote access to e-resources

This is a Quantitative Metric wherein the respondent needs to provide the subscription/membership details of databases, details about how the library is providing remote access to e-resources, whether the library has purchased e-journals and/or e-books packages. Shodhganga being an open-access electronic theses and dissertations database does not require any individual/institutional membership/subscription. Universities sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with INFLIBNET for submission of the electronic version of theses and dissertations in Shodhganga and approved Synopses/Minor or Major Research Projects/ Post-Doctoral Fellowship Research Reports in Shodhgangotri.

Colleges that are covered under 12(B) and 2(f) of the University Grants Commission are eligible to subscribe to NLIST. Such colleges do not require membership of e-ShodhSindhu. Colleges imparting education in Agriculture, Engineering, Management, Medical, Pharmacy, Dentistry, and Nursing are not eligible for NLIST.

Depending on the status of access of the databases/e-resources the institution needs to select the appropriate option. The E-copy of the subscription/membership letters needs to be uploaded along with the screenshots of the services provided with the name of the higher educational institution.

4.2.3 Average annual expenditure for the purchase of books/ e-books and subscription to journals/e-journals during the last five years (INR in Lakhs)

This is a Quantitative Metric wherein the respondent needs to provide the annual expenditure done by the library in the last five years for purchasing books and journals. As additional documents, Audited Statements of library expenditure clearly highlighting the budget heads, duly attested by the Chartered Accountant and the head of the Institution need to be uploaded. The data provided for 4.2.3 regarding details of subscriptions and purchases should match with 4.2.2.

4.2.4 Percentage per day usage of the library by teachers and students (footfalls and login data for online access)

This is also a Quantitative Metric wherein the respondent needs to provide the data related to the latest completed academic year. The number of users accessing the library physically as well as through e-access needs to be calculated. If the library maintains the register for library users, then they need to scan and upload the last page of the register which will show the number of teachers and students visiting the library in an academic year. The usage statistics of using databases like NLIST, DELNET, etc.; login details of the institutional repository, the digital library, WebOPAC can be uploaded in this metric. Tools like Google analytics can be used to measure the library website visits for e-resource access. Institutions that are going to face NAAC post-COVID, can show the online usage statistics of the library resources. The online usage data will prove the efficiency of the library in providing quality services even during the pandemic situation.

5. Preparation of Library and Information Centre for NAAC: Points to remember

1. The Librarian must be completely aware of the Library collection development policy, accession registers, services provided, activities undertaken, software used for automation (if any), subscription details of journals, e-resources (if available), the role of the library in the development of the college, etc. no matter since when he/she joined the institution. For the newly appointed Librarians, it becomes a challenge to prepare the Library as well as himself/herself for a NAAC peer team visit.
2. The Librarian must also project his/her academic achievements, qualifications, publications, activities undertaken for promotion of library services, and administrative duties other than the library.

3. Photo Gallery with Captions.
4. Collection development policy, Acquisition details, Quotation Files, Purchase Orders of books and Non-Book Items, Accession Registers, Bill files, Payment Receipts (if maintained), Audit Reports, Serials Information, Circulation Reports, OPAC, WebOPAC services needs to be shown to the peer team.
5. At the entrance of the Library or in any prominent place board featuring 'Library at a Glance' should be put mentioning Number of Volumes, Number of titles, Senior College Books, Books purchased under UGC (if any), Book-Bank Sets (if provided), Number of Journals and Periodicals, Newspapers, CDs/VCDs, E-resources Subscribed, Databases Subscribed, Institutional Memberships (if any).
6. Display multiple small size flex/color print-outs featuring 05 Highlights of Library, 05 years Library Collection details in tabular format (for 1st Cycle Library Collection right from the establishment of the library should be mentioned), during 2nd and consecutive cycles Comparative charts/graphs of Library collection can be prepared, Year-wise College Library Budget/UGC Budget for books (if received)/DST, DBT Budget for Books etc., Year-wise Journal/Periodical Subscribed, Year-wise Subscription Amount, Bound volumes, Theses and dissertations (if any), ETDs (if any), Library Activities, Services Provided, Any Special Achievements of the Library, Highlight Rare Collection (if any) and Knowledge Resources, Photos of Library Orientation Program, Book Exhibitions, Visits of eminent personalities, Institutional membership records and facilities availed, Departmental library details and Best Practices of Library.
7. Librarians should also include a few prints highlighting personal achievements, publications, h-index (if any), citation statistics(if any) etc.
8. Audit reports should be filed separately and they need to be signed by the Chartered Accountant and the Head of the Institution.
9. Minutes book of Library Committee Meeting with Agenda and Action Taken Report should be maintained, signed by the Librarian and Principal.
10. If the library maintains a ledger, then that should also be signed and shown to the team. Accession registers should be signed by the Librarian and Principal at the end of each financial year. Proper Library Collection statistics should be noted in the register.
11. If the Library is partially/fully automated then show the peer team how the circulation is carried out, book reservation, barcoding, stock-taking and stock-verification process etc., if UGC-Network Resource Centre is available in the library then a record of internet usage by students and faculty should be maintained.
12. Library user statistics should be maintained either manually/automated.
13. New arrivals display racks should be kept at a place from which they will be clearly visible.
14. Throughout the time that the team spends in the library, the Librarian, as well as the library staff, should try to project all sections of the library. The librarian along with the library staff members needs to plan out the visit in such a way that each and every library staff gets an opportunity to represent some activity/service of the library. Such a proper distribution of work leaves a positive impact on team members.
15. Library should be clean, hygienic, well-lit, books should be arranged as per DDC/CC, shelf/cupboard levels, general rules and regulations of library and stacking section should be displayed, how to search a book on the stack and through OPAC, Newspaper clippings file should be maintained, CCTVs should be installed for security purposes, Wi-fi routers should be made available in the library, etc. If the library provides an E-newspaper Clippings facility, then that needs to be shown to the peer team.

