



An Integrated Approach to the Assessment of Excellence in Higher Educational Institutions

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Abstract

India's higher education system is next to the United States and China and it is the third largest in the world. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 8 million students. Universities in India have evolved in divergent streams with each stream monitored by an apex body, indirectly controlled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and funded jointly by the state governments. The National Institute of Technology (NITs), Indian Institutes of Information Technology (IIITs), Indian Institutes of Technology is among the most prestigious institutions within the technology sciences. In this context, the assessment plays the pivotal role. Assessment in higher education becomes a complex phenomenon. To make it easier, institutions are following the analyzed elements of assessment for the higher education. The elements such as Module Design, Teachers' experience of assessment, Students, Departmental Culture, Programme Design, Innovation and Improvement, Procedures, Principles, Policies and Regulations, Resources/funding and Recognition and Reward.

Keywords: Assessment, elements, institutions

Introduction

India's higher education system is next to the United States and China and it is the third largest in the world. The main governing body at the tertiary level is the University Grants Commission, which enforces its standards, advises the government, and helps coordinate between the centre and the state. Indian higher education system has expanded at a fast pace by adding nearly 8 million students. Universities in India have evolved in divergent streams with each stream monitored by an apex body, indirectly controlled by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and funded jointly by the state governments. The National Institute of Technology

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Assessment is something which is 'experienced', though not always positively, by almost all involved in a higher education institution: students, teachers, administrators, managers, policy makers, institutional leaders, library staff, the students union and those supporting students in professional contexts in which learning is assessed, e.g. teaching mentor or manager of the



placement student in business. Given this complexity surely it is important for us to try to understand the relationships between these groups in some systematic way.

We wish to propose an assessment system in higher education that helps to make sense of the milieu, may be useful in identifying critical points for intervention, and may assist in seeing why attempts to improve assessment across a system, or in a particular part of a system, may succeed or fail. In this article we present the principal elements, suggest some key issues with respect to each element, and note some critical relationships between the elements. To make it easier, institutions are following the analyzed elements of assessment to function of the higher education smoothly. The elements such as Module Design, Teachers' experience of assessment, Students, Departmental Culture, Programme Design, Innovation and Improvement, Procedures, Principles, Policies and Regulations, Resources/funding and Recognition and Reward.

Elements

Module Design

- The alignment of assessment methods and tasks with module objectives and learning activities
- Balancing the multiple purposes of assessment - for learning, measurement achievement, and maintaining standards.
- The accessibility and inclusivity of assessment, so that assessment tasks enable all students to fully demonstrate the quality of their learning with an equal amount of effort

- Feedback that is detailed, timely, related to objectives, and leads to a response from students
- The balance of time allocated for teaching and for assessment

Teachers' experience of assessment

- Teachers' awareness of good practice and their repertoire of assessment methods
- Teachers' time - to design assessment tasks, evaluate student responses, provide feedback that is genuinely useful, and innovate
- Teachers' conceptions of and values/beliefs about assessment
- Teachers' experience of assessment
- Teachers' enthusiasm and motivation

Students

- Students' perceptions of assessment tasks and the alignment of these perceptions with teachers' intentions
- Experience of assessment and being assessed
- Workload and time-pressures
- Students' approaches to studying, including strategic approaches based on motivation and workload
- Students' preparation for assessment - their understanding of the task, familiarity with the format and ability to engage with assessment criteria
- Students' family, educational, employment and social backgrounds
- Student culture
- The student's 'lifeworld' including the competing demands on their time and commitment for studying



Departmental culture

- The departmental culture and the extent to which it supports teachers and encourages innovation
- Values such as scholarship and respect for, and valuing of, individuals
- Community of practice and extent to which there is a core and periphery to assessment practice

Programme design

- The design of assessment at the programme level to maximize coherence in students' experience
- The extent to which the assessment strategy reflects programme learning outcomes

Innovation and improvement

- Innovation based on programme-level objectives and learning processes
- Innovation involving changes in assessment methods
- Embedding change at the programme level Element 7: Staff development Critical issues
- Access to information on assessment
- Opportunities to reflect on current practices and to discuss practices with colleagues
- A structured programme of research and writing on assessment practices
- Whether staff development is perceived as meeting deficiencies, addresses management agendas or is more developmental

Procedures

- Peer review of teaching, including review of assessment design and evidence of student learning
- The expression of institutional policies in departmental procedures

Principles, policies and regulations

- The existence and quality of institutional policies and principles
- The process of developing policies and principles, including the involvement of staff and students
- The nature of institutional policies and principles as edicts or guides
- The extent to which policies and regulations are seen as constraining or enabling

Resources/funding

- Academic support units that are viable
- Funding for innovation
- Targeting of resources for strategic improvement
- Resources for teaching (including assessment)
- The balance of resource allocation between research, teaching and other activities

Recognition and reward (for good teaching, including assessment)

- Institutional recognition of good teaching
- Institutionally endorsed processes for the review of teaching and assessment (including, for example, peer observation/peer review)
- Rewards, promotions and allocation of roles and responsibilities for teaching and assessment



Conclusion

The private sector is strong in Indian higher education. This has been partly as a result of the decision by the Government to divert spending to the goal of universalization of elementary education. Within a decade different state assemblies has passed bills for private universities, including Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Amity University etc. Regulatory authorities like UGC and AICTE have been trying to extirpate private universities that run courses with no affiliation or recognition. Students from rural and semi urban background often fall prey to these institutes and colleges. This leads to the excellence of higher education in India. The above assessment elements contribute to the growth of the higher education in both the technical and non-technical institutions.

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