

Self-Study Report and its Preparation Process for Saudi National Accreditation

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ABSTRACT

National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) established in 2004 is a Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. National Commission which accredits postsecondary institutions and programs within the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Commission determines and monitors standards and procedures for academic accreditation and quality assurance procedures and practices. There are around 11 main requirements for any program wishing to be accredited by NCAAA. One of the very crucial requirements is the Self Study Report of the program (SSRP). This article deals with the preparation process of SSRP and what are the major contents in the SSRP and how to respond to each of them.

Keywords: Accreditation, Standards, Management, Teaching and Learning, Students, Faculty and Facilities

1. INTRODUCTION

All programs seeking National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) accreditation must fully satisfy all the rules and regulations and provide all the required documentations. For general awareness, we can categorize them into twelve major sections. The paperwork and documents required to meet the NCAAA accreditation include a) Program final licensing or establishment decision b) Consistency with National Qualifications Framework (NQF) c) Availability of institutional accreditation requirements d) Students and staff manuals, e) Program's quality assurance system and its

performance reports, f) Program and courses specifications g) Program learning outcomes assessment plan and reports, h) Students graduated (One cohort at least), i) Program Advisory Committee, k) Program Advisory Committee, m) Key performance indicators and benchmarking, n) Program Self-Study Report (SSRP), p) Program Improvement and Implementation Plan. Under some major sections there are further details in which NCAAA go into further details and require paperwork to confirm that the program seeking accreditation is fully implementing all the rules and regulations. In this article, we will just concentrate on Self Study Report preparation process and will discuss major parts in the report [1,2,3].

2. Self-Study Report for the Program (SSRP)

NCAAA provides clear guidelines for the preparation of self-study report for the program (SSRP). SSRP has six major contents which requires detail responses from each program seeking NCAAA accreditation. These include:

- Executive Summary of the Program
- Program Self Study
- Program Quality Assurance Evaluation
- Program Independent Evaluation
- Actions Recommendation
- Attachments

Under Executive summary section of the SSRP, programs seeking Accreditation must provide program profile, its mission and

goals, achievements, accomplishments of the program, major tracks/pathways, intermediate exit points or awarded degree. branches offering the program, program statistical data, students Enrolment, graduation rate, number of teaching staff, classification of teaching staff according to mode of study and overall assessment of program statistical data.

Under program Self-study section of the SSRP, programs need to supply evidences about program benchmarking partners and selection criteria and reasons and summary of Knowledge Performance Indicators (KPIs) and their benchmarks.

Third section which is about Program Quality Assurance Evaluation is very crucial and is the major section in SSRP which has 5 standards. Detailed responses and evidences are required from each program seeking to be NCAAA accredited.

3. Knowledge Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Programs seeking NCAAA need to provide list of Knowledge Performance Indicators (KPIs). These indicators are very helpful to benchmark the program overall evaluation. Not only the KPIs but their result is very important. For every single KPI, its required to supply actual value of the KPI and what was the target set for that specific KPI and what are the internal and external benchmark values for each KPI. External benchmark partners must be selected carefully, and they must have already been accredited. Programs also need to provide strengths and weaknesses for each KPI and what are the immediate and future priorities for the improvement. There are 17 major KPIs and different KPIs are related to different standards. Some standards such as Standard 1, 2 and 3 have only one KPI in each standard while standard 2 has 8 KPIs.

4. Program Evaluation in Quality Standards

Program Quality Assurance Evaluation is very crucial and is the major section in SSRP which has 5 standards. Detailed

responses and evidences are required for each standard from each program seeking to be NCAAA accredited.

4.1 Standard 1. Program Management and Quality Assurance

As the name indicates, Standard 1 is about the leadership and quality assurance of the program. Standard 1 has two major parts i.e., program management and its quality assurance and each part is further divided into sub-standards.

4.1.1 Program Management

- Mission and its goals match with college/ university mission.
- Availability of qualified staff to perform defined tasks.
- Supportive academic and organizational environment.
- Monitoring the achievement and improvement of goals through specific performance indicators.
- Implementation of mechanisms to ensure integrity, fairness, and equality.
- Including views of professionals and experts to evaluate, develop, and to improve performance.
- Supplying reliable and publicly disclosed information about the program to suit the needs of the stakeholders.

Activating ethical practices, IP rights, scientific integrity and professional conduct. Applying approved regulations, and procedures.

