



Bangladesh Accreditation Council

External Quality Assessment Guidelines for Accreditation of Academic Program

1. External Quality Assessment

External Quality Assessment (EQA) refers the fact that a team or a body, external to the Higher Education Institution (HEI), assesses the academic program, provides observations and assessment on the quality of the academic program under consideration for accreditation. EQA is a system of objectively measuring the level of compliance with the standards for quality assurance and accreditation. There shall be an Accreditation Committee appointed by the Council to carry out the EQA for the purpose of accreditation.

2. External Quality Assessment Process

The external quality assessment process shall include:

- 1) **Review of Documents:** The Accreditation Committee shall critically review the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and all the documents that the Program offering Entity (PoE) submitted along with the application for accreditation.
- 2) **Meeting with the Expert Committee:** Accreditation Committee shall meet with the Expert Committee appointed by the Council and discuss the observations on review of documents. The Expert Committee shall provide a list of discipline specific requirements, which are very essential for quality education in the academic program under assessment for accreditation. Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) shall arrange this meeting at the Council office or at a suitable venue.
- 3) **Site Visit:** As an integral part of external quality assessment, the Accreditation Committee in consultation with the concerned official of the council shall prepare a site visit schedule. At least 10 (Ten) working days before the site visit, the Council shall send the site visit schedule to the respective PoE. Following the site visit schedule, the concerned PoE shall make necessary arrangement to facilitate the site visit. The site visit may be started with a presentation on the Self-Assessment Report (SAR) by the program self-assessment

committee (PSAC). The PSAC will clarify statements mentioned in the SAR during the presentation. During the site visit the Accreditation Committee shall:

- a) Visit and observe all the quality assurance aspects of the HEI & PoE following the BAC accreditation standards and criteria;
 - b) Visit and observe classroom teaching and practical sessions as decided by the Accreditation Committee;
 - c) Review of academic and administrative documents related to the BAC standards and criteria to assess the level of compliance.
 - d) Meet separately with the representatives of major stakeholders including students, faculty and non-academic professional staff, alumni, employers of the graduates, key persons of administration and top management of the HEI. In the meetings there shall be intensive discussions on the current status of the HEI & PoE in respect of the accreditation standards of the Council.
 - e) It is to be noted that selection of respondents for discussion with the Accreditation Committee is very critical to get meaningful information for assessment. Hence for the purpose of effective discussion with the accreditation committee following conditions have to be fulfilled during site visit:
 - students should be selected from all the batches/classes and sections (if any) of the academic program.
 - alumni members have to be selected from several organizations beyond the HEI & PoE. Alumni members working at the HEI & PoE are not the right choice for meaningful discussion and feedback. Alumni members who have graduated in the recent past (for example last 5 years) may be the right source of feedback.
 - it is very important to select right employers/representative of the employers, who are sufficiently knowledgeable about the performance of the graduates of the academic program under assessment.
- 4) **Exit Meeting:** At the end of site visit, there will be an exit meeting with the internal stakeholders of the PoE. In the exit meeting the Accreditation Committee will share findings of EQA. Director of Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Dean of the concerned faculty/Head of the institute, Head and faculty members of the PoE shall be present in the exit meeting. Exit meeting creates opportunity for correction and confirmation of EQA observations with justification. Exit meeting also creates opportunity for consideration of documents or evidences missed or overlooked by the accreditation

committee during site visit, if any. The Accreditation Committee shall try to get acceptance of the stakeholders on the facts and findings with appropriate clarification, if needed. It is to be noted that recommendations and numerical assessments are very confidential, which cannot be shared with the stakeholders. Recommendations and numerical assessments will be used only by the BAC with confidentiality for decision on the accreditation and issuance of certificate.

5) **Post Site Visit Assessment:** At the end of site visit the Accreditation Committee shall determine the level of compliances. Using the BAC assessment sheet, the Accreditation Committee shall make numerical assessment giving score for each criterion based on level of compliance following the BAC scoring rubrics. The accreditation committee shall also prepare a draft EQA report identifying the lapses and gaps in respect of BAC accreditation standards.

