Paper ID: HE-030

Conference Theme: Governance in Higher Education The Importance of Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) for Tertiary Level Eductation in Bangladesh

[1]F. Hossain, [2]N. Rahman, [3]A. K. Arafin, [4]N.I. Islam

[1]Director of IQAC & International Affairs, Daffodil

International University,102, Suk rabad, Mirpur Road, Dhanmondi, Dhaka - 1207, Bangladesh,

international@daffodilvarsity.edu.bd

[2]Senior Lecturer, Daffodil International Academy, nayeema@daffodil.ac

[3]Associate Professor & Additional Director of IQAC, Daffodil International University,

skak _arafin@daffodilvarsity.edu.bd

[4]Office Manager, IQAC, Daffodil International University, iqac-office@daffodilvarsity.edu.bd

Abstract

The purpose of this article is to create aw areness about the importance of Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and it s activit ies includ ing the capacity build ing of the national framew ork of higher education in Bang ladesh. The present government of Ban gladesh took the init iat ive in the year 2015 to establish IQAC as a pilot project in both private and public universities to ensure qualit y education provided in tertiary level. Currently, there are 38 private and 31 public universit ies under this pr oject by the supervision of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), UGC for three years and after completion of the project IQAC w ill be an integral part of each university. He number of higher education institutions in Bang ladesh has remarkably increased during t he last one decade. At present, the numbers of private and public universit ies in Bang ladesh are 95 and 40 respectively. About 3.2 million students are studying now in these universities and approximately 0.7 million graduates come out each year. However, the scope for the employment rate of graduates in Bang ladesh is insufficient; many of them w ould have to fight for employment in local as w ell as g lobal job markets. In order to get a job w ithin and outside of Bang ladesh, the graduates must have to pr epare themselves in the context of both national and global requirements; otherw ise their opportunities for jobs w ould become very narrow in the near future. To increase the grow th of the employment rate, the quality of the graduates has to be of international standard in terms of their (i) know ledge, attitudes and soft-skills, (ii) adaptat ion w ith updated course curricula to meet the g lobal requirements, iii) learning process using Outcome Based Teaching Learning (OBTL) strategies and (iv) engagem ent in creative, evaluat ing and analyt ical assessment procedures follow ing Bloom's Taxonomy to a large extent in the coursework. The objective of IQAC is to ensure the qualit y edu cation, develop skilled graduates w ith high employability in local as w ell as global context.

Keywords: quality assurance, national accreditation, national quality f ramework

1. Introduction

The idea of quality is not new, nor that of quality assurance (QA). Neither, for that matter, are concerns on quality. There are different approaches to quality assurance. The meaning of quality assurance may vary depending on the field of activity. Different countries have evolved QA models for their higher education systems as necessitated by their unique national contexts. Nevertheless, in all activities related to quality assurance across the world, there lies a common unifying thread that laces together the basic concepts.

2. Defining Quality

The British Standard Institution (BSI) defines quality as ¡§the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs¡¨ (1). There are five approaches in considering quality (2):

- Quality as exceptional (highest standards)
- Quality as confronting (Challenging) to standards
- Quality as fitness for purpose
- Quality as effectiveness in achieving institutional goals
- Quality as meeting customers' stated or implied needs

3. Importance of Quality Education

Quality in higher education is a dynamic entity which is the outcome of interaction among many factors including inter alia, leadership, quality of faculty and students, infrastructure facilities, research and learning environment, governance, strategic planning, assessment procedures, and market force. Quality has a few central ideas around which the whole concept revolves: Quality as absolute, Quality as relative, Quality as a process, and Quality as culture. Quality is the means through which an institution can guarantee with confidence and certainty that the standards of its educational provision are being maintained and enhanced (Quality Assurance Agency UK); Quality has become an invaluable part of augmentation (increase) plan of Higher Education espoused by the Higher Education Commission.

International human mobility has a meaningful connection with the quality of universities all over the world. A graduate with a particular educational background moves to foreign country, he/she needs to retain the same level of educational quality and skills of that country. The graduates from Bangladesh can find out better job opportunities in abroad if their skills are compatible with foreign skills. Here, IQAC will play a vital role to establish and ensure the quality of higher education to be standardized at a national as well as global level context to assist the graduates to achieve better opportunity in home and abroad.