4.1.2. Program Quality Assurance

- Implementing an effective quality assurance and management system and its consistency with the institution quality system.
- Analyzing the key performance indicators (KPIs) and the evaluation data.
- Conducting periodic, comprehensive evaluation and planning for improvement and implementation.

4.2 Standard 2. Teaching and Learning

Teaching and Learning Standard is about exploring defining learning outcomes and their consistency with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). Defined Learning Outcomes must also be consistent with other standards, and requirements. Not only the learning outcomes but the curriculum must also match to the standard requirements. The learning outcomes achievement must be assessed, and their results are used for continuous improvement. The major sub-standards which are required to be addressed under Standard 2 are grouped under 3 main categories:

4.2.1 Learning Outcomes

- Identifying intended learning outcomes and aligning them.
- Consistency of the learning outcomes with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), other standards and requirements.
- Identifying the learning outcomes for the different tracks.
- Applying proper procedures to measure the learning outcomes and benchmarking achievement.
- Implementing a clear and approved teaching, learning and evaluation strategy to achieve intended learning outcomes.

4.2.2 Curriculum

- Designing Curriculum that fulfills the desired course learning outcomes, number of academic developments and is reviewed periodically.
- Ensuring the balance between the general and specialty requirements in the study plan and considering the sequencing and integration of the courses.
- Considering the identification of exit-points requirements in the study plan and consistency with international practices.
- Aligning the course learning outcomes with the program learning outcomes.

- Varying teaching and learning strategies and assessment methods and aligning them with the learning outcomes.
- Verifying the effectiveness of field training and the quality of its supervision and following up on the commitments according to the specific mechanisms.
- Ensuring a that study plan, course and program specifications are matched and unified.

4.2.3 Quality of Teaching and Students' Assessment

- Monitoring assessment methods and teaching & learning strategies and the commitment of the teaching staff.
- Providing necessary training for the teaching staff on learning and teaching strategies and assessment methods.
- Providing students with comprehensive information about CLOs, assessment methods and procedures, learning and teaching planning and strategies.
- Applying mechanisms of excellent teaching methods and encouraging the teaching staff to be creative and innovative.
- Implementing clear and publicized procedures to verify the quality and validity of the assessment methods.
- Using effective procedures to control academic integrity and avoiding plagiarism.

4.3 Standard 3. Students

Standard 3 is about the students. Under this standard seven sub-standards are addressed. These include:

- Applying fair and approved procedures for the student's registration & admission, their graduation, and transfer to different programs or institutions.
- Providing basic information to students i.e., study requirements, services, and financial fees.
- Providing effective academic advisory and counseling services.

- Applying mechanisms to identify different categories of the students and availability of appropriate programs to care for, motivate, and support each group.
- Developing the skills and abilities of the students in various field by giving access to extracurricular activities and encouraging them for active participation.
- Communicating and engaging the alumni in events and activities and benefiting from their input to reflect and improve further.
- Applying effective mechanisms to measure students' satisfaction about the services available to them and their sufficiency.

4.4 Standard 4. Faculty

Standard 4 is about the faculty and the teaching staff of the program. The standard explores that the hired staff is well equipped and experienced in their field of expertise and they are continuously engaging in professional and research development activities and improvement plans. The major sub-standard under Standard 4 are:

- Having enough faculty members and applying
- appropriate verification mechanisms.
- Experienced and highly skilled professionals are recruited.
- Teaching staff participation in academic, research, and scientific production activities.
- Teaching staff participation in professional and academic development programs.
- Assessment of faculty performance based on standard published procedures and regulations and providing feedback; and the results helps for reflection and improvement.

4.5 Standard 5: Learning Resources, Facilities, & Equipment

Meeting needs of the program by supplying learning resources, facilities, and equipment and making sure their availability to all beneficiaries using an appropriate arrangement. The major sub-standards which are required to be addressed under Standard 5 are:

- Ensuring the adequacy and appropriateness of learning sources and services and updating them periodically.
- Having proper orientation and training, technical support for proper and efficient use of learning and resources.
- Applying safety, environmental conservation, and hazardous waste disposal standards.
- Having appropriate environment, services and technologies for courses provided via various means such e-learning or distance learning.
- Evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of learning resources, facilities, and using the results for improvement.

CONCLUSION

The article explores the Self-Study Report and its Preparation Process for Saudi National Accreditation. All programs seeking National Commission for Academic Accreditation and Assessment (NCAAA) accreditation must fully satisfy all of the rules and regulations and provide all the required documentations. The role of different committees in applying and getting accreditation is very important and crucial.

Declaration by Authors

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