EQA OF PAKISTANI UNIVERSITIES

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INTRODUCTION

- Higher Education Commission (HEC), Pakistan established–2002
  - Facilitating the national universities to become centers of excellence
  - building the country as knowledge-based economy
  - evaluating, improving and further developing the higher education/research in the national universities.

- Core strategic aims of HEC's Medium Term Development Framework:
  - faculty development,
  - improving access to education,
  - achieving excellence in learning and research, and
  - relevance to national priorities.

  - These aims are supported by focusing on developing leadership, improving governance and management, enhancing quality of assessment and accreditation, and development of physical and technological infrastructure

HEC'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

▪ **Framework developed for quality in the national context and to remain in line with international best practices.**

▪ **It accounts for both Internal Quality Assurance (IQA) and External Quality Assurance (EQA):**

IQA	**Self Assessment of Programs** **University's Internal Quality Audit**
EQA	**Accreditation of Programs by Accreditation Councils** **Institutional Performance Evaluation (External Review) of Universities**

▪ **IQA practices are developed and implemented through Quality Enhancement Cells (QECs).**

HEC'S QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK

- **The *'Self-Assessment Manual'* for program level and *'University Quality Standards and Assessment Model'* for the institutional level are developed to facilitate universities on IQA practices**

- **EQA practices have been developed and implemented through Accreditation Councils at program level and through Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) of Pakistan at the institutional level.**

QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

■ **The QAA established by HEC in 2002 as a policy making and monitoring body for maintenance and improvement / enhancement of quality in higher education.**

■ **QAA engages in systematic implementation of quality enhancement procedures / criteria to attain improved levels of international compatibility and competitiveness at institutional and program levels.**

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT CELLS

- **The QECs have been established at various universities as field units for implementing the quality assurance / enhancement policies and programs with uniform pace and standards**

- **In 2006-07, Batch-1 QECs were established at ten public sector universities. The number of QECs has grown over the years to 116 in public and 22 in private sector universities**

EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE OF HEIs

- **The HEC through QAA planned to review individual Pakistani universities periodically.**

- **On-site visits for the purpose of institutional performance evaluation (IPE) are undertaken by the review panels constituted by QAA**

- **HEC recognition of an institution will be awarded only as a result of successful reviews / evaluation.**

- **Eleven IPE Standards have been developed which outline major areas to be focused on by HEIs for evaluation of their effectiveness and future development**

IPE STANDARDS

- **These standards include:**
    - **(1) Mission and Goals**
    - **(2) Organization and Governance,**
    - **(3) Planning & Evaluation**
    - **(4) Integrity**
    - **(5) Faculty**
    - **(6) Students**
    - **(7) Academic Programs and Curricula,**
    - **(8) Public Disclosure and Transparency**
    - **(9) Institutional Resources**
    - **(10) Assessment and Quality Assurance**
    - **(11) Student Support Services, and**
- **All are equally important to be met by the HEIs for obtaining a certification to quality provision in education**

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THE PILOT PROJECT FOR EQA

- **QAA invitation for IPE in 2011**

- **Five universities volunteered (Names withheld)**

  'University A', 'University B', 'University C', 'University D' and 'University E')

- **Complete review required employing all eleven standards but in view of the,**

  - **Deadline fixed by the World Bank**

  - **Limited time given to the universities for preparation**

  - **Decided to evaluate the performance against only four standards namely;**

    - **Organization and Governance,**

    - **Faculty,**

    - **Institutional Resources, and**

    - **Academic Programs and Curricula.**

THE PILOT PROJECT FOR EQA

- **During 2012, another five universities evaluated for six standards; two additional being *Mission & Goals and Planning & Evaluation***

- **During 2013, ten more universities evaluated against eight standards by including *Students and Assessment & Quality Assurance***

- **While undertaking evaluation on the basis of lesser number of the standards, the questions related to remaining standards were also asked because of:**
  - **Close relevance of all the standards with academic activities**
  - **Due to overlapping activities clear-cut segregation of questions was not possible**

THE IPE STAGES

- IPE conducted through an on-site visit:

- **Pre-visit Activities**
  - Nomination of a Panel
  - Getting information from University (UPR)
  - Study of UPR by the Panel
  - Distribution of Work – Assignment of the Chapters of UPR
  - Formation of the Questions by panel Members
  - Collation of Questions
- **On-site Visit**
  - Review of the study material in the Panel room
  - Meeting with the Head of the Institution
  - Interviewing the Deans/HoDs, Faculty, admin/Tech Staff, Students
  - Meeting of the Panel – Private discussion
  - Exit Meeting

THE IPE PROCESS

Post Site activities

- Writing of Visit report – Panel members contribution
- Consolidation of the report by Executive officer
- Review by the Panel member – agreement
- Approval of Report
- Dispatch to the University
- Follow-up on the required actions for improvement.

