



NAAC RECOGNIZED BEST PRACTICES IN ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

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Quality Improvement without Best Practices and Accreditation cannot be possible in today's Academic Realm; Best practices are identified by examining empirical evidence of success. At present, there are many Best Practices followed in Academic Libraries to improve the quality of services and professionalism. In the accreditation process evaluation of libraries is an essential component where the collection services and their outreaching capacities are monitored and reported in library and information services and the libraries are shouldering newer responsibilities in higher education. This paper focuses on suggestions for Best practices in the library regarding NAAC grades.

Key Words: NAAC, Quality, Best Practices, Library, User Service.**Introduction:**

The need for Quality assurance and accreditation has been established especially to check the quality of higher education. The accreditation activity is gaining momentum in our country as people and educational institutions have come to realize that quality enhancement is essential for the institutions and the country. In this process of accreditation, libraries have a pivotal role. The services of libraries have been expanding as they contribute significantly to the learning process, particularly the e-learning process. The accreditation activity is gaining momentum in our country as people and educational institutions have come to realize that quality enhancement is essential for the institutions and the country. In the process of institutional accreditation, libraries have a crucial role. The services of libraries have been

expanding as they contribute significantly to the learning process.

The guidelines are derived from the understanding of the global developments in the activities and services of the library's national environment. The libraries need to prepare well-framed rules and guidelines about access and circulation policies and other regulations to offer better services to the users.

Definition of Best Practices:

Online Dictionary of Library and information science (ODLIS) describes best practices as follows: in the application of theory to a real-life situation, procedures that, when properly applied consistently yield superior results and are therefore used as references points in the evaluation of the effectiveness of alternative methods of accomplishing their same task. Best practices are identified by

examining empirical evidence of success. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary "describes best practices as the quality of higher standard excellence highly improved outstanding part excellence services. It is a means way of doing something usual or expected way in a particular organization or situation guidelines for good practices. In this process of developing best practices we take action rather than good side and we improve our skills".

Best Practices in Libraries:

The assessment of a library as a vital sub-unit is a key step that integrates itself with the overall evaluation. The library is the fulcrum of support for the entire range of academic activities on an educational campus. In today's high-tech learning environment, the library as a learning resource is taking up increasingly more academic space and time in the life of the learner, in times ahead, this will be even more so. All this plays up the need for the scientific evaluation of a library so that its role as the centrepiece of academic development is protected and enhanced. It is in this context that the NAAC has after wide consultation evolved a set of guidelines on quality indicators, to help academic libraries to be always in their best form. College libraries have to create an image of being interesting and happening places to attract the young generation towards them. Many events can be organized to promote library activities. It advertises library collections and services on different subjects. Organizing events like book talks displays films reviews etc. Attract more users to the library. These create awareness about library products and services. Displaying useful information to users such as the importance of various days, vocational

guidance, events happening in the local area or a specific subject field etc. interests many users and give them a reason to visit libraries. It gives the library an image of information useful for routine and helps to enhance users' knowledge and skills in day-to-day life. Encouraging users to participate in various library activities and user representation on various library activities and user representation on various library activities and committees develops a feeling of participation.

NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council):

The National Assessment and Accreditation Council is an autonomous body established by the University Grant 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 in Bangalore. The primary role of NAAC is to assess and accredit institutions of higher education and or its units in the country.

In the new methodology introduced by NAAC in April 2007, the higher education institutions are assessed and accredited by a two-step approach. In the first step, the institution is required to seek 'Institutional Eligibility for Quality Assessment (IEQA)' and the second step is the assessment and accreditation of the institute under the grades 'A', 'B', 'C' for

accredited institutions; 'D' for those which are not accredited.

NAAC has identified seven criteria:

1. Curricular aspects,
2. Governance and leadership,
3. Infrastructure and learning resources,
4. Innovative practices as the basis for its assessment procedure,
5. Research, Consultancy and extension,
6. Teaching-learning and evaluation,
7. Student Support and Progression.

