



## NATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION COUNCIL, BENGALURU

### Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA) A brief advisory note

#### Context:

The **National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)** has evolved tools and guidelines for improving quality for different levels of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and for its sustenance. By establishing Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and undergoing External Quality Assurance process it's possible to continuously strive for excellence.

The monitoring and evaluation of the institutional processes require a carefully structured system of internal and external review. The NAAC expects the Institutions to undertake continuous Academic and Administrative Audits (AAA). This brief note is intended to serve as advisory to all accredited HEIs who volunteer to undertake AAA.

#### About Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA):

Academic and Administrative Audit (AAA), are very essential for the excellence in Higher Education. These are interrelated concepts. Thus in order to have a quality oriented academic, there should be a strong administrative background.

**Academic Audit:** - Academic audit can be understood as a scientific and systematic method of reviewing the quality of academic process in the institution. It is related with the quality assurance and enhancing the quality of academic activities in HEIs.

**Administrative Audit:** - It can be defined as a process of evaluating the efficiency and effectiveness of the administrative procedure. It includes assessment of policies, strategies & functions of the various administrative departments, control of the overall administrative system etc.

### Major objectives of AAA:

1. To understand the existing system and assess the strengths and weaknesses of the Departments and Administrative Units and to suggest the methods for improvement and for overcoming the weaknesses.
2. To identify the bottlenecks in the existing administrative mechanisms and to identify the opportunities for academic reforms, administrative reforms and examination reforms etc.
3. To evaluate the optimum utilization of financial and other resources.
4. To suggest the methods for continuous improvement of quality keeping in mind criteria and reports by NAAC and other bodies.

**Approach towards AAA:** - World class Universities or institutions of eminence cannot be built overnight or legislated into existence. For that strict and continuous Audit of Academic and Administrative process should be adopted. Both the AAA can be done internally and externally. Internally it should be done by the IQAC of the institutions, while externally it can be done by the University (for Colleges) or by other peers. In some states it is organised by state level agencies. **Knowledge Consortium of Gujarat (KCG)** has developed a very good model of AAA in state of Gujarat. It is also learnt that many of the HEIs volunteering for third and fourth cycles of accreditation have done AAA.

### Methodology:

NAAC has not prescribed any specific methodology or guidelines for conducting AAA. It is expected that each HEI may evolve its own guidelines and methodology by learning from good practices followed by leading institutions within and outside India. The successful practices can be adapted to suit specific context and requirement of HEI on various aspects such as given below:

- **Criteria:** IQAC of HEIs can decide set of criteria to be used for AAA. Some HEIs follow NAAC criteria as it compliments periodic assessment and accreditation by NAAC. Some HEIs have developed slightly different set of criteria. It is also learnt that some HEIs have taken NAAC departmental evaluation format and have done department-wise also.

- **Periodicity:** Some HEIs undertake the AAA exercise on annual basis. However many HEIs prefer to do this exercise once in three years or five years. An internal exercise every year and involvement of external peers once in a three or five years could be a good option.
- **Selection of peers/experts:** Since peer review is backbone of AAA, similar to accreditation by NAAC, it is important to select good experts as peers for AAA. Even though no specific qualifications can be prescribed for good peers, it is vital that peers should be able to command respect from faculty on the basis of their credentials such as academic distinctions, experience as reviewer on NAAC or similar bodies and professionalism.
- **Process:** HEIs can device its own process including self-evaluation by faculty and administrative units, schedule of onsite visit, format of report and outcome etc... Many HEIs try to follow NAAC's process and formats with some changes.
- **Outcome:** The outcome of AAA may be placed before Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and Governing Bodies (GB) of the HEIs. Plan of action can be prepared to implement the suggestions accepted by IQAC and GB.

It is important that HEIs should formally prepare the guidelines / statues / ordinances for AAA, so that it becomes an institutionalised practice. As the facilitator of quality culture in higher education, the NAAC will be taking efforts to promote any good practices of AAA brought to its attention. At present, NAAC has sponsored a good number of seminars across the country on the theme of AAA. The HEIs are advised to take benefit from deliberation of these seminars to update recent trends in AAA as tool for continuous quality improvement.

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Prof. D.P. Singh  
Director, NAAC