THE PANELS

- The visiting panels were taken from the pool of international and national experts created by QAA

- Some panel members already had the experience of conducting external reviews / evaluation at international level.

- The others were provided training with the help of experts from the USA, QAA (UK) and Pakistan.

- An Executive Officer from QAA coordinated and facilitated the visits

THE UNIVERSITY PORTFOLIO REPORT

Brief outline of information relevant to eight standards is given below:

- **Mission and Goals**

Conceiving, writing, approval and review of the university mission besides the goals; problems regarding living up to the mission; description of university's intentions by mission and goals etc.

- **Planning and Evaluation**

Systems of planning and evaluation; related committees and their working; planning documents, development plan for facilities and a financial plan; budget documents; Campus master plan and management plan etc.

THE UNIVERSITY PORTFOLIO REPORT

Organization and Governance

Detail about the governance system and process for meetings of the senate; the syndicate; the Board of Governors; SoPs and usage of emergency powers; resolution of conflict of interest etc.

Faculty

Faculty appointment criteria and process; Faculty evaluation, development, research, service to the university and to external communities, promotion and tenure, salary and benefits, satisfaction etc.

Students

Students' Information on status of programs; admissions policies; offering of courses and registration; adequacy of assessments; feedback and surveys etc. 15

THE UNIVERSITY PORTFOLIO REPORT

- **Institutional Resources**

  Resource allocation and budgeting; involvement of departments/students; procurement process; human resource and need assessment; process of hiring, evaluating and terminating etc.

- **Academic Programs and Curricula**

  Development, approval and review of academic programs; copies of the curricula; Students, faculty, alumni and employer surveys and their usage; learning outcomes, assessment and teaching methodology; infrastructure etc.

- **Assessment & Quality Assurance**

  Establishment of the QEC; self-assessment process; accreditation status of programs; feedback/surveys conducted and their usage; SOPs for QA reports etc.

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THE VISIT PREPARATION

- **Before conducting the visits:**
  - **Panels members:**
    - **Held coordination meeting**
    - **Allocated specific chapters (standards) to study**
    - **Prepare questions on the basis of total UPRs and the specifically allocated chapters**

  - **Universities asked:**
    - **Reserve a Panel Room**
    - **Place additional data/information in Panel Room for the review during the visit.**

THE ON-SITE VISIT

- **Panels met the Vice-Chancellors/Rectors**
- **Reviewed the data/information to evaluate policies and processes, human and physical resources, programs and curricula; Validated data provided earlier**
- **Conducted interviews of:**
  - **Deans / Heads of Departments,**
  - **Senior & junior faculty members,**
  - **Undergraduate & graduate students of different semesters/disciplines**
  - **Administrative & technical staff**
- **Visited classrooms, libraries and laboratories, to**
  - **Observe their state and functioning, and**
  - **Interacted with the relevant staff.**
- **Finally, briefed VCs/Rectors about the salient observations during exit meetings.**

POST VISIT ACTIVITIES

VIST REPORTS

- ➢ **Visit reports written by the panels members on allocated chapters**

- ➢ **Mainly on strengths and weak areas of universities providing commendations, recommendations and affirmations**

- ➢ **Individual inputs collated by the Executive Officer at QAA and shared with panel**

- ➢ **Approval sought from the Competent Authority at HEC**

- ➢ **Final reports sent to the universities for taking actions to improve upon the weak areas in the light of affirmations/recommendations**

- ➢ **Periodic update obtained from the universities on the actions taken on the recommendations/affirmations**

VISIT REPORTS

- **The panels duly appreciated the good practices and included them in visit reports as commendations**

- **Commendations not included in this paper for brevity**

- **Some recommendations and affirmations regarding five universities given here to show the spectrum of evaluation in the context of selected standards**

VISIT REPORTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

University A:

➢Executive Committee's terms of responsibilities be reviewed critically.

