

# Quality Assurance Framework

## 1. Three Stages of Quality Assurance

The stages of quality assurance identified in the QA framework are for the purpose of guiding management, faculty, students and all other practitioners of QA in higher education institutions of the country. The stages enlisted below are in line with the international QA practices:

### 1.1 Stage I

Setting up of Quality Assurance standards and criteria through national level consultation to assure the desired level of engagement and ownership of all stakeholders.

#### 1.2 Outcomes

- ◆ Criteria/Standards for Quality Assurance
- ◆ Criteria/ Standards for Accreditation
- ◆ Doctrines/ Manuals/ Guidelines

### 1.3 Stage II

Developing Internal Quality Assurance System (**IQA**) at the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

The HEIs stand responsible for setting up of IQA at their own realizing the significance of integrating quality into all tiers of academic activity. Whereas all kind of facilitation required for capacity building of the HEIs to accomplish the task is provided by HEC.

#### 1.4 Outcomes

- ◆ Self Assessment Manuals
- ◆ IQA Doctrines/ Guidelines

### 1.5 Stage III

Developing External Quality Assurance System (**EQA**) in the higher education sector of the country.

The respective Accrediting / Auditing Bodies stand responsible for EQA in the form of Academic Audit, Accreditation or Performance Reviews. These bodies are Accreditation Councils for Program Accreditation in case of Pakistan and the HEC for Institutional level Accreditation, Academic Audit or Performance Review.

## **1.6 Outcomes**

- ◆ Program Accreditation Standards
- ◆ Intuitional Accreditation Standards
- ◆ Doctrines/ Guidelines/ Manuals

## **2. Two Levels of Quality Assurance**

### **2.1 QA at Program Level**

Programme Level Quality Assurance System identified as essential and not to be replaced with Institutional Level QA Processes as standards vary amongst various academic programs even within the same institution. Thus for accuracy of information to standards, the specific program level quality assurance processes are given significant importance. Accreditation Councils / Professional Bodies are responsible to assure that Programme level QA processes are in place. Establishment of new Accreditation Councils is a milestone on this roadmap where these do not exist whereas active linkages are developed with already existing ones. The information regarding Program level quality assurance is published for Public Information and transparency. Self-Assessment reports generated by the HEIs correspond to Accreditation Bodies for Program Assessment Reports.

### **2.2 Outcomes**

- ◆ Establishment of Programme Accrediting/ Auditing Bodies (Councils) on the need identification basis
- ◆ Self-Assessment Reports
- ◆ Program Accreditation Reports
- ◆ Program Ranking lists

### **2.3 Institutional Level**

The institutional level quality assurance processes are required to develop an ultimate Quality Culture with the goal that quality is central focus of the institution at all levels and is integral part of all academic practices. It involves all aspects and tiers of academic research and scholarship including students, faculty, staff, governance, management, infrastructure, facilities, funding etc.

Institutional level Quality Assurance System defines that Quality assurance is primarily a responsibility of the HEIs. Creating enabling learning environment for the students is the core of mission and goals achievable through all academic activities planned and conducted by the HEIs.

### 3. Future Developments

- ◆ Autonomous Status of single operative QAA
- ◆ Establishment of more independent EQA Bodies like QAA
- ◆ Internationally recognized Quality Label

### 4. Illustration of QA Framework

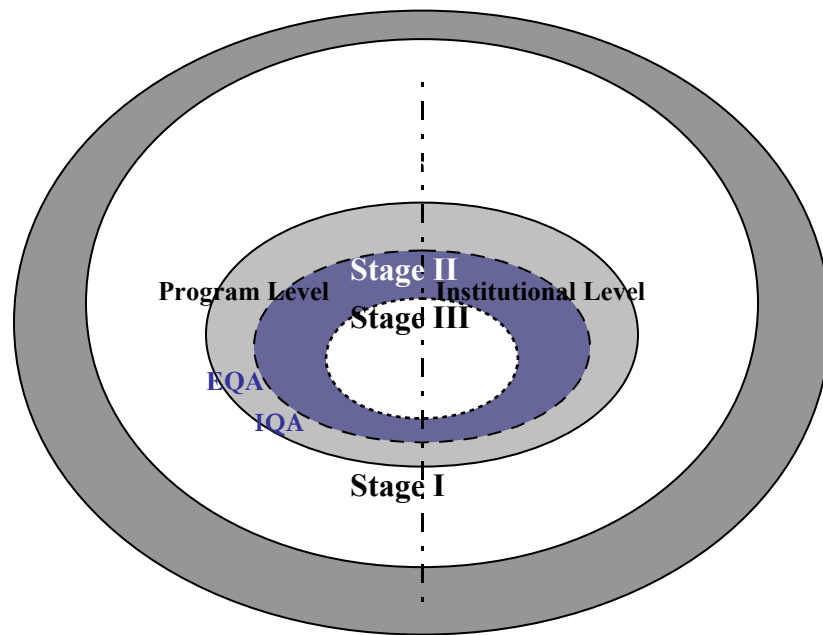


Fig I: Quality Assurance Framework