



Major Reforms in Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions

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The Indian higher education system is transforming rapidly through the implementation of National Education Policy (NEP 2020). A target of 50% GER in higher education by 2037 is set, along with enhancing the quality of education which is of paramount importance to the nation. The top Indian institutions are expected to compete with the best in the world. Achieving higher levels of quality is dependent upon processes such as the teaching-learning, research & Innovation, motivated teachers, enhancing employability skills, equity and societal integration, academic ambience, commitment to sustainability rather than mere infrastructure and inputs.

Accreditation and Ranking is an integral part of the transformation of higher education in India. In major development, the Ministry of Education, Government of India constituted an overarching committee with Dr. K. Radhakrishnan, Former Chairman of ISRO and Chairperson, Standing Committee of IIT Council as Chairman in November 2022 to propose transformative reforms for strengthening Assessment and Accreditation of higher education institutions in India.

The preliminary report of the committee was placed on the Government of India website for public consultation. The final report, incorporating several feedback received from stakeholders, was presented to the Hon'ble Minister of Education, Government of India *Shri. Dharmendra Pradhan* on 16th January 2024 which has been accepted by the Minister.

A set of transformative reforms have been proposed to strengthen the periodic approval, assessment & accreditation, and ranking of 'All HEIs' of India. These reforms have been proposed with a strategic intent to be consistent with the Vision of NEP 2020, adopt a simple, trust-based, credible, objective and rationalized system for approval, accreditation and ranking of HEIs, with a technology-driven modern system that could replace or minimize manual involvement to make the accreditation process to be transparent and integrate the inputs of the stakeholders. The recommendation also focuses on mentoring and incentivizing schemes for raising their participation as well as accreditation levels, towards eminence, significance and global acclaim.

The following are the salient features of the recommendations:

Binary Accreditation (Either accredited or not accredited) rather than grades with an aim to encourage all the institutions to get on-boarded in the accreditation process thereby creating a quality culture in the higher education system. The binary accreditation is also in line with the best practices followed from many leading countries in the world.

Maturity-Based Graded Accreditation (Level 1 to 5) to encourage accredited Institutions to raise their bar, continuously improve, evolve in-depth or in-breadth in disciplines from 'Level 1' to 'Level 4' as Institutions of National Excellence, and then to 'Level-5' i.e. Institutions of Global Excellence for Multi-Disciplinary Research and Education. The leveled accreditation shall enable Indian institutions to significantly improve their quality and position themselves among global top institutions.



The metrics for both Binary and Maturity-Based Graded Accreditation shall focus on Processes, Outcomes and Impact across different attributes of HEIs (instead of mere input-centric). The new process shall consider the heterogeneity of HEIs in the country, categorize them based on their orientation/vision and heritage/legacy, and then seek information from the HEIs that are appropriate for their category rather than a one-size-fits-all model. There will be a special focus on rural and remote location institutions through mentoring and handholding.

One Nation One Data Platform has been proposed as part of the reform to ensure integrity and transparency in handling institutional data. The new platform shall capture superset of data from HEIs for the varied purposes (of approval, accreditation, ranking) with an in-built design for collateral cross-checking to check authenticity of data. In addition, to improve the validity and reliability of the data “Stakeholder validation” has been proposed to effectively integrate stakeholders as part of the accreditation and ranking process.

The system shall be based on Trust and Data Driven with minimal visits to an institution for verification; however, carrying heavy penalties on giving wrong submissions. In addition, there will be provision for customized ranking based on stakeholders such as industry, funding agencies, students etc.

The Executive Committee of NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council) in its 104th meeting held on 27 Jan 2024 decided the following.

The recommended reforms shall be implemented in two stages. In the first stage, the Binary accreditation will be implemented in the next four months and no new applications will be accepted as per the present methodology thereafter. Institutions that have already applied and are applying in the next four months shall have the option to either go by the present process or by the new methodology of binary accreditation. The Maturity based Graded levels will be implemented by December 2024.

The methodologies and formats are being redesigned based on recommendations of Dr. Radhakrishnan committee report and the same shall also be reflected in the data collection and validation process using One Nation One Data Platform making the system friendly, easy and smooth.

By implementing all the recommendations comprehensively before the end of 2024, the Indian higher education system will be making a transformation, enhancing the quality and credibility of Indian institutions and thereby contributing to the socio-economic leadership of India as part of *Amrit Kaal* vision of Honourable Prime Minister *Shri Narendra Modi*.