

# Aligning Teacher Education with NAAC Standards: The Role of IQAC

**Dr. Rashmi Ranjan Mohapatra**

Assistant Professor

Academy of Business Administration, Harida, Kuruda, Balasore, 756056

Email: [dr.rashmيرانjanmohapatra@gmail.com](mailto:dr.rashmيرانjanmohapatra@gmail.com)

## Abstract

Accelerated educational reforms, regulatory structures and shifting expectations among the public, accreditation has become a major concern in education of the educators. With the growing emphasis on accountability, transparency, and continual improvement, ensuring quality in teacher education is a vital goal. The most important development in higher education in the twenty-first century is the revival of high-quality education. As recommended by regulatory and accrediting agencies especially the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC), the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is essential to the institutionalisation of quality culture in educational establishments. As a strategic tool, IQAC helps in integrating educational objectives with national and international standards of excellence. By supporting outcome-based education, interdisciplinary integration, and conformity with professional teaching standards, IQAC helps teacher to enhance their professional competencies. Through learner-centred pedagogy, hands-on experience, classroom-based training, and internship programs, it ensures productive curriculum transfer resulting in the strengthening aspiring teachers' professional readiness. The paper focusses as how IQAC could enhance educational quality of teacher through facilitating meticulous planning, persistent scrutiny, and evidence-based improvement techniques. IQAC's role in boosting faculty quality through organised professional development programs, instructional creativity, ICT integration, and research capacity building is further explored in this study. The study examines how IQAC might improve management, leadership, and governance at the institutional level by encouraging transparent quality assurance procedures, best practice documentation, and participatory decision-making. A conceptual framework that views IQAC as a perpetual, recurring, and collaborative quality development mechanism in the education of teachers is presented in the paper's conclusion. It makes the case that enhancing IQAC procedures and institutional dedication can greatly raise the calibre and applicability of teacher training, producing capable, thoughtful, and socially conscious educators.

**Keywords:** Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Quality Assurance, NAAC Accreditation, ICT integration

## Introduction

The system of higher education in India has expanded significantly with a tremendous shift in the number of students enrolled in them, however the modern era is now defined by the "quality in education" as opposed to the "quantity." In light of the current pressures placed on education due to global competition, quality has become essential. All around the world, higher education institutions place a great priority on quality. Improving teaching and learning methods is an ongoing endeavour. The University Grants Commission (UGC), the national regulator of higher education, standardised the quality evaluation procedure after Indian independence. In 1994, two prominent institutions, the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council of India (NAAC) were established for evaluating and accrediting Indian higher educational institutions.

These days, the idea of higher education—which encompasses academic knowledge and personality development that fosters a positive attitude in students—has grown in importance. The pillars that support the quality of higher education include curriculum relevance, institutional accountability, stakeholder efficiency and equity in higher education. With the entry of private colleges, private universities and international institutes of educational excellence, the role of IQAC has been tremendous to maintain and foster quality education in respective educational institutions. Institutions should

be encouraged to create their own internal systems for maintaining, ensuring, and improving the quality culture of education (Hussain,2008).

### Quality as envisioned by NAAC

How a person views quality is always a subjective assessment, quality is therefore still illusive. “Aristotle” viewed quality to be a habit. Quality can be considered as a strategy with no alternatives. In many ways, quality is a mental attitude that is essential to quality assurance. When considered in the context of education, quality appears in the form of inputs (number of educators, amount of training for educators, number of publications), processes (amount of direct time spent on teaching, degree of engagement), outputs (assessment scores, graduation rates), and consequences (how well one does in subsequent employment) can all be considered (Chapman & Adams, 2002). Adams (1998) highlighted that the reputation of a program or institution, the degree to which education has impacted knowledge of learners, attitudes, values, and behaviour, or a comprehensive theory or ideology of learning acquisition and application can all be used to interpret quality.

A thorough framework for changing the Indian educational system is provided by the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. The NEP-2020 places a strong emphasis on an inclusive approach to teacher education, emphasising technological integration, experiential learning, and diverse viewpoints. Important changes brought about by NEP-2020 include the creation of multifunctional teacher education institutions, the incorporation of vocational and artistic courses into teacher preparation programs, and the focus on ongoing professional development via digital platforms (Choudhury, 2024).

