

Assuring the Quality of Higher Education during the COVID-19 pandemic

Till now, the COVID-19 pandemic is existing across various parts of the globe with its new variants. This state forced universities to adopt online teaching and learning to continue their academic services to their stakeholders. At the same time, those universities are in place to accommodate the E-Accreditation system to monitor, improve, and sustain higher education quality. E-Accreditation system is an online system for the management of accreditation assessments. Accreditation bodies have released the academic accreditation standards for E-learning and distance education programs. The following strategies would be adopted for successful implementation of E-Accreditation:

Institutional support:

- *Allocating the sufficient budget for managing E-Accreditation besides resources, amenities, effective use of data & KPIs.*
- *Establishing the essential infrastructure aiding the E-Accreditation system.*
- *Adhering to the E-Accreditation standards covering online teaching, E-Learning, and distance education programs; and guiding the HEIs' members to follow them.*
- *Developing/utilizing the software for managing accreditation services.*
- *Engaging the stakeholders using the suitable approach.*
- *Gathering the relevant and vital data, including benchmarking for better outcomes.*
- *Redesigning the existing online surveys to focus on the components highlighting the quality of curriculum content, digital learning resources, and online teaching and learning.*

Students:

- *Understanding the students' readiness using surveys and online interviews to improve the quality of online learning.*
- *Improving the students' commitment to self-disciplined and self-directed E-Learning.*
- *Providing sufficient training for both students and faculty to utilize E-Learning effectively.*
- *Enhancing the quality of digital library resources to aid the students' online learning process.*

Faculty:

- *Focusing on the faculty readiness for online teaching to maintain the quality of teaching.*
- *Providing the faculty with adequate technical support and training for handling the data, online educational platforms, and software related to E-Accreditation.*
- *Develop and implement a learning outcomes (Los) based assessment system and automate Los measurement using appropriate software.*
- *Use specified Rubrics to assess students in the newly adopted examination system.*
- *Utilizing the quality network for conducting the regular peer review and self-review against accreditation standards.*

Research:

- *Carefully design and execute the research management guidelines that adhere to social distancing protocols, particularly research requiring the physical presence.*
- *Offering the funds and ensuring safety measures to prevent the compromise of the students' educational and research needs.*

These strategies would help the educational administrators monitor and improve the quality of higher education, thereby easing E-Accreditation. Moreover, effective leadership is mandatory to organize the streamline of the higher education process during this pandemic state with precautionary measures and appropriate strategies and move ahead towards attaining successful E-accreditation of programs and institutions. There is also a need for HEIs to prepare themselves to face the post-COVID-19 situation.