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“Selection and Preparation of Peers. The Viewpoint of an Asian Agency”

Dr. Jagannath Patil
Deputy Adviser, NAAC
APQN Vice President

Outline

- Peer Review in Asian Context
- A glimpse on survey of practices in Asia- pacific regarding peer selection and training
- Experience of NAAC , one of the largest QAAs in terms number of QA activities
- Efforts of APQN, towards capacity building in this area
- APQN Project on Reviewers' Training Package.
- APQN- INQAAHE Project on Database of Reviewers and consultants
- The way forward

Peer Review in Asian Context

- Many QAAs in Asia- Pacific are in developing stage
- QAAs vary in size, scope and maturity levels
- Peer Review is the key element of QA across the region
- Selection and Training of Peers is critical factor for credibility and success of QA

A glimpse on survey of practices in Asia- pacific regarding peer selection and training

- Survey was done as precursor to Chiba Principles[Dr. Antony Stella]
- Probably the first major survey that mapped QA practices in broader Asia-Pacific
- Almost all QAAs follow Peer Review method for QA even as scope, nomenclature and outcomes vary to some extent.
- Many QAAs have their own Register of Reviewers
- Some countries involve international experts as peers, but not very common practice
- Identification of reviewers can be from different sources like agency staff, HEIs, government, advertisements, etc.
- Appointment of Peers for visit is done either by agency staff, head or Governing body

Survey of practices in Asia- pacific regarding peer selection and training...continued.

- A good number of QAAs use Trained Peers
- But still there are instances where positions , nominations and aspects like seniority take precedence.
- Some QAAs have robust mechanism of training, deployment, feedback and review in place
- Role of agency staff varies from Full member, secretary, co-coordinator to off site co-ordination
- Checks and balances to ensure objectivity of QA process
- Complaints handling or appeals mechanisms are put in place

Experience of NAAC , one of the largest QAAs in terms number of QA activities

National Assessment and Accreditation Council- NAAC ,
India has huge task and mandate as the country has over
550 Universities and 30,000 + colleges

So far over 5000 HEIs accredited by NAAC [161 Universities
and 4371 colleges in first cycle , 65 universities and 636
colleges in second cycle]

NAAC follows system of Criteria-based self study , onsite
visit by Peers and outcome- [figure 1]