Best Practices for Academic Libraries:

The assessment of a library as a vital sub-unit is a key step that integrates itself with the overall evaluation. The library is the fulcrum of support for the entire range of academic activities on an educational campus. In today's high-tech learning environment, the library as a learning resource is taking up increasingly more academic space and time in the life of the learner, in times ahead, this will be even more so. All this plays up the need for the scientific evaluation of a library so that its role as the centrepiece of academic development is protected and enhanced. It is in this context that the NAAC has after wide consultation evolved a set of guidelines on quality indicators, to help academic libraries to be always in their best form.

College libraries have to create an image of being interesting and happening places to attract the young generation towards them. Many events can be organized to promote library activities. Displaying useful information to users such as the importance of various days, vocational guidance, events happening in the local area or a specific subject field etc. interests many users and give them a

reason to visit libraries. It gives the library an image of information useful for routine and helps to enhance users' knowledge and skills in day-to-day life. Encouraging users to participate in various library activities and user representation on various library activities and user representation on various library activities and committees develops a feeling of participation.

Best Practices for Libraries:

1. The library staff should be taken to other colleges to study their functioning which will refresh the staff and will make aware them of the best practice followed by that library.
2. The library staff should provide training to make them experts in handling library automation and other activities.
3. Libraries can generate funds through resource generation through external membership and also through internal services.
4. To create awareness about the library science subject can be offered as an optional course for the semester.
5. Book exhibitions will encourage the faculties and students to buy books for their information needs.
6. Hybrid where CD-ROMs and Internet facility will provide the required information.
7. Use of ICT facilities such as the Internet, and free browsing.
8. Library websites/homepages which will disseminate information about the library. The link should be provided for OPAC which will familiarize with Library Catalogue.
9. Access to e-resources should be given such as e-journals, e-books,

online databases, digital resources, web resources etc.

10. Digital repositories should be created of in-house publications or other resources, so the user can access these links.

Best User Awarded:

The library has initiated several innovative practices which are mentioned in the paper to promote the quality services and maximum use of the library by the end-user which is our students. In addition to this, to motivate the students to make efficient use of the library and its services, the 'Best User Award' has been started in the last two years. Three students are selected based on the statistical data, reading aptitude of the student, utilization of library resources, and discipline. As a part of that, we had decided at the beginning of this academic year that we will give the Best Library User Award to a promising student of our university on the occasion of the Annual day.

Newspaper Clippings:

The library should maintain clipping files on different subjects of students' interests and as per Institute demand. Some informative news clips are stuck on the notice board also. Librarians should maintain a Notice File which contains one copy of every notice in this file. Current Awareness Service (CAS) provide to users by email and notice board. The library should display different website information on the notice board.

Previous Year Question Papers:

All subjects' question papers for the previous year should be arranged in the file. Scanned question papers should keep in a digital library for users. Besides its

eBooks. Syllabuses and E-resources are the part of Digital library.

Suggestion Box:

Suggestion boxes should be in the library for valuable suggestions of users or keep suggestions registered in the library and put before the library membership.

Budget:

The library department proposed an annual budget for the year. There should be a proportionate growth in the library budget. Budget for different documents such as books, journals and other resources and ICT infrastructure are to be defined as to the scope of the institute. Sources of income other than the state, central and UGC grants may be identified for enhancing the collection and services. The last five year's budget file should be in the library.

Digital Library:

A digital library is a collection of documents in organized electronic form, available on the Internet or CD-ROM disks. Depending on the specific library, a user may be able to access e-resources, magazine articles, e-books, papers, audio, and videos. In digital library should have a minimum of 10 computers for users. Reports of e-resource users should be arranged year-wise.

ILL & MOU:

The library department should have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with other organizations to share reading materials and E-resources. The library becomes a member of DELNET, which provides Inter Library Loan (ILL) facility to users.

