

By;
Dr. Suchitra Devi
Associate Prof.
Education Deptt.
N.A.S College

M.Ed IV Semester
Paper CC14
Unit III

Accreditation: Concept, Meaning & Definition

Accreditation is the process in which certification of competency, authority, or credibility is presented.

Organizations that issue credentials or certify third parties against official standards are themselves formally accredited by accreditation bodies; hence they are sometimes known as "accredited certification bodies".

The accreditation process ensures that their certification practices are acceptable, typically meaning that they are competent to test and certify third parties, behave ethically and employ suitable quality assurance.

Higher education accreditation is a type of quality assurance process under which services and operations of post-secondary educational institutions or programs are evaluated by an external body to determine if applicable standards are met. If standards are met, accredited status is granted by the agency.

In most countries around the world, the function of educational accreditation for higher education is conducted by a government organization, such as a ministry of education. In the United States, however, the quality assurance process is independent of government and performed by private agencies.

Accreditation in India is compulsory for all universities in India except those created through an act of Parliament. Without accreditation, "It is emphasized that these fake institutions have no legal entity to call themselves as University/Vishwvidyalaya and to award 'degrees' which are not treated as valid for academic/employment purposes." The University Grants Commission Act, 1956 explains,

"The right of conferring or granting degrees shall be exercised only by a University established or incorporated by or under a Central Act or a State Act or an Institution deemed to be University or an institution specially empowered by an Act of the Parliament to confer or grant degrees. Thus, any institution which has not been created by an enactment of Parliament or a State Legislature or has not been granted the status of a Deemed-to-be-University is not entitled to award a degree."

Accreditation for higher learning is overseen by autonomous institutions established by the University Grants Commission.

Definitions and Purposes of Accreditation

Accreditation in higher education is a collegial process based on self and peer assessment. Its purpose is the improvement of academic quality and public accountability. This continuing quality control process occurs usually every five to ten years.

Accreditation is a term covering both the initial and on-going approval of a school, postsecondary institution, or program offering as meeting the standards established by a nationally recognized accrediting association for membership in the association. Accrediting associations are voluntary membership organizations that undertake to monitor the academic and administrative quality of their members, which are either entire institutions or components.

In order to ensure a basic level of quality, the practice of accreditation arose in the United States as a means of conducting non-governmental, peer evaluation of educational institutions and programs. Private educational associations of regional or national scope have adopted criteria reflecting the qualities of a sound educational program and have developed procedures for evaluating institutions or programs to determine whether or not they are operating at basic levels of quality.

Functions of Accreditation:

1. Certifying that an institution or program has met established standards
2. Assisting prospective students in identifying acceptable institutions
3. Assisting institutions in determining the acceptability of transfer credits
4. Helping to identify institutions and programs for the investment of public and private funds
5. Protecting an institution against harmful internal and external pressure
6. Creating goals for self-improvement of weaker programs and stimulating a general raising of standards among educational institutions
7. Involving the faculty and staff comprehensively in situational evaluation and planning
8. Establishing criteria for professional certification and licensure and for upgrading federal assistance

The Accrediting Procedure:

1. Standards: The accrediting agency, in collaboration with its communities of interest, establishes and periodically revises standards and policies.
2. Self-study: The institution or program seeking accreditation prepares an in-depth self-study that measures its performance against the standards established by the accrediting agency.
3. On-site Evaluation: The association selects a team of external academic and administrative experts from other similar institutions or programs. The team reviews the self-study and visits the institution or program to determine first-hand if the applicant meets the established standards. The evaluation team issues its report of findings enumerating any conditions that need to be met before full positive approval may be given.
4. Publication: The association's members of the Board of Commissioners vote on the status of the candidate or member, and publish the names and information about successful candidates and re-accredited members in the next annual edition of its official approved list.
5. Re-evaluation: The accrediting agency periodically re-evaluates each institution or program that it lists to ascertain whether continuation of its accredited or pre-accredited status is warranted.

Types of Accreditation

There are two basic types of educational accreditation: one identified as "institutional" and one referred to as "specialized" or "programmatic."

Institutional accreditation normally applies to an entire institution, indicating that each of an institution's parts is contributing to the achievement of the institution's objectives, although not necessarily all at the same level of quality. The various commissions of the regional accrediting associations, for example, perform institutional accreditation, as do many national accrediting agencies.

Specialized or programmatic accreditation normally applies to programs, departments, or schools that are part of an institution. The accredited unit may be as large as a college or school within a university or as small as a curriculum within a discipline. Most of the specialized or programmatic accrediting agencies review units within an institution of higher

education that is accredited by one of the regional accrediting commissions. However, certain accrediting agencies also accredit professional schools and other specialized or vocational institutions of higher education that are freestanding in their operations. Thus, a specialized or "programmatic" accrediting agency may also function in the capacity of an "institutional" accrediting agency.

Role of National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC):

The main role of NAAC is quality assurance in higher education. The National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) is an autonomous body established by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of India to assess and accredit institutions of higher education in the country. It is an outcome of the recommendations of the National Policy in Education (1986) which laid special emphasis on upholding the quality of higher education in India. To address the issues of quality, the National Policy on Education (1986) and the Plan of Action (POA-1992) advocated the establishment of an independent national accreditation body. Consequently, the NAAC was established in 1994 with its headquarters at Bangalore. As education plays vital role to the society, the quality of education must be monitored. To understand the quality of the education NAAC play great role by accreditation process. Since ancient period many changes brought by change in circumstances and need of the society. The developments in science and technology, industrialization, globalization are the instances which compelled government to provide effective and quality education to educate, train, undertake research and provide good service to society. It shall be the general duty of the Commission to take, in consultation with the Universities or other bodies concerned, all such steps as it may think fit for the promotion and co-ordination of University education and for the determination and maintenance of standards of teaching, examination and research in Universities, and for the purpose of performing its functions under this Act.

University Grants Commission (UGC) under Section 12 of the UGC Act, 1956 established the National Assessment and Accreditation Council as an autonomous body on 16th September 1994. A significant contribution of NAAC in the area of higher education is to implement new methods of accreditation having recognition at international level. Further NAAC is providing policy framework to help government making mandatory provisions binding on various Universities, institutions at state level. The contribution of NAAC is really appreciable.

Vision and Mission Vision:-

To make quality the quality defining element of higher education in India through a combination of self and external quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance initiatives.

Mission:-

- To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of institutions of higher education or units thereof, or specific academic programmes or projects;
- To stimulate the academic environment for promotion of quality of teaching learning and research in higher education institutions;
- To encourage self-evaluation, accountability, autonomy and innovations in higher education;
- To undertake quality related research studies, consultancy and training programmes, and
- To collaborate with other stakeholders of higher education for quality evaluation, promotion and sustenance. Guided by its vision and striving to achieve its mission, the NAAC primarily assesses the quality of institutions of higher education that volunteer for the process, through an internationally accepted methodology.

Value Framework:- To promote cognizance developments and the role of higher education in society, NAAC (2004) has developed five core values:

1. Contributing to national development
2. Fostering global competencies among students
3. Inculcating a value system in students
4. Promoting the use of technology
5. Quest for excellence Quality Parameters & Indicators of NAAC in Teacher Education

In the field of teacher education, in order to assess the quality of teacher education institutions, certain quality control indicators are to be considered. NAAC (2005) has

identified seven indicators to assess and control the quality in teacher which shall be discussed in the next lecture.

Sources:

- 1) Wikipedia
- 2) <https://www.oijrj.org/ejournal/Articles-in-press/03.pdf>
- 3) Reference books
- 4) Other internet sources