

**Sub-theme: Innovative approaches to external QA in tertiary education: not a single approach towards excellence**

**WEB BASED MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEM FOR EXTERNAL QUALITY ASSESSMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES**

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**ABSTRACT:**

External Quality Assessment (EQA) is the major component of QA framework in Sri Lanka. The main function of EQA is to review the standard and quality of the HEIs and its programmes of study and to provide the outcome to stakeholders to observe their expectations.

Due to lack of organized mechanism to monitor and evaluate the outcome of the EQA conducted in universities the improvement in quality is not visible. Also the System users are in different geographical locations and therefore, no access to observe the outcome of EQA's.

A web based approach was developed, as a method to achieve the expected outcomes of EQA's. The system provides user friendly, accurate and up-to date information of EQAs and also it provides a feedback mechanism through online forms/questionnaires. The easy access of information would provide the authorities a basis for decision making to improve higher education sector in Sri Lanka.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The QAA Council (QAAC), Sri Lanka performs activities to improve the quality in education, share good practices and to inculcate quality culture in universities. The main function of the QAAC is to review the standard and quality of the HEIs, its programmes of study and to publicize the outcome to stakeholders to achieve expectations. For this purpose the QAAC conducts EQAs for Institutions (IRs), Subject/Programmes (SR/PRs) and Libraries (LRs).

The QAAC completed the first EQA review cycle in universities but the impact is not visible. Therefore, it is an urgent need to establish a proper mechanism to monitor and evaluate the progress of the EQAs conducted. The System is very much needed as stakeholders of the system are also in different geographical locations. By the system, the deficiencies in programmes can be observed & rectified and a feedback could be obtained through questionnaires. This facilitates authorities to take decisions in relation to QA activities.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- To provide a user friendly access for information.
- To maintain an accurate and up-to date information
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of EQAs in universities for enabling decision making
- To Provide the authorities a basis for policy options on higher education
- To ensure that quality learning outcomes are responsive to the changing needs and comparable to international standards

## **MAJOR FUNCTIONS AND FEATURES**

There are nine modules in the system and following information will be available.

- **Basic information of department/faculty/university**
- **Information on Process of EQA's**
- **Information on Accreditation Process**
- **Monitor and evaluate the performance of the faculty/university in-relation to EQAs**  
This is the most important module of the system. Through this module it will be able to achieve the main objective of reviews. Major indicators of the quality assurance will be monitored and evaluated to check the current status of the faculty and the university in relation to the EQAs. User-friendly web forms have been used for this purpose to maintain effectiveness and efficiency.
- **The Impact and Outcomes of External Quality Assessment**
- **Online checklist for eight (8) aspects of evaluation to maintain the status of faculty in-relation to the aspects of evaluation by reviewers during the site visit.**
- **Cost analysis of the entire faculty for a review**
- **Maintenance of Expert Database**
- **User Enquiry System**

During the analysis phase several discussions were held with the stakeholders such as UGC, Reviewers and Donor Agencies (World Bank) etc. and adopted their feedback to improve the system in much meaningful way. Feasibility analysis was conducted in analysis phase and most of the requirements are adopted since the proposed system is feasible economically and technically. Time constraint is a critical factor when implementing their requirements and feedback. Several technologies were adopted and relevant research was conducted during designing phase to make this process a success.

One of the major problems faced during the analysis was the lack of information as this may be the first web based monitoring and evaluation system for external quality assessment in universities. During the literature survey there was no similar system identified and also QAAC did not have a manual system for this process. Since the developer has a domain knowledge and able to manage it without much difficulty.

Recommendations given by the review panel are indicated in the online form for them to fill and send it to the QAAC to check whether the university addressed these recommendations. These responses will be analyzed and relevant feedback will be send to the University

Employability, GPA of the degree programmes, research output, implementation of good practices in HE and impact of curriculum revision in major disciplines are the main performance indicators in QA. Hence the system provides the annual comparison of these indicators in each degree programmes in universities. It ensures that quality learning outcomes are responsive to the changing needs and comparable to international standards and make decisions in an effective manner by relevant authorities.

## **CONCLUSION**

The implementation of the web based monitoring and evaluation system for external quality assessment would be an important landmark of quality assurance sector in higher education and if successfully achieved this. The relevant officials can periodically monitor and evaluate the performance of each university and respective faculties. It provides the officials of the UGC/Ministry/other Donor Agencies with bases for policy options in higher education and its decisions for development assistance and incentives to HEIs.

The system is link to the QAAC main web site ([www.qaacouncil.lk](http://www.qaacouncil.lk)) for easy access. Highly strengthen of back-end system to maintain dynamic nature, identified three (3) main levels of users to access the system and the administrator will assign user privileges according to their level to maintain confidentiality. The information will be provided in tabular and graphical format for better understandability and readability of the users of the system.