The NAAC has established its own standards and characteristics to gauge the calibre of educational institutions. The NAAC defines quality as follows:

- Pursuit of excellence
- Knowledge of the concept
- Action Orientation
- Learner-centric approach
- Innovation for change
- Competency-building training
- All-year-round activities

Quality in education can be interpreted from three different aspects. At first, it depicts the features of the treatment, including the classroom setting, the teacher's way of teaching, the program's content, instructional strategies, the teacher-to-student ratio, the teachers' viewpoints, and even their degree of training. Measuring the impacts of education is a second way to assess quality. This might range from more ethical and long-term outcomes like the formation of democratic attitudes to more immediate and practical objectives like a smooth transfer to the next educational level. The process variables are included in the third category of criterion. These are aspects of the student or student engagement in the classroom (Laevers, 1994).

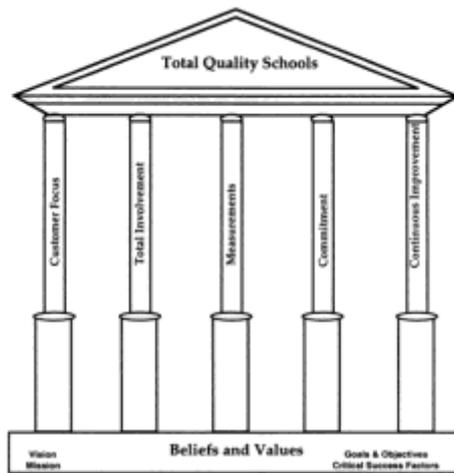
### Need for accreditation

The process of self-regulation and peer assessment that educational institutions voluntarily embrace is called accreditation. It results in enhancement of credibility and is generally done by a national accreditation agency. A college's accreditation is a confirmation that it offers a calibre of education that the educational system acknowledges and that the general public has a right to demand.

The national government of India placed a strong emphasis on the evaluation and certification of institutions of higher learning in light of the deficiency of quality among young people and guarantee high-quality education, educational institutions must be accredited. With a focus to develop quality, all colleges and universities must be accredited in accordance with the new central government policy, and institutions that receive a B+ accreditation will also receive funding. This certification establishes credibility, accountability, and uniform performance in curriculum, faculty, and infrastructure. In addition to giving students access to scholarships, transfer credits, and improved career possibilities, it assists institutions in identifying their strengths and areas for growth.

Additionally, quality education may imply simply the attaining of specified targets and objectives. More comprehensive views are also found, and interpretation of quality may be based on an institution's or program's reputation, the extent to which schooling has influenced change in student knowledge, attitudes, values, and behavior, or a complete theory or ideology of acquisition and application of learning (Adams 1998).

The degree to which an educational institution helps students attain the desired learning outcomes through efficient teaching-learning procedures, pertinent curricula, qualified faculty, sufficient facilities, inclusive practices, and mechanisms for ongoing improvement is referred to as quality in education. The frameworks of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) and the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) serve as major guidelines for quality in Indian higher education.



Source: Arcaro, J. (2024). Quality in education: An implementation handbook

The Total Quality school model focuses on the pillars of quality for education as they act as an initiative to develop quality. Quality education must be visualized as a tool that helps in developing students as a valued citizen those who are prepared to meet future challenges. It also makes stakeholders focus on developing quality necessary for the survival of the organisation in the long run. However, selecting the area of education that will be the focus of attention presents a challenge in defining the quality of education. Any significant component of a system, such as infrastructure, school buildings, administration, teacher training, educational materials, teaching, or student accomplishments, may legitimately be the subject of quality-related enquiries due to the wide range of goals and elements of education (Arcaro, 2024).

## Review of Literature

Quality in teacher education has been a subject of sustained academic and policy discourse due to its direct impact on education and national development. In addition to meeting legal requirements, schools that train teachers and should strive for ongoing improvement in their curricula, pedagogy, and faculty members' professional competence. It is conceivable as it would help to meet the educational challenges presented by increased diversity of learners and higher expectations for learning if they acquire knowledge that helps to face different circumstances (Darling-Hammond, 2017). Altbach and De Wit (2018) through their studies identified that a methodological and holistic approach through the designing of curriculum, practices involved in teaching and learning and methodological approaches that focus on research governed by institutional oversight is a major requirement for accreditation among teachers that would ensure excellence. It has been revealed that just compliance with fundamental criteria is inadequate for attaining excellence, hence necessitating the establishment of internal mechanisms such as IQAC within institutions to enhance quality.