NAAC's Methodology

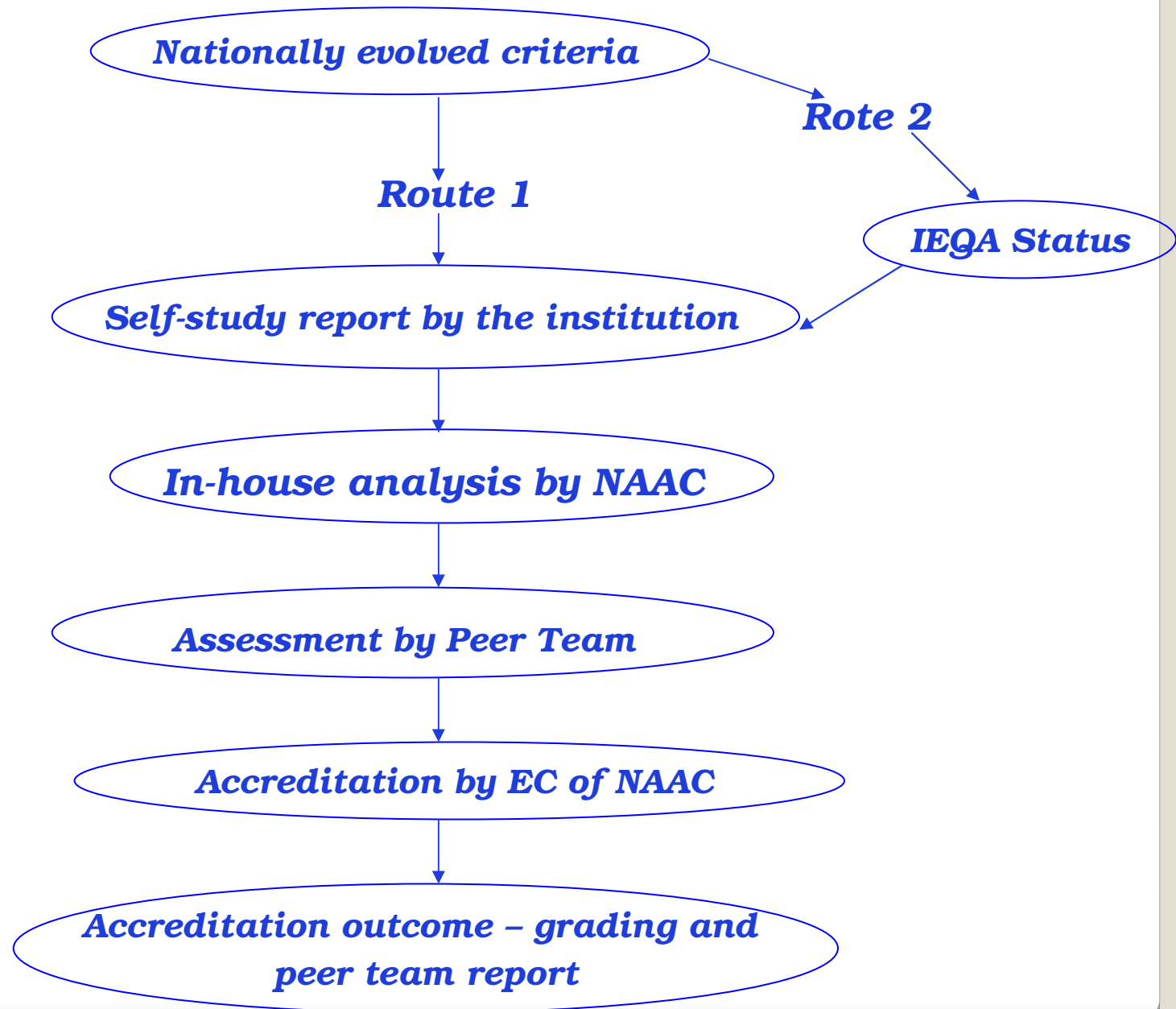


Figure 1

Experience of NAAC...continued

- NAAC has so far trained more than 5000 peers through over 100 Training programmes spanned over a decade.
- The nomenclatures and types varied from Assessors' Training Programme, Workshops for Member Co-ordinators, Roundtable for Chairs to recent Assessors' Interaction Meeting.
- The NAAC has practice of nominating Vice- Chancellors [current or retired] as chairs of peer teams. University professors and college principal of accredited colleges are the other constituents of team.
- Educational administrators and QA experts are also considered as team members.
- Observers from international QAAs and from Industry sector are also included in teams occasionally.
- In some cases , NAAC still nominates specialists which are not formally trained but suit the requirement of HEI being assessed [for. Eg. experts in fine arts, defense studies, etc].
- NAAC has broad based policy for Identification of peers for training and visits. Nominations from University vice-chancellors, regulatory bodies, agency staff, occasional advertisements on website are various channels used to identify potential peers.
- Women and disadvantaged section of society are given due preference in Peer selection.
- To maintain the standard NAAC generally do not consider experts below the rank of Professor as peer except in case of principles of accredited colleges.

Experience of NAAC...continued

- Training has become more vital as NAAC not only assesses HEIs but grade them on 4 point scale.
- To take up large number , it has also developed cadre of Member-coordinators to manage site visits.
- Training is modeled on best international practices based on simulation of onsite visit.
- NAAC has developed training modules , Model Self Study reports for various types of HEIs .
- Apart from own Advisers, it has pool of Trained Trainers.
- In recent past it has ventured into training for specialized experts in areas such as Medical, Engineering. Teacher education , etc.
- NAAC also accommodates international participants in training programmes without any fees.
- Fully residential 2 day programme at NAAC's own campus which has state of art facilities
- Conference rooms with two way Video interactions, Guest house and ample rooms to have more than 7 parallel working groups at a time .
- 360 degree feedback system helps NAAC to keep its Assessors Cadre alert and updated

A photograph of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) building in Bangalore, India. The building is a long, modern structure with a prominent upper level featuring a facade of perforated metal panels. Below this, a glass-enclosed ground floor is supported by several tall, slender white columns. The foreground consists of a well-maintained green lawn with various plants, including a large palm tree on the left and a yellow-flowered tree on the right. The sky is overcast with grey clouds. The text 'National Assessment and Accreditation Council' and 'Bangalore, India' is overlaid in bold black font across the upper part of the building.

National Assessment and Accreditation Council
Bangalore, India

APQN Project on Reviewers' Training Package-

- Project aimed at consolidating existing materials of various QAAs and use them to prepare a comprehensive training package which can then be made available to members electronically through the website or other electronic means.
- A workshop was held in Malaysia to pilot the Training Package and to consider its applicability for training reviewers for APQN members which will support the capacity building of their QA systems.
- The Training Package now includes 7 Modules, namely:
 - *Module 1 - Overview of QA in higher education*
 - *Module 2 - QA Principles and Practices*
 - *Module 3- IQA and Self Assessments*
 - *Module 4- EQA and Peer Review*
 - *Module 5- The Site Visit*
 - *Module 6 - Report Writing*
 - *Module 7- Good Practices in QA,*
followed by appendices , Reading material and Acknowledgement of sources.

We hope that this package would be a good open resource for all QAAs



APQN in Action !

Efforts of APQN, towards capacity building -

APQN- INQAAHE Project on Database of Reviewers and consultants

- This project is a concrete step towards addressing the needs of many HEIs and QAAs not just in Asia- pacific but across the globe , who are looking for IQA and EQA experts .
- Although the database is primarily meant to serve the APQN membership, considering the need and advantages of involving experts from other regions, the database includes entries from outside APQN membership. This gives a global approach to APQN database.
- The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) as a global network collaborates with APQN in this database. The database is administered by APQN and INQAAHE contributes to the additional resource implications to include its nominations into the database.
- The database has the search facility to identify those reviewers.
- Recently APQN signed MoU with Arab Network [ANQAHE] to join and contribute to this database
- <http://www.apqn.org/services/consultantsdb/>

The way forward...

- Increased understanding and emphasis on objective identification and training of Peers
- Need for investing more resources in capacity building by QAAs and Networks
- Strengthening linkages between IQA and EQA
- Need for developing QA as discipline of study and research
- Sharing of good practices and recourses
- Use of ICT to reduce cost and add effectiveness
- Increased inter and intra regional collaborations and exchanges .
- Addressing aspirations of millions of students seeking mobility could be the prime concern of any initiative in QA.



**East needs West and West needs East
It's high time now that twain should meet !**

Thank you !

Dr Jagannath Patil

Deputy Adviser, NAAC

Vice President, Asia Pacific Quality Network

jp.naacindia@gmail.com

www.apqn.org