

## Irregularities in the functioning of NAAC

### Why in news?

The chairperson of NAAC's executive committee, resigned after repeatedly demanding an independent inquiry into the functioning of the council.

### What is the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC)?

- The NAAC is an *autonomous body* set up in 1994 under the *University Grants Commission (UGC)*.
- **Functions** - NAAC is entrusted with assessing the quality of India's [higher educational institutions](#).
- Following a multi-layered assessment process, it awards grades to colleges and universities.
- Its parameters include curriculum, faculty, infrastructure, research and financial well-being.
- The ratings of institutions range from A++ to C and if an institution is graded D, it means it is not accredited.

### How is the accreditation process carried out?

- The first step involves an institute approaching the NAAC for assessment.
- Once the NAAC sets the process in motion, the applicant has to submit a self-study report (SSR) containing information related to quantitative and qualitative metrics.
- **Peer review** - The data is then validated by expert teams of the NAAC, followed by spot visits by peer teams comprising assessors drawn from universities across India.

GRADE-WISE				TOP FIVE STATES (Accredited)			
Grade	Universities	Colleges	Total	UNIVERSITIES		COLLEGES	
A	224	1,778	2,002	Tamil Nadu	43	Maharashtra	1,834
B	165	5,831	5,996	Uttar Pradesh	37	Karnataka	881
C	17	1,077	1,094	Maharashtra	35	Tamil Nadu	829
Total	406	8,686	9,092	Karnataka	33	Uttar Pradesh	604
				Rajasthan	31	Gujarat	492

### Is a NAAC accreditation mandatory?

- **Voluntary** - While the UGC has over the years issued many circulars directing institutes to mandatorily undergo NAAC's assessment, the process still remains largely voluntary.

- **NEP** - The [National Education Policy \(NEP\) \(2020\)](#) has set an ambitious target of getting all higher educational institutes to obtain the highest level of accreditation over the next 15 years.

### What are the allegations on the NAAC?

- **Malpractices** - People with vested interests are indulging in malpractices, leading to the awarding of questionable grades to some institutions.
- **Input based** - The major problem with the ratings is the current approach of assessment is input-based, i.e., the NAAC relies heavily on self-assessment reports of applicant institutions.
- **Influence on the reviews** - The data is then validated by NAAC expert teams, followed by peer team visits to the institutions.
- It is alleged that the education institutions influence the peer review teams.

### Why are so few institutes accredited?

- **Poor grades** - The fear of obtaining poor grades holds institutes back from applying.
- **Paramarsh** - In 2019, the UGC had launched a scheme named 'Paramarsh' to address the issue.
- Under the scheme, some of the best performing institutes were identified to serve as *mentors to at least 5 institutes* aspiring to get accredited.
- **Provisional Accreditation for Colleges (PAC)** - NAAC explored the possibility of issuing PAC, under which 1 year old institutes could apply for accreditation with validity of 2 years.
- **Difficult criteria** - Currently, only institutes that are *at least 6 years old*, or from where *at least 2 batches of students have graduated*, can apply and the accreditation is valid for 5 years.

### References

1. [The Indian Express | Claims of irregularities in the functioning of NAAC](#)
2. [The Indian Express | The controversy over NAAC's system for assessing higher education](#)