

Innovative Programme Experimented by IQAC:

“Academic Newsletter”

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Abstract:

Quality assurance and enhancement is the continuous process, for which Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) may be constituted in every accredited college as per the guidelines of NAAC¹ with some necessary specific modifications. IQAC evolved mechanisms and procedures for the predefined objectives, by formation of the corresponding committees². The role of every committee in terms of activities concerned to achieve the goals is properly communicated to all the members. The action plan for each year and progress of the same is monitored by IQAC and the annual quality assurance report (AQAR) is prepared accordingly.

Effectiveness of IQAC can be brought in by setting goals; monitoring and analyzing results by feedback & improving accordingly by modified mechanism. Overall SWOT analysis of the institution is done by identifying and overcoming the weaknesses and threats. Redressal of grievances or issues identified as threats or hurdles to the progress of the institution is also taken care of.

Via such extended activities the IQAC is to be made effective which will serve as a powerful tool for efficient administration in the institution². The effectiveness can be brought in via the coordinating activities of each committee via academic calendar³. The activities covered as per the calendar were published in the form of Individual, Departmental, Committee wise and Institutional Newsletter. This one page newsletter acts as a driving force for a person to undertake more and more activities, generates awareness for the need of quality in higher education. Departmental newsletter gives proper publicity to the consultancy services⁵ offered by the faculty and the participation⁶ of the students in the activities. While institutional newsletter provides publicity of the activities undertaken by the cluster group under the leadership of the lead college.⁷ It was found to be effective for improvement of the quality of an institution in every criterion and expression of the core values.

Introduction:

Quality assurance and enhancement is the continuous process, for which Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) may be constituted in every accredited college. The functions of IQAC and the efficiency of college administration being interrelated, depend on the degree of decentralization of power and authority with high-level specialization through division of work via the participatory and proactive involvement of every member in the institution. In the present paper, we introduce the concept of academic calendar for the perfect coordination between the different committees of the IQAC for the effective working which may result in the transparent, managerial and efficient administration of the institution.

Formation of IQAC:

IQAC should be formulated as per the guidelines of NAAC¹ with some necessary specific modifications as given. For the senior college attached to junior college, the vice-principals from both wings may be included along with the office superintendent as administrative officers. Teacher representatives to be selected from different faculties, considering their participation in teaching learning, evaluation, research and extension work, including one LMC teacher representative. Proactive, highly qualified and quality conscious, young, enthusiastic members of governing council should be requested to contribute in IQAC. Local people may be selected from learned; qualified persons serving society via their own work may be selected. The NAAC coordinator will act as a coordinator of IQAC necessarily, which should be a senior, non-transferable, full time teacher with more than five years of tenure.

Working of IQAC: IQAC should evolve mechanisms and procedures for the predefined objectives, by formation of the corresponding committees² (Table 1), headed by the responsible, senior, interested faculties. The selection may be done in consultation with the faculty. The special care should be taken that every member will be engaged in some or the other work. Though horizontal mobility is allowed, mutual replacements will be allowed only after academic year. The role of every committee in terms of activities concerned to achieve the goals should be properly communicated to all the members. The prescribed formats to be supplied for proper documentation and collection of data. The action plan for each year will be obtained from the heads and progress of the same will be

monitored by IQAC in its quarterly meetings. The annual quality assurance report (AQAR) will be prepared accordingly.

Effectiveness of IQAC can be brought in by setting goals with deadlines, monitoring and analyzing results by feedback & improving accordingly by modified mechanism. Overall SWOT analysis of the institution is done by identifying and overcoming the weaknesses and threats. Redressal of grievances or issues identified as threats or hurdles to the progress of the institution be also taken care of.

Via such extended activities the IQAC is to be made effective which will serve as a powerfull tool for efficient administration in the institution.²

Academic Calendar:

The above said committees were formulated and the detailed objectives and goals were set before the members of each committee for the expected outcome of the improvement in the quality of education in the institution. For the effective working and coordination of every committee, the concept of academic calendar³ was put forward. Taking into consideration the different activities of each committee and the appropriate time span from the academic year, the even distribution of opportunities for every committee was done. The academic calendar was so designed that proper care was taken to denote not only the day and venue for each smallest activity, but the time duration provided and the IQAC committee responsible for the same was also indicated in the calendar. Again, considering the effectiveness of the calendar if incorporated in the prospectus of the institution, the version of the academic calendar for students was separately prepared and published in the prospectus. The practice as such imparted complete transparency in the day to day activities of the institution and credibility and responsibility on the part of the teaching faculty. With the complete view of the yearly activities at a single glance (Table 1) provided simplicity and neatness in the daily work of the faculty. The pictorial format (As given in Fig. 1) of the calendar provides enough space for the additions of the other personal activities to the individuals. Though, the effective implementation of the academic calendar has been found to be difficult at the introductory year, due to lack of proper enlightening of all the stakeholders, this has high lightened the important role of the administrator in the implementation of the quality enhancing activities suggested by the IQAC.