6) **Expert Committee Opinion:** The Accreditation Committee shall share and discuss the draft EQA report and findings on the discipline specific requirements with the expert committee. Expert committee members shall look into the observations and findings in respect of the list of discipline specific requirements provided before the site visit. The expert committee shall provide expert opinion regarding the suitability and appropriateness of discipline specific requirements available at the HEI & PoE for quality education.

7) **Numerical Assessment & Final EQA Report**

Considering the opinion of the Expert Committee the Accreditation Committee shall finalize the numerical assessment and prepare the final EQA report.

8) **Submission EQA Report**

The Head of the Accreditation Committee shall submit the final EQA report and assessment sheet to the Chairman/Member (Accreditation) of the Council, both in soft and printed hard copies in sealed envelope separately within the time as per the ToR. The EQA report and assessment sheet must be submitted within 4 (four) weeks after the completion of site visit.

3. Responsibilities of the Accreditation Committee

1) EQA is an essential part of the accreditation process. Sincerity and fairness in assessment are very critical to determine the accreditation status of Academic Program. It is expected that the Accreditation Committee shall carry out the EQA maintaining confidentially and avoiding all sorts of conflict of interest with utmost good faith as per BAC policy.

- 2) Before starting the EQA, it is very important to go through the Part-B of the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF), BAC accreditation standards and criteria and EQA guidelines. To complete the assessment effectively the Accreditation Committee must follow the EQA process and guidelines of BAC.
- 3) At the beginning of EQA process the Accreditation Committee shall critically review the SAR and other documents submitted along with the application for accreditation. The Accreditation Committee will identify the issues that are very critical for meaningful EQA, but not clear enough to understand from the submitted documents and/or not fully explained and/or not discussed at all in the self-assessment report.
- 4) Accreditation Committee shall meet with the Expert Committee, appointed by the Council, and collect a list of requirements, which are very essential for quality education in the academic program under assessment for accreditation.
- 5) Considering the list of requirements provided by the expert committee and identified issues that require further clarification the Accreditation Committee shall prepare a checklist for validation and EQA activity plan.
- 6) In consultation with the concerned official of the council the Accreditation Committee will prepare a site visit schedule. To complete site visit effectively within the specified time the Accreditation Committee must follow the site visit schedule strictly.
- 7) Following the site visit schedule, the Accreditation Committee shall arrive at the PoE. At the beginning the Accreditation Committee may have an introductory meeting with the IQAC Officials, program Self-Assessment Committee (PSAC) and Head of the concerned PoE. The site visit for EQA formally will commence with a presentation on the SAR followed by a discussion on the identified issues, which need further clarification.
- 8) To assess the level of compliance, during site visit the Accreditation Committee shall review all the documents and evidences following BAC standards and criteria.
- 9) The Accreditation Committee shall carry out the EQA activities with due respect and protocol to all the stakeholders of the HEI & PoE.
- 10) The Accreditation Committee shall meet separately with the representatives of major stakeholders including students, faculty and professional staff, alumni, employers of the graduates, key persons of administration and top management of the HEI. In the meetings there shall be intensive discussions on the current situation of the HEI/PoE in respect of quality assurance aspects and accreditation standards of the Council.