Stella and Gnanam (2004) asserted that the IQAC transcends mere compliance; it serves as a strategic mechanism for educational planning, qualitative oversight, and institutional development. The efficient function of the IQAC enables structured documentation, data-based decision-making as well as institutional vision with reference to accreditation parameters (Kumar & Sharma 2020). Professional efficiency and academic activity are closely related to each other as far as the IQAC is concerned.

Curriculum development and reinforcement are necessary for increasing teachers' efficacy. IQAC is important for achieving academic relevance, alignment with educational goals, and addressing the current challenging issues like egalitarian education, technological competency and value education (MHRD, 2020). Further enquiry reveals that IQAC-based academic planning increases the outcome based education besides strengthening practical and internship components -they are essential to teacher preparation. But some academics argue that even in most schools and colleges, the combination of IQAC efforts for curriculum is restricted to preparing paper work rather than to a significant reform of curriculum (Singh and Mishra, 2018). This stresses the demand for more IQAC integration within curriculum design and transaction processes.

As teaching and evaluation techniques are important indications of institutional excellence, the IQAC-led monitoring of evaluation methods guarantees that students receive transparent, fair, and timely feedback. Rao & Patel (2021) found that IQAC efforts such as faculty growth initiatives, pedagogical training sessions, and feedback systems improve the effectiveness of teaching and student engagement.

IQAC in educational institutions oversees peer tutoring, classroom-based instruction, and internship supervision. Educational institutions with active IQACs have greater alignment of theoretical education and practice in the classroom (Kaur, 2019). Nonetheless, impediments to effective implementation include faculty reluctance to modify their teaching methods and a lack of ICT skills. NAAC emphasises investigation, creative thinking, and outreach efforts as markers of institutional quality, IQAC helps in facilitating the promotion of a research culture by organising research methodology workshops, promoting empirical study, and funding publication projects. Studies along with research are especially crucial for enhancing classroom practices (Choudhary & Verma, 2020).

Extension activities like community engagement, school adoption programs, and teacher training workshops have been shown to improve the social relevance of teacher education. However, data indicates that research effectiveness among teachers remains low due to large teaching loads, insufficient financing, and a lack of research mentorship (UGC, 2021). Student assistance and advancement are critical aspects of quality assurance. Sharma & Joshi (2020) visualized that IQAC-coordinated mentorship systems, guidance and counselling services, and grievance redressal processes improve student satisfaction and retention.

The feedback mechanisms of the IQAC make an impact on teaching-learning process and in the development of institutional infrastructure. Nevertheless, scholars stress the importance of thorough assessment on performance regarding those feedback systems to avoid their being hollowed out as if they were only formal measures. Efficient management and organization are crucial for maintaining high quality programs. Collaborative leadership is supported by the IQAC through promoting data driven decision making, quality audit and documentation of best practices (Naidu & Reddy, 2019). SSR and AQAR reports have been proved to inculcate institutional introspection and responsibility.

IQAC plays a vital role in the sustenance and enhancement of an institution's quality values, which include ethical practices, social concern and sensitivity to issues of inclusiveness. Studies show that it is the organizations with proactive IQACs may incorporate good standards in to their culture. The goal of the IQAC is to make a significant and meaningful contribution in the future towards quality improvement activities on campus, such as creating benchmarks for performance evaluation and promoting academic research in order to monitor quality enhancement (NAAC, 2020). It represents an interface between accreditation standards and institutional development. In addition, the IQAC organizes microteaching and training/ internship programmes facilitating interface of theory and practice. But obstacles, like recalcitrant professors unwilling to adopt new teaching methods and a lack of digital savvy, have also proven difficult.