Academic Newsletter:

The activities covered and scheduled as per the Academic Calendar are published in the form of Individual, Departmental, Committee wise and Institutional Newsletter. While preparing the newsletter, the care has been taken to make it high-tech, compact, more and more reliable and informative by applying highly innovative ideas freely. The regularity of the publication of the newsletter is not ascertained at the initial introductory stage. The technical assistance is provided by the students and teachers working in the computer section. Individual innovations in the presentation of the same are welcomed and IQAC is desirous to give an award to the best newsletter.

Individual newsletter : It details the activities covered by the individual, innovations in the teaching⁴ learning evaluation, topics and practicals covered and scheduled, seminars and conferences planned, reporting of the ongoing research work, services offered as consultancy, co-curricular, extracurricular activities, community lectures, papers or articles read, written and presented, reviews of the book or article read, participation in teaching and designing of self supporting courses run by the same or other institutions, reporting of the activities of the person in his or her capacities as member of Parliament, NAAC Peer team, Senate, Board of Studies, faculty, different University Committees like LIC, LMC, IQAC, teacher's organization etc. There is a special space provided to highlight the creative work done by the person like poems written, plays written or directed, playing or learning musical instruments, drawings and paintings, articles prepared as well as recipes tried and tasted and such other activities fulfilling the role of a person as an artistic and aesthetic personality.(Fig. 2)

Departmental Newsletter: It reports the collective activities undertaken by the faculty, scheduled practicals, future plans, transactions in the departmental library, placement cell, group discussions and student seminars, schedule of workshops and lectures by guest faculty, analysis of results of unit and periodical tests, home assignments, student projects, study tour reports, recent events in the subject like new discoveries, awards conferred like Nobel, ongoing or proposed research projects, MOUs and collaborations to link the department with industries and institutions, new courses introduced or planned, reports or schedules of the meetings with parents or alumni etc. Departmental newsletter gives proper publicity to the consultancy services⁵ offered by

the faculty and the participation⁶ of the students in the activities. IQAC similarly publish its own newsletters which covers the activities of different IQAC committees which may be used effectively for the preparation of AQAR.

Institutional Newsletter: It depicts the activities covered and scheduled as per the academic calendar. The reports of attendance, decisions, suggestions and notices regarding the different meetings of IQAC, LMC, Staff Academy, co-curricular and extra curricular activities. This institutional newsletter also provides publicity to the activities undertaken by the cluster group under the leadership of the lead college.⁷

Conclusion: This one page newsletter acts as a driving force for a person to undertake more and more activities. It also generates awareness for the need of quality in higher education, explore the possible teaching and learning methodologies in order to enhance the quality in higher education, analyze the possible dimensions of higher education in terms of students participation and employability and underline the role of higher education in motivating the society and nation for overall betterment. It was found to be effective for improvement of the quality of an institution in every criterion and expression of the core values properly through the continuous activities.

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Table. 1

Sr. No.	Title of Committee	Objectives	Activities
1.	Academic Programmes	Initiation, monitoring and strengthening of academic programmes.	Admission, time-table, for new courses, interdisciplinary, career oriented, need based, agro based courses, computer training to teaching and non-teaching for up gradation, remedial courses and guidance for competitive exams etc.
2.	Teaching and evaluation programmes	Innovations in curricular designs, examination reforms and analysis.	Innovation in curricular designs, examination reforms, generation of new learning material, departmental libraries, counseling to the beginners, teachers, improvement in communication skills, etc.
3.	Co-curricular programmes	Enhancement of different skills of all stakeholders	Cultural activities, conducting seminars and workshops, staff academy, publicity, nature club, faculty forums like science forum, commerce club, etc.
4.	Research Programmes	Acceleration to research and related activities.	Major/ minor projects, patents, collaborative programmes, impact factor, citation index, research scholars, proper utilization of research grants, linkages with laboratories and industries, research publications etc.
5.	Extension programmes	Optimization of facilities and services	Resources generated, community services, health services, guidance and counseling, placement cell, earn and learn scheme, pollution awareness center, NSS, NCC, <i>Swayamsiddha</i> women's forum.
6.	Effective governance cell	Welfare activities for development in campus life.	Faculty development, awards and honours, evaluation of all, feedback analysis, technology up gradation, healthy practices, staff welfare, BC cell, Sexual harassment redressal cell, campus development fund etc.
7.	Infrastructure development cell	Improvement in infrastructural facilities	Enrichment of science, commerce and language laboratories, water storage and management, new constructions, agro forestry and botanical garden, medicinal plantation etc.
8.	Management Information system	Maintenance and continuous updating of information	Students admission, distribution, ratio, scholarships, affiliation, etc.
9.	Gymkhana	Increasing sports activities	Facilities for sports, awards, competitions arranged, development of gymkhana etc.
10.	Library	Establishment of library as information centre	Automation of library, network resource centre, access to INTERNET, etc.