➢Strategic planning process be instituted with inputs from all academic/admin depts to set priorities & future direction of university.

➢Performance evaluations of admin staff be carried out annually.

➢Admin / academic quality audit of affiliated institutions be carried out.

➢Ratio of visiting to permanent faculty in all departments be reduced (to a maximum of 20 %)

➢Number of PhD /senior faculty be increased to a reasonable number.

➢Formal System for faculty evaluation/development be instituted.

➢Process for review/revision of curricula be revised by senior academicians

➢The employer and alumni surveys be used to assure that curricula meets the needs of the marketplace.

VISIT REPORTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

University B:

❑ Statutory bodies deal with matters specific of their concern only

❑ University to write the job description of the officials clearly

❑ Percentage of part-time faculty in some departments be curtailed.

❑ Need to induct senior faculty in some of the departments

❑ Library and (some) laboratories be housed in more spacious rooms.

❑ More books and magazines be added to the library

❑ Library be automated

❑ Student strength per section be curtailed as per recommendations of the relevant Councils.

❑ Curricula of programs be reviewed in the light of feedback from all stakeholders and international good practices.

❑ The semester-wise teaching load of faculty be reviewed for rationalization as prescribed by accreditation councils.

VISIT REPORTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

University C:

➢University-wide strategic planning be written

➢System for performance evaluation of employees be introduced

➢Involvement of the faculty and other stake-holders in budget making, resource utilization, and other administrative matters be encouraged

➢Effective faculty development plans be prepared and implemented

➢Faculty may be augmented in the departments, where student to teacher ratio is inadequately high

➢Departments to devise reasonable monitoring tools to improve teaching/learning process

➢More equipment and books be procured after conducting need analysis of laboratory equipment and books

➢Academic programs need to be designed and developed as per international standards.

➢University to explore internship opportunities for students in local market and industries.

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VISIT REPORTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

University D:

➢ **Analyze the use of emergency powers and their delegation to the vice-chancellor and other officials**

➢ **Job descriptions of all university officials be specified**

➢ **Examination branch be more efficient in announcing results**

➢ **Part-time faculty (now 35% of the full-time) be reduced**

➢ **Performance appraisal system for teachers at university and its affiliated colleges be introduced**

➢ **System of mentoring the new/junior faculty be implemented**

➢ **Adopt faculty development program through short/long courses**

➢ **Some labs are seriously deficient of equipment and consumables**

➢ **Non-existent Stats and Physics laboratories be established**

➢ **Number of computers be increased and latest versions of software for computer science students be procured**

➢ **Books be increased in library and usage of digital library enhanced**

➢ **Stakeholders' feedback be used to review the curricula**

VISIT REPORTS - RECOMMENDATIONS

University E:

➢ **University's Mission statement to reflect vast spectrum of its current operations and be specific to its mandate**

➢ **Training opportunities be provided to faculty and administrative staff**

➢ **More PhD qualified and senior faculty be inducted in departments where only junior / non-PhD faculty is available.**

➢ **Junior faculty be encouraged/trained to improve their communication skills**

➢ **System for mentoring and evaluating the junior/newly-inducted faculty may be devised to improve the quality of education**

➢ **Old library books be replaced with new editions**

➢ **Teaching labs and equipment need to be upgraded**

➢ **Qualified technical support for the laboratories be arranged**

➢ **Feedback from different stakeholders be used for improvements in the curricula and teaching & learning processes**

THE IMPACT OF EQA

- Universities subjected to the EQA feel indebted to the review panels for conducting their evaluation with positive minds and highlighting the areas for improvement

- VCs/Rectors openly acknowledged the usefulness of this exercise

- Some, during exit meetings, acknowledged that they knew about some weak areas (not all) but their confirmation by panel was useful in taking remedial measures with confidence

- EQA will enable universities in making up deficiencies by getting support from HEC and their respective federal/provincial ministries

- The activity will certainly help these universities in enhancing the quality of education and research through improvement in the infrastructure and resources; human as well as physical

- EQA carried out in these universities bring in positive improvement, and not for finding faults, has not only influenced them positively but has also encouraged the others to present themselves for the evaluation

- EQA is taking roots in Pakistan and is expected to make a discernable difference in the realm of quality assurance in higher education

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Thank You

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