### Research Gaps

Based on an extensive literature review and insights drawn from accreditation reports, it is found that quality assurance in teacher education has for the most part been addressed at the level of policy or ideas, with little empirical work on the practical effectiveness of the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) in teacher education. Despite the recognition of IQAC as a key tool by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) that ensures quality enhancement, majority of studies focus on its structure and necessary documentation rather than its actual influence on academic practices and institutional functioning.

Furthermore, no criterion-referred empirical work is available on IQAC practices in the context of NAAC Criteria I-VII vis-à-vis faculty development. Current studies often approach quality assurance as a general problem on the level of higher education-regardless of specific features for teacher learning. Furthermore, the perspectives of other stakeholders, such as lecturers and institution administrators, regarding the efficiency of IQAC activities have not been widely studied. Most of the prevailing studies are based on single-source data, which limits our knowledge about how IQAC influences curriculum transactions, teaching-learning practices, faculty professionalism, research environs and student counselling.

Another major void is over-emphasis on compliance-centric outcomes such as AQAR generation and accreditation scores, without due emphasis on the role of IQAC in enabling continuous quality enhancement and development of a quality culture. There is a paucity of literature pertaining to the question that whether IQAC operates as a forward looking, developmental exercise or only responds to procedural need of teacher education.

Lastly, there is no record of best practices and problems faced during the implementation of IQAC in Teacher Education Institutes, especially from an Indian perspective. This inadequacy limits the access to practical knowledge which might support institutional leaders and policymakers in improving IQAC effectiveness and aligning it more closely with the NAAC and NBA quality frameworks.

### **Problem Statement**

In order to produce qualified, moral, and thoughtful educators who can meet the ever-changing demands of the educational system, it is essential to educate teachers. In order to institutionalise a culture of continuous quality improvement, regulatory organisations like the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) and accreditation organisations like the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) in India have emphasised the creation of Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs). Constitution of IQACs, maintaining efficacy, defining its scope, and its impact on institutions is still a long way to go.

### **Objective of the study**

The objectives of the study are:

- To investigate how the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) contributes to the improvement and maintenance of quality in teacher education.
- To evaluate academic and administrative initiatives started by IQAC with the goal of enhancing teacher education's teaching-learning procedures.
- To evaluate IQAC's contribution to professional integrity among teacher educators, research promotion, and faculty development programs.
- To determine the obstacles IQAC faces while putting quality initiatives into practice in emphasizing developing quality among teachers.
- To make recommendations on ways to improve IQAC operations in order to guarantee ongoing quality improvement and accreditation ready.

### **Research Methodology**

The research uses a descriptive and interdisciplinary approach. The information's were collected from the secondary sources including NAAC manuals, NCTE regulations, policy manuals and annual IQAC reports of the institutions, academic papers etc. The study is qualitative in nature and aimed at comparing literature to come up with a compounding view on the role of IQAC towards teacher's growth. The NAAC criterion framework was used as an instrument to classify and analyse the IQAC-initiating projects. Institutional records that included IQAC meeting minutes, AQAR, SSR, feedback reports, and faculty development program records were also reviewed to gain further insight into the study.

### **Role of the IQAC**

Teachers and their behaviour during instruction are often seen as convenient measures of school quality, and they are often at the centre of efforts to improve quality, even if the notion of excellent instruction is still elusive (Chapman &

Adams, 2002). One of the primary endeavours of IQAC initiatives is the enhancement of quality of faculties. In consistent with NAAC's emphasis on research, innovation, and advancement, it additionally encourages joint endeavours in publication and research. In order to improve instructional efficacy, digital literacy, and creative evaluation techniques, the IQAC also places a strong emphasis on incorporating the use of technology for communication and information (ICT) in classroom instruction and assessment. Furthermore, the significance of IQAC as a contributing factor for ensuring effective learner support and progression (one of the important NAAC assessment aspect). IQAC ensures steady enhancement of the overall performance of the institution in academics and other service aspects by regularly receiving and aggregating all relevant feedback from students, parents, alumni and other stakeholders.