4. Establishment of IQAC:

For establishing Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) at Daffodil International University (DIU), the performance contract is entered into June 14, 2015 between University Grants Commission (UGC), Bangladesh. The IQAC is working with different entities/programs of the universities in three different phases:

- Phase I - Academic Audit,
- Phase II ¡V Development of Quality Assurance and
- Phase III - Improvement Plan& Implementation.

To achieve the above mentioned a three phase action approach is planned:

4.1. Phase I - Academic Audit:

An academic audit report needs to be prepared to consider five different stakeholders which are current students, alumni, employer, academic staff and non-academic staff. There are nine criteria to develop academic audit report. In respect of current setting following quality assurance areas are considered as the self-assessment criteria:

Criteria 1: Governance	Criteria 4: Physical Facilities	Criteria 7: Staff and Facilities
Criteria 2: Curriculum Content Design & Review (OBTL)	Criteria 5: Teaching - Learning and Assessment	Criteria 8: Research and Extension
Criteria 3: Student Admission, Progress and Achievements	Criteria 6: Student Support Services	Criteria 9: Process Management & Continuous Improvement

This academic audit report is called Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and identifying the strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities of each entity or program. An institutional audit has to establish current strengths & weakness of the entity or program of individual department. And also find out the areas need to be adjustment & improvement on basis of the recommendation or weaknesses of the academic audit.

4.2. Phase II – Development of Quality Assurance:

The development of quality assurance systems and processes required to support the University's vision to become a higher education institution with global recognition.

4.3. Phase III - Improvement Plan & Implementation:

An improvement plan has to be designed for each entity/program on basis of recommendations of Self-Assessment Report (SAR). This improvement plan has to be implemented with a certain period of time. It is also important to monitor the implementation plan for the progress of the entity. Three phase action of assessment process has to be completed within 5 year cycle for 4 year bachelor program. This is a continuous improvement cycle within every 5 year.

5. A Case Study of Daffodil International University(DIU)

Currently, Daffodil International University (DIU) has been working with IQAC. At the first stage, 8 entities were included under Self-Assessment (SA) Activities of IQAC and 4 were included at second stage to carry on SA process activities. As per criteria and compliance of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), UGC Bangladesh, total 12 entities have started SA Process activities of DIU.

Three phase action of assessment process has to be completed within 5 year cycle for 4 year bachelor program. This is a continuous improvement cycle within every 5 year.

5. A Case Study of Daffodil International University(DIU)

Currently, Daffodil International University (DIU) has been working with IQAC. At the first stage, 8 entities were included under Self-Assessment (SA) Activities of IQAC and 4 were included at second stage to carry on SA process activities. As per criteria and compliance of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), UGC Bangladesh, total 12 entities have started SA Process activities of DIU.

In the first stage, the following eight entity/program of the departments developed SAR through Self-Assessment Committee (SAC) of IQAC, DIU:

1. Department of Computer Science & Engineering
2. Department of Business Administration
3. Department of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering
4. Department of Journalism & Mass Communication
5. Department of English
6. Department of Law
7. Department of Nutrition and Food Engineering
8. Department of Software Engineering

The above departments have successfully completed their Self-Assessment Report (SAR), External Peer Review (EPR) and Improvement Plan. Currently, those eight departments are associated with implementation process.

In the second stage, the following four entity/program of the department developed SAR through Self-Assessment Committee (SAC) of IQAC, DIU:

1. Department of Textile Engineering
2. Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering
3. Department of Real Estate
4. Department of Pharmacy

The above departments have also successfully completed their Self-Assessment Report (SAR), External Peer Review (EPR). Now, those four departments are working to develop improvement plan & implementation process.

