

## Foreword

Quality, in the context of a higher education institution, is multi-dimensional. The functioning of a library can be said to manifest one such dimension. The need to improve on the accuracy of accreditation process is constant and exists side by side with possibility to do so. The NAAC is always at it.

Though it is institutional accreditation that the NAAC does, the assessment of a library, a vital sub-unit, is a key step that integrates itself with the overall evaluation. Library is the fulcrum of support for the entire range of academic activities on an educational campus. In today's high-tech learning environment, the library as a learning resource is taking up increasingly more academic space and time in the life of a learner. In times ahead, this will be even more so. All this plays up the need for scientific evaluation of a library so that its role as the centerpiece of academic development is protected and enhanced. It is in this context, that the NAAC has after wide consultations evolved a set of guidelines on quality indicators, to help academic libraries to be always in their best form.

I appreciate the enthusiasm of all the participant librarians across the country and my colleagues, Dr. Srinivas Raghavan and Mr. B. R. Manjunath, in bringing out the guidelines in this booklet form. It is my sincere hope that it serves the intended purpose.

**(Prof. V.S. Prasad)**

## GUIDELINES ON QUALITY INDICATORS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES: UNIVERSITIES/AUTONOMOUS COLLEGES

### INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, accreditation activity is gaining momentum in our country as people and educational institutions have come to realize that quality enhancement is essential for the institutions and the country. In the process of institutional accreditation, libraries have a crucial role. The services of the libraries have been expanding as they contribute significantly to the learning process, particularly, the e-learning process.

In the accreditation process, evaluation of libraries is an essential component, where the collection, services and their outreaching capacity are monitored. In the recent past, significant developments have been reported in library and information services and the libraries are shouldering newer responsibilities in higher education. Hence the standards for assessing the quality of library services need to be updated. It is true that libraries largely support learning, teaching and research processes in institutions. So far, mostly, the classroom has, by and large, been the primary source of learning, with library accorded a supplementary status. In times ahead, one can foresee a role reversal, and indeed, in the increasingly learner-centric educational effort, one may already be witness to the library becoming the primary learning resource in many instances, with conventional classroom teaching playing mainly a facilitating role. In case of Open Distance Learning (ODL), this has always been the case.

It is in this backdrop, that the NAAC has developed a set of objective indicators to facilitate assessment of the Library and Information Services of academic institutions. The guidelines are derived from an understanding of the global developments in the activities and services of libraries, the national environment, and the outcome of a recent national-level workshop held at the NAAC, in which college and university librarians and library scholars from across the country had participated. The parameters are defined by considering certain factors such as age of the institutions, courses offered by them and so on. The institutions are grouped into two broad categories: one, the university-level institutions (these include universities, deemed-to-be universities, autonomous colleges, and postgraduate colleges) and the other, the colleges (affiliated/constituent colleges). A set of indicators for university/autonomous college libraries is presented in the following pages.

## **A. MANAGEMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES**

In universities (and in large colleges as well), the library system normally consists of a central 'university library' and 'branch or department libraries'. The large campus environment often defines the use of the library in terms of the strength and size of the text and research collection. The central library supports the general information requirements of the users whereas the department libraries cater to the specific subject needs of the users, both for study and research. By considering a set of minimum parameters listed below would help to ensure quality in library systems of university and autonomous colleges.

### **a. Number of days the Library is kept open**

This is to help in knowing whether the library is kept open on Saturdays, Sundays and other holidays so as to facilitate use by students and faculty.

### **b. Working hours**

This parameter refers to opening and closing hours of the library, whether library opens before the institution's opening time and closes after the closing time so that readers have an opportunity to use the library without disturbance to their academic schedules.

### **c. Library Advisory Committee**

The formation of the library committee with an equal representation by faculty and students, and the role of the committee and its functions in developing the library services are to be well defined.

### **d. Manpower development**

Qualifications and experience of the librarian and the library staff should be on par with that of the academic staff and should fulfill the norms prescribed by UGC/AICTE/NCTE/ICMR etc. for guaranteeing a professional approach in delivering information services. Training programs and professional involvement of library professionals need to be encouraged. Total qualified and semi-skilled manpower, the ratio between number of users and collection, needs to be maintained as per UGC/AICTE and government norms for promoting a better library environment.

### **e. Infrastructure of the Library**

The Managements may look into the aspect of location of the library, to see whether the library has a place of its own with proper planning and organization of space, and has proper furniture, necessary quantity and quality of reading chairs, tables, display racks, magazine racks, etc. The minimum carpet area for service counters and other sections of the library as prescribed by government and other governing bodies are to be taken note of along with proper ventilation, fans, and water and toilet facilities. Fixing of notice boards, research cubicles for scholars/teachers, providing

uninterrupted power supply systems (UPS, generator, etc.) along with due attention to overall building maintenance and cleanliness also need consideration.