The role of the IQAC to promote quality practices among teachers is crucial. The objective is to enhance the governance of institute by promoting group decision making, while maintaining a record of best practices and adhering to standards set by NAAC and NBA. Quality Requirement, NAAC, OBE and Best Practics to make them able to integrate quality concerns with academic activities are imparted by IQAC so that they can adjust academic activities as per the parameters set out in vision / mission of IQAC along NAAC accreditation. The IQAC regularly organizes Faculty Development Programmes (FDPs), Orientation programmes, Refresher Courses, Workshops, Seminars and Training programmes to strengthen the teaching skills, subject knowledge and professional competency of teachers. These efforts support educators in remaining updated about educational trends, curriculum changes, and competency-based learning methods.

To help the faculty to adopt new & innovative methods of student-centered learning such as blended Learning, experiential learning, flipped classrooms, technology enhanced teaching and Strategies for inclusive classroom. IQAC promotes the use of reflective teaching methodologies and professional development through tools such as the Academic Performance Indicators (API), student feedback, peers' teaching evaluation and self-assessment. IQAC imparts skills to teachers on digital tools, Learning Management System, e-content development, MOOCs and online test in order to enhance their digital competence levels. IQAC regularly collects, analyses and puts to use data on teacher performance and development. Such an evidence-based approach facilitates strategic planning, quality improvement initiatives, and organizational decisionmaking to help sustain teacher development. IQAC initiates mentoring schemes and leadership development programmes for preparing educators for academic as well as administrative leadership. It promotes professional ethics, academic integrity, gender sensitivity, inclusivity and social responsibility; all inherent in a good educator.

Setting of IQAC in an educational institution signifies the optimum utilization of resources-physical, academic, and digital. This is being done by providing access to libraries, ICT services, laboratories and e-learning materials in an attempt to underpin the delivery of high-quality teaching and research. The IQAC is the prime driver of a quality culture and takes all the initiatives that facilitate quality improvement in the Institution. Its work extends beyond paperwork for accreditation to nurture a culture focused on continuous quality improvement". They ensure through participatory processes and research-based practices that the Quality Development becomes a part of the institution's system.

Accordingly, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell is essential to improve and sustain the quality of education by adopting maximum continuous improvement measures according to NAAC standards. The IQAC functions to support institutional success focusing on curriculum development, faculty training, research promotion, student support, good governance and value orientation. Reinforcement of IQAC processes and internal stakeholders involvement may improve the quality and effectiveness of education in a changing terrain.

**Criterion-wise Mapping of IQAC Practices and Findings**

NAAC Criterion	Tools Used	IQAC Practices Examined	Findings
I: Curricular Aspects	Questionnaire, Documents	Curriculum planning, practicum monitoring	IQAC strengthened curriculum relevance and professional alignment
II: Teaching–Learning	Student Feedback	Pedagogical innovation, evaluation	Improved learner engagement and assessment transparency
III: Research & Extension	Records, Interviews	FDPs, action research	Enhanced research culture and community linkage
IV: Infrastructure	Observation	ICT and library support	Improved learning environment
V: Student Support	Student & Alumni Feedback	Mentoring, career guidance	Positive impact on progression and readiness
VI: Governance	Interviews	Quality audits, AQAR	Strengthened accountability and leadership
VII: Best Practices	Documentation	Institutional values	Promotion of ethics, sustainability, inclusiveness

**Findings**

Studies proved that it is very important for IQAC to empower the continuous quality improvement within the teaching staff (12). By setting up regular academic assessments, benchmarks and practices IQAC promotes organized development, implementation and quality measurement of Academic processes. Researches have shown that the IQAC plays an important role in promoting the academic environment and encouraging teachers to adopt a quality improvement approach. The standard procedures and benchmarks set out by IQAC, with regular internal academic evaluations lead to systematic planning / development, execution and analysis of various activities. The IQAC has made a significant contribution in the generation of intellectual capital.

IQAC-led training and monitoring methods encourage faculty members to use learner-centred methodologies of instruction, technology-driven training, outcome-based education (OBE), and introspective teaching practices. Studies undertaken reveal that IQAC efficiently promotes faculty development programs (FDPs), workshops, seminars, and training that are linked with current educational demands. These programs improve the pedagogical competency, research abilities, digital literacy, and assessment methods of teacher educators. IQAC plays an important role in safeguarding curriculum relevance by supporting curriculum revision and enrichment based on stakeholder feedback, incorporating NEP 2020 standards, including quality education, equitable learning, digital literacy, and skill-based components.