16. The Librarian must show the Library Website to the team and services provided through it can be explained briefly. This will prove the remote access provided by the library to the learning resources.
17. If the Librarian is well versed with ICT, must help in other academic and administrative sections.
18. The Librarian or any staff should never sound to be self-boasting but they should bring each and every object of importance in the eyes of the peer team.
19. The librarian should explain the importance of the library in a way that will make the team members feel that it is the 'Heart of the Institution'.
20. One most important thing that Librarians of constituent colleges should remember is that they should try to avoid projecting Junior College Collection/details as some Peer Teams don't accept the concept of Junior College collection being present in Senior College.
21. The Librarian needs to be aware of the Staffing pattern, Student-Book ratio, Job description, Affiliating University Norms, UGC prescribed Senior College Librarian Qualification, Salary details, etc.
22. Maintain records regarding Library Orientation Programmes, Awareness Sessions, Workshops, Seminars organized by the Library.
23. Mention the initiatives taken by the Library in the holistic development of students and the Research initiatives taken by the library for the students and faculty members.
24. Library can mention the special services and collections offered for visually impaired students and persons with disabilities.
25. The role of the Library in academics, extra-curricular and co-curricular activities should be mentioned.
26. Conduct annual Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA) of the Library and Information Centre.

6. Role of Librarian beyond Key Indicator 4.2:

Librarians play a very important role in the institution. Kulkarni (2018) and Jange (2020) have highlighted several points related to the contribution of librarians beyond libraries in NAAC preparation. Beyond the Key Indicator 4.2, Librarian can prove to be helpful in all the criteria due to the variety of professional skills, abilities, and the variety of services offered by the library in the following manner:

1. Plan NAAC related meetings and awareness programs.
2. If any Librarian becomes part of the Self Study Report (SSR) preparation then very alertly use the ICT skills in file conversions, uploading of documents, providing hyperlinks of College website, Updating college website or sending the developer all the current information, etc.
3. Create / Help in creating a college website and updating the website.
4. Librarians can help with documentation.
5. Show ICT Skills in preparing AQAR, SSR, PowerPoint Presentation, NAAC related documents/updates.
6. Provide e-resources to teachers for effective teaching.
7. E-content Creation/ LMS Coordinator.
8. Information regarding Funding Agencies for Research, Awareness sessions on Plagiarism, Academic Integrity, Research Metrics etc.
9. Guidance of Competitive Examinations.
10. Professional development/administrative training programs organized by the library for teaching and non-teaching staff.
11. Library may support green initiatives on the campus by replacing tubes/bulbs with LED bulbs, by supporting and promoting paperless office work.

12. Making available Braille Software/facilities for Visually Challenged students, Provision for lift, Ramp/Rails, Braille Software/facilities, Rest Rooms, Scribes for examination, Special skill development for differently-abled students.
13. Conduct activities for the promotion of universal values and ethics.
14. Librarians may support students in field projects and internships.
15. Librarians can also participate in the feedback process as he/she is in touch with maximum students.
16. Librarians can assist in Syllabus development, be a part of teaching in Academic Programmes related to Research Methodology, etc.
17. Information regarding UGC-CARE list of Journals, SCOPUS listed Journals, Citations, Research Metrics.
18. Create awareness about Reference Management Tools, Plagiarism Detection Tools, etc.
19. The Library and its staff should excel in their leadership ability and contribute to achieving the institutional vision in the capacity of an Academic Council Member, IQAC Coordinator, NAAC Coordinator, IT Coordinator, and Statutory Officer.
20. Providing updated information about Academics, Administrative developments, Research, etc.

7. Conclusion:

NAAC visit is mandatory for all colleges and universities in order to evaluate the services provided by them and for increasing the quality of education. While preparing for NAAC, library professionals need to remember that no two libraries are the same. The experiences of one librarian should be considered but not in a hard and fast way. One should be prepared in all means. Library and Information Centre is considered as one of the most important support services where usually the Peer Team gives more time compared to other Academic and Administrative Units. Proper preparation, homework, and mock visits will be fruitful for a successful portrayal of the library. With the help of administrative abilities and updated professional skills, library professionals can excel not only in the Key Indicator 4.2 but even beyond it.

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