#### **f. ICT Infrastructure and Know-how**

Quantification and computer facilities, systems for enabling e-library services, etc. need to be determined, taking into account the total number of users, type of users and programs offered. The library should have networking facility and be a part of institutional network, with fully implemented automation. The bandwidth of Internet access and subscription, organization and access of e- resources, etc. are important factors in the transmission of digital information services.

#### **g. Overall policy of the institution on library**

The Library should have an approved policy on the collection development support, introduction of new services, support in terms of fund, annual increase of budget, binding procedure, removal of obsolete books, and policy on loss of books and an ongoing commitment of the institution in deputing library professionals for continuing and further education.

#### **h. Budget**

There should be a proportionate growth in the library budget. Budget for different documents such as books, journals and other resources and ICT infrastructure are to be defined as to the scope of the institute. Sources of income other than state, central and UGC grants may be identified for enhancing the collection and services.

### **B. COLLECTION AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO USERS**

#### **(i). Collection**

The library is required to provide varied, authoritative and up-to-date resources that support its mission and the needs of its users. Resources may be provided onsite or from remote storage locations, on the main

campus and/or at off-campus locations. Moreover, resources may be in a variety of formats, including print or hard copy, online electronic text or images, and other media. A university/autonomous college should contain the quantity of resources as prescribed by the government, UGC/AICTE and other governing bodies. They may generally be in the form of books, text books, standard reference, current journals which include national, international and peer reviewed journals, back volumes, e- resources such as full text/secondary databases, CDs/DVDs, AV materials, etc.. The Library may maintain a special collection of national and international agencies (World Bank, UNO, EU, UGC, DST, etc.) government documents, book-bank, rare materials, collections for civil service/competitive exams, etc. Even with limited budget, the library may explore ways, such as open access sources to provide quality resources in the most efficient manner possible. Collection currency and strength may be maintained through judicious weeding-out policies.

#### **(ii). Services**

The library has a key role in supporting the academic activities of the institutions by establishing, maintaining, and promoting the library and information services, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The library offers a wide range of services from reference to electronic information services. University and autonomous college libraries may answer the following basic questions while ensuring the appropriate services.

1. Does the library provide the following facilities/services to the students?
  - Publication and Research Support services
  - Information display and notification
  - Bibliographic compilation
  - ILL/Resource Sharing
  - Reprographic facilities

Book bank  
 User orientation  
 Computers  
 OPAC/Indexing services  
 Audio-visual resources  
 Internet  
 Digital library services  
 Any other

- Ratio of library books to number of students enrolled
- Number of log-in's into the e-library services/e-documents delivered per month (Efforts made towards developing on-campus electronic environment and encouraging e-deliveries may be mentioned)
- Network of academic libraries under the university's jurisdiction
- Membership of library networks (INFLIBNET/DELNET) and Consortia (UGC INFONET/ INDEST) or any other

**C. EXTENT OF THE USE OF SERVICES**

Performance evaluation of university and autonomous college libraries needs to be carried out at regular intervals in order to enhance the quality and its sustenance. Normally, the evaluation can be made on the compilation of statistics based on use. The following parameters would help in assessing the extent of use of library and its services.

- I.a). Average number of books issued/returned per day.
- b). Number of reference enquiries (users) on an average per month (percentage may be specified)
- c). Number of services delivered per-user per month
- d). Average number of users who visited/documents consulted per month

- II. Compiling the information on number of Log- ins into the E-Library Services/E- documents delivered per month.

**D. BEST PRACTICES FOR UNIVERSITY/AUTONOMOUS COLLEGE**

**LIBRARIES**

In the library context, the 'best practice' may be viewed as one that enhances user satisfaction contributing to full realization of one's academic potential. Listed below is a suggestive set of best practices.

1. Library Brochure/Dairies /Information Packs.
2. Central Reference Library for the use of constituent and affiliated colleges.
3. A feedback from stakeholders through scientifically designed and analyzed questionnaire, at least twice a year.
4. Compiling and displaying of student/teacher attendance statistics (graphic) on the notice boards of the library as well as in the departments.
5. Communication of current awareness to different user groups.
6. Information literacy programs
  - Beginning of the academic year with a general presentation
  - Periodically for need based groups
  - Teaching library programs
7. Creation of digital Repositories
  - Article Repositories
  - Publication Repositories
  - Question paper Repositories
  - Course ware Repositories

8. Displaying new arrivals of books/journals and circulating a list to different departments that use the library.
9. Suggestion box and timely response.
10. Development of a website/web page for the library including all the services and necessary information.
11. Establishing linkage with other libraries and avail free/ nominal fee services.
12. Initiatives for research projects/ turn key projects from the library.
13. Development of electronic environment on the campus and encouragement to e-deliveries.
14. Developing linkage with the functional units of the universities.
  - Information Center
  - Computer Center
  - Department of Computer Science
  - Student welfare Directorate/Training & Placement Cell
15. Conducting Exhibitions/Demonstrations/Lectures on Current Issues.
16. Building a Network of College Libraries under the aegis of the University.

\*\*\*\*\*