The IQAC-driven reforms to assessment methods emphasise transparency, fairness, and continual evaluation. The use of rubrics, formative assessment, student self-evaluation, and feedback-based improvement methods improves learning outcomes in teacher education programmes. Various research findings show that IQAC contributes greatly to the establishment of a research-oriented academic environment by encouraging faculty and student-teachers to do action

research, publish papers, work on projects, innovate, and participate in academic forums. IQAC interventions improve student support services by providing mentoring, remedial instruction, career assistance, counselling, and conflict redressal methods. These efforts have a positive impact on student teachers' academic performance, professional preparedness, and employability.

IQAC sets up systematic procedures for gathering and assessing input from students, graduates, companies, and practice-teaching schools. The input is practically applied to academic planning and institutional advancement. The research found that IQAC facilitates an enhancement of education-related internship by underpinning standard procedures, practicum observation and partnership involvements with the partner institutions to grow professionalism competencies for student-teachers. IQAC encourages participatory leadership in the academic activities by decentralizing decision making processes, quality circles or committees help to develop a work culture emphasizing the importance of achieving excellence. But lately institutions are combining data analytics, indicators of academic performance, and institution measures to monitor progress and take evidence-based corrective steps. As a result, IQAC functions as a strategic quality enhancer in teacher development, fostering transparency, creativity, and excellence, which in turn facilitates professional development and significantly enhances the overall quality of teacher education.

### Discussion

IQAC is a significant base for the work culture of quality at teacher. Using structured quality assurance initiatives such as academic audits, action plans and periodic reviews, IQAC makes adequate/'sufficient' quality enhancement an ongoing institutional practice rather than one-time achievement driven by accreditation. This is consistent with NAAC's focus on quality enhancement and internal systems of quality assurance. IQAC interventions have had a beneficial impact on teaching-learning processes by emphasizing learner-centric, creative and result-oriented practices. This change signals a move from the conventional form of didactic learning to a more reflective and interactive methodology which is crucial in equipping future competent teachers.

These measures are in line with the emphasis of NEP 2020 on immersive, integrated and competency-based teacher training. The conversation points to the fact that teacher educators skills can be significantly improved through IQAC driven faculty development programmes. An ongoing diet of teaching innovation, methodologies and digital tools increases teaching efficacy. This finding raises the assumption that teacher quality is what really matters for quality education and highlights the role of IQAC to develop this capacity. The findings indicate that IQAC increases the organizational readiness of higher education institutions for NAAC accreditation through systematic documentation.

### Conclusion

The report reiterates the importance of IQAC in enhancing quality of teacher education in India. IQAC is a significant instrument for academic and administrative quality facilitation, thus helping the institution to realize its ultimate objective of enhancing the overall quality of the education, being imparted by the institutions. In fact, from the observations it can be recommended that an effective functioning of IQAC does not only make keeping with NAAC and NBA standards but also helps in imbibing a culture of synonymous academic proficient faculty/student instructors accountability and commitment.

Criteria-wise analysis shows that IQAC helps to enhance curriculum relevance and deliver the curriculum, promote innovative methodologies of teaching-learning process, foster quality in academic (and extension) activities and instil values among students like inclusiveness, ethics and eco-sensibility. Through a fusion of feedback, participatory governance and protocol-led documentation, IQAC facilitates teacher educator institutions to move from compliance-based mode to quality enhancement paradigm as the latter reflect national accreditation and regulatory practices.

Yet the report also sounds some challenges like low faculty awareness of quality assurance systems, underutilization of ICT technology and perception that IQAC is compliance based in some institutions. Challenging these concerns necessitates a proactive plan, need for capacity building and to enhance institutional commitment towards IQAC as not only an obligatory procedure but developmental tool. The IQAC that finally rises from the wreckage is a mechanism of strategic importance in promoting teacher education, which shall transcend the mere fulfillment of mandatory requirements and will play an active role in quality enhancement activities. Correct functioning of NCTE guarantees

that institutions not merely fulfill the criteria required for accreditation but also prepare competent, reflective and socially concerned teachers who can serve as an asset to India's developing educational environment.

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