Library Advisory Committee:

The formation of the library committee with equal representation by faculty and students, and the role of the committee and its functions in developing the library services are to be well defined. The Library Committee works for the strategic development of the library. Library Committee convene meeting twice per year and additional meeting, if required and record the minutes of meeting for the same.

Library Policies:

The library should have approved policies on the collection development support, Books issuance, introduction of new services, support in terms of the fund, annual budget, book bank, binding procedure, weed out books, and policy on the loss of books and an ongoing commitment of the institution in deputing library professionals for continuing and further education. NAAC strives for Quality and excellence in higher education and advocates for enhancing the role of library and Information Services in improving the academic environment. Document prepared by NAAC for Best Practices in Academic Libraries says "Best Practices may be innovative and be a philosophy, policy, and Strategy program, Process or Practice that solves a problem or create new opportunities and positively impact on the organization." NAAC developed a set of Best Practices followed in Academic Libraries and presented under the following four broad areas:

- Management of Library and Information Services
- Collection and Services Provided to Users
- The extent of the Use of Services
- Use of Technology

NAAC Peer Team Members Can Ask:

1. Are the qualifications, experience and pay off the Librarian as per government/UGC norms?
2. Does the library have extended and appropriate working hours before/after class hours?
3. Does the college have a Library Advisory Committee? If yes, what is the role of the library committee?
4. Has the librarian attended/participated in orientation/refresher courses and workshops/seminars/conferences?
5. Does the library have separate premises of its own? Does it contain minimum infrastructure facilities such as utilities, staff area, reading hall, periodicals section, circulation counter, service area, Information Display, etc.?
6. Is the generator facility extended to the library?
7. Does the library have computers and Internet facilities?
8. Are the library functions automated? If yes, are they fully/partially automated?
9. What are the financial/funding sources other than the state, central and UGC grants?
10. Is there any defined policy for collection development, stock verification, promotion and training of library staff?
11. How many International, National, Peer Reviewed Journals?
12. Journals subscription details and list of e-journals.
13. DELNET Membership, Inter Library Loan (ILL) facility.
14. How many magazines and Newspapers?
15. How many volumes and titles?

16. Which library software is used and Barcoding on books?
17. Which secret page of books?
18. Which type of Reference books are in the Reference section?
19. How many Encyclopedias and Dictionaries?
20. How many Foreign Authors' books?
21. How many books were purchased this year (with Bills)
22. Audi-Video Materials (Non-Book Materials)
23. How many Handbooks and Reports?
24. Book issuance report and missing books list.
25. Reprography services (Photocopy facility to users)

Suggestions:

1. Make a Library PPT which contains the last five years data of the library.
2. Collection of previous year's Question Papers for last 5 years and provided to students on demands.
3. News Paper clipping file should be arranged year-wise.
4. Students' and faculty members' library entry records in the register last 5 years.
5. E-Resources usage statistics of users.
6. Indoor plants should be in the library for a green environment.
7. Stock verification records file
8. New arrivals are displayed in a separate section
9. Book Exhibition/Workshop/conference organizes every year by the library department.

10. Special care of Divyangs (Handicaps) to search for reading material.

It is suggested to NAAC that the best practices followed in British Libraries and American Center Libraries operating in India should have been taken into account. There are areas which we have not been able to find out as best practices. A few examples of such areas are the index to periodicals, real-time reference service, preparation of various statistics of the use of e-resources and many other areas.

Conclusion:

The libraries play a major role in catering to the information needs of the educational community. Significant role for libraries to lead the parent institutions in pursuing new modes of academic research and productivity. Libraries and librarians are the base of academic productivity, with a potential to expand both the range and depth of creative work carried out by the faculty and students in corresponding disciplines. Hence library and librarian can play an important role and contribute a lot to the assessment and accreditation process beyond 4.2 i.e. Library learning resources.

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