It has been worthy to mention that IQAC, DIU has successfully executed the conduction of External Peer Reviewing (EPR) Process of its twelve (12) SA Departments within stipulated time and that SA-Process are now in implementation tier. Eight SA Departments have successfully started their implementation process under the guideline of improvement plan accordingly. We believe, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) of Bangladesh under IQAC can eventually get benefit from the project which would ensure quality teaching-learning, research, knowledge generation and support services standards at an acceptable level.

6. Establishment of National Accreditation Council (NAC) of Bangladesh
In 2016, Bangladesh government approved a new law to form an accreditation council to ensure standards of higher education in Bangladesh. The 13-member council will consist of a chairman, four full-time members and eight part time members. The higher education institutions will be evaluated and certified in the light of the council statutes. As the government clears law to form National Accreditation Council (NAC) for Bangladesh universities, all the public and private universities will be under NAC eventually.

7. Designing National Quality Framework of Bangladesh (NQFB)
Government of Bangladesh also considers establishing a National Quality Framework of Bangladesh (NQFB) in tertiary level education. The implementation of such framework will therefore be instrumental for the development, classification and recognition of skills, knowledge and competencies at agreed benchmark levels for the higher education sector in Bangladesh.

Many countries have evolved Quality Assurance (QA) models for their higher education systems as necessitated by their individual unique national contexts to ensure the employability skill of the graduates for both national and international context. Nevertheless, in all activities related to quality assurance across the world, there lies a common unifying thread that laces together the basic concepts. Quality assurance system leads to performance excellence and total quality management in each component. In fact, assuring quality is a continuous teamwork in which standards, benchmarks, and quality audit play a significant integrated role. Continuous improvement should be the focal area of quality assurance in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs).

8. Conclusion:

The aim of IQAC will be to establish a National Qualification Framework of Bangladesh (NQFB) in tertiary level education in Bangladesh in order to ensure sustainable education, skilled graduates with high employability in local as well as global context. But Quality Assurance (QA) is continuous improvement process for HEIs. It is about improvement not punishment, or provocation. QA must take into consideration international benchmarks and global good. QA is a journey NOT a destination.

9. References

[1]   British Standards Institution. Handbook Twenty Two: Quality Assurance. 1991, p. 4.

[2]   Green, D. What is Quality in Higher Education? s.l. : Oxford University Press, 1994.

[3]   Percetions of the Qualities of a Model Teacher in the Minds of Newly Recruited Teachers at a Private University. Md. Kamrul Hossain, Dr. Md. Fokhray Hossain, Dr. Yousuf M Islam. 1, June,2015, Daffodil Internationational University Journal of Business and Economic, Vol. 9, pp. 43-51.

[4]   Question Analysis wih Bloom's Taxonomy: A study on The Department of Business. Md. Kamrul Hossain, Dr. Md. Fokhray Hossain, Dr. Yousuf M Islam. 1, Daffodil International University Journal of Business and Economics, Vol. 10, pp. 152-159.

[5]   Institutonal Quality Assurance Cell. daffodilvarsity.edu.bd. [Online] Daffodil International University. http://iqac.daffodilvarsity.edu.bd/index.php.

[6]   Quality Assurance Issues in Higher Educatin Sectors of Developing Countries: Case of Northern Cyprus. Arif Saria, Altay Firatb , Ali Karadumanc,. s.l. : www.sciencedirect.com, 2016, Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 229, pp. 326-334.

[7]   The Quality of Higher Education in Developing Countries. Bunoti, Sarah. s.l. : Centre for Education Innovation, 2009.

[8]   Definitions of Quality in Higher Education: A synthesis of the Literature. Laura Schindler, Sarah Puls-Elvidge, Heather Welzant, Linda Crawford. 3, 09 30, 2015, Higher Learning Research Communications, Vol. 5.

[9]   Integration of Quality Assurance Models for Education on the Basis of Comparative Analysis. Nina N. Aniskina, Ekaterina V. Lunina. St. Petersburg,Russia : IEEE, 2017. Quality Management,Transport and Information Security,Information Technologies(IT&QM&IS).

[10] Kis, Viktoria. Quality Assurance in Tertiary Education:Current Practices in OECD Countries and a Literature Review on Potential Effects. s.l. : OECD Thematic Review of Tertiary Education, 2005. Review.