- 11) During the meeting with the different group of stakeholders, the Accreditation Committee shall try to bring out the valuable insights and information creating a very friendly and cordial environment. The Accreditation Committee shall try to make the stakeholders open and transparent with enough opportunity to express their honest opinion on the prevailing situation at the HEI & PoE relating to the BAC accreditation standards and criteria.
- 12) The members of the Accreditation Committee should take note on the responses from the stakeholders during the time of meeting and discussion on the matters related to EQA, which, in effect will help in preparing the draft report and numerical assessment.
- 13) At the end of site visit, in the exit meeting, the Accreditation Committee shall share the EQA findings. Accreditation committee must be open and flexible to change or correct their observations considering documents and evidences missed or overlooked during site visit, if any.
- 14) Head and all the members of the Accreditation Committee should maintain courtesy to all colleagues with whom they work in the EQA team, respect their views and opinion in preparing EQA report, recommendations and assessment.
- 15) All the EQA findings, comments, recommendations and assessment must be based on valid facts, documents and evidences avoiding all sorts of conflict of interest and biasness.
- 16) All the EQA findings, comments, recommendations and assessment must be very specific and clearly understandable without any ambiguity.
- 17) EQA report, recommendations and numerical assessment of the Accreditation Committee are very confidential. These will be used only by the BAC with confidentiality for decision on accreditation and issuance of Certificate. Any information presented on the SAR of the concerned PoE, review and EQA findings, or the conduct of the EQA cannot be shared to any other HEI/PoE, any member of the public or the media.
- 18) The final EQA report and assessment sheet must be signed by Head and all the members of the Accreditation Committee with their detail identity (Full name, Designation, name and address of the employer, contact details with cell/phone number and e-mail address).
- 19) The Accreditation Committee must carry out the EQA activities with professionalism and integrity maintaining the provisions of BAC Policy on Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality, 2019.

4. External Quality Assessment Report

- 1) At the end of the EQA the Accreditation Committee shall submit a report on the basis of findings and observations using EQA report format prescribed by the Council.
- 2) The EQA report should include all the critical observations and comments relating to the accreditation standards and criteria specifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the PoE.
- 3) All the EQA findings may be presented in the report using the following descriptors:

Commendation	Criterion that the HEI/PoE is maintaining properly with appropriate documentation and evidences.
Affirmation	Criterion that the HEI/PoE has started to adopt and maintain, which should be enhanced further for sustainability.
Recommendation	Criterion that the HEI/PoE is not maintaining and should give serious attention considering as a weakness/laps in compliance.

- 4) The EQA report should clearly demonstrate the level of compliance, identify the laps and gaps in respect of BAC accreditation standards and criteria.
- 5) In the EQA report the good practices maintained by the HEI/PoE should be recognized and commended.
- 6) All the EQA findings, comments, recommendations must be very specific and clearly understandable without any ambiguity.
- 7) The EQA report should be written in clear and concise language avoiding ambiguity so that readers can understand and follow the contents with ease.
- 8) The final EQA report shall be limited within maximum 10,000 (Ten Thousand) words other than exhibits.
- 9) The assessment sheet must be signed by Head and all the members of the Accreditation Committee with their detail identity (Full name, Designation, name and address of the employer, contact details with cell/phone number and e-mail address).
- 10) The declaration page of the final EQA report must be signed by Head and all the members of the Accreditation Committee with their detail identity (Full name, Designation, name and address of the employer, contact details with cell/phone number and e-mail address).

Annex 1: External Quality Assessment Report Format

<p>Chapter 1 Principles and significance of EQA BAC standards/QA aspects under assessment and Description of the EQA process</p>
<p>Chapter 2 Brief history of the HEI, PoE (Department/Faculty/Institute etc.) with vision, mission, objectives. Rationale and goals of the academic program as described in the Self-Assessment Report. Program learning outcomes as presented in the Self-Assessment Report.</p>
<p>Chapter 3 Findings as the outcomes of the EQA in each of the accreditation standards and criterion. This chapter should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clearly identify the level of compliance with specific comments on the current status of adoption and maintenance of the criterion;• Clearly identify the strengths, good practices, initiatives and weaknesses as commendation, affirmation and recommendation.
<p>Chapter 4 SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunity and threats) Concluding remarks with specific recommendations.</p> <p>Exhibit Exhibit-1 Site visit schedule</p>
<p>In addition, the EQA report should include a declaration page (as suggested in annex 2) signed by the Head and Members of the EQA team</p>

Annex 2: Declaration

We, hereby, declare that this External Quality Assessment (EQA) Report is prepared by us under the ToR of appointment by the Bangladesh Accreditation Council. All the findings and recommendations contained herein are the outcomes of EQA including site visit, intensive discussions with representatives of major stakeholders, review of the Self-Assessment Report of the PoE (Name of the PoE & HEI) and other documentary evidences made available to us during the site visit.

Accreditation Committee	Name & Designation with contact details	Signature
Head		
Member (QA)		
Member (Subject)		