

Terms of Reference for Assessors

1. Background

The Bhutan Accreditation Council was established as per clause 11 of the Tertiary Education Policy of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2010. The members of the Council were appointed through an Executive Order from the Cabinet. The Council is the overall authority on accreditation and quality assurance in higher education. It is also responsible for interpretation and recognition of qualifications. The Quality Assurance & Accreditation Division, Department of Adult & Higher Education serves as the Secretariat to the Council and shall facilitate accreditation exercise.

Accreditation shall be done by “**assessors**” appointed by the Council on the recommendations of the Secretariat. A team consisting of maximum of five assessors shall be engaged for the accreditation exercise. The assessors shall constitute of qualified professionals with relevant background. They may be involved for accreditation of more than one institution based on the commitment and availability.

2. Eligibility Criteria

Assessors shall meet the following criteria to be engaged in accreditation:

- 2.1 Must have Masters or equivalent qualifications in relevant field.
- 2.2 Should have experience of at least 10 years in any public or private organization with good employment history.
- 2.3 Should not be serving professor or lecturers in any of the HEIs who would have conflict of interest.
- 2.4 Can be an in-service person that the Council thinks deemed appropriate.
- 2.5 Should be a person of integrity and commitment.

3. Core Values

- 3.1 **Competence:** Demonstrate expertise in carrying out the responsibilities.
- 3.2 **Integrity and commitment:** Committed to provide fair & accountable services.
- 3.3 **Professionalism:** Demonstrate professionalism through positive attitude, actions and comments.

4. Roles & Responsibilities

The assessors shall:

- 4.1.1 declare conflict of interest.
- 4.1.2 evaluate the ISAR submitted by the HEI through detailed examination, prepare tentative assessors’ report, grade and list the required evidence before the site visit.
- 4.1.3 assist in developing plan of action for the accreditation site visit (*5 days*) and share with the Secretariat.
- 4.1.4 validate the evidence during the site visit.

- 4.1.5 ensure comprehensive and diligent evaluation of the institution against standards outlined in this manual.
- 4.1.6 ensure integrity of practice and shall submit undisputed recommendation on accreditation to the Council without making biased judgment.
- 4.1.7 finalize and present assessors' report at the exit meeting, and submit to the Secretariat in both hard and soft copy.
- 4.1.8 complete assigned tasks as per the agreement (*Annexure VII*) including appeal, if any.
- 4.1.9 conduct other appropriate actions as deemed necessary to ensure professionalism.
- 4.1.10 chair all meetings, present assessors' report to the Council, if appointed as Chair.

The evaluation process shall include, amongst others:

Before site visit:

- a) Study ISAR submitted by the HEI as per *Annexure V*.
- b) Prepare individual tentative assessors' report as per *Annexure XI*.
- c) Identify strengths and issues related to the eight Standards.
- d) Prepare a tentative grade as per *Annexure XII*.
- e) Appoint Chairperson and Secretary, this is usually done during the training of assessors.
- f) Discuss individual tentative evaluation, identify issues to be probed further and agree on distribution of responsibilities.
- g) Prepare a list of evidence required to validate the ISAR.

During the site visit:

- a) The Chair shall lead the discussion and Secretary shall lead drafting the report based on the discussions. However, other members may share the responsibility of report writing.
- b) Look for evidences to validate ISAR.
- c) Compare and discuss individual tentative evaluation to arrive at three most important points under each key aspect, overall analysis and recommendations.
- d) Compile individual assessor's report as per *Annexure XI*.
- e) Decide marks to be awarded under each Key Aspect and prepare the Grade sheet based on observation and evidence as per *Annexure XII*.
- f) Conduct exit meeting to finalize the report where a presentation shall be made on the overall analysis of the institution.
- g) Sign the final report by head of the institution and assessors' team.

After the site visit:

- a) Submit a soft copy and hard copy of all relevant records including the plan of action and the assessors' report to the QAAD for onward submission to the BAC and for future references.
- b) Answer to queries related to accreditation of the institution, if any.
- c) Make presentation as the chair of assessors' team.

5. Expectations

Do's

- ✓ Declare conflict of interest
- ✓ Develop a proper plan of action
- ✓ Study the ISAR thoroughly before the site visit
- ✓ Take note of any aspect of the institution that may not have been included in the ISAR
- ✓ Prepare individual tentative assessor's report
- ✓ Share observations and ideas candidly avoiding domineering attitude
- ✓ Work as a team to arrive at undisputed score and recommendation
- ✓ Shed all inhibitions relating to the institution being assessed
- ✓ Ensure integrity of practice
- ✓ Always be positive, committed, humble and collegial
- ✓ Have at least three team discussion/assessors' meeting during the site visit
- ✓ Share the responsibility of drafting the final assessor's report
- ✓ Share, finalize, and sign the assessor's report during the exit meeting
- ✓ Ensure confidentiality of information

Don'ts

- ✓ Avoid making criticism on ISAR
- ✓ Do not make conclusions without completing verification of evidence
- ✓ Do not be carried away either in favour of or against the institution by any exceptional strength or weakness in one or two aspects
- ✓ Do not attach any weighting to what you might have learnt unofficially about the institution
- ✓ Do not publicly compare the institution in review to other HEIs
- ✓ Do not be carried by external display
- ✓ Do not give impression of superior knowledge
- ✓ Do not be rude or insulting
- ✓ Do not have personal work or outside visits during the period of assessment
- ✓ Do not accept any gifts, mementos and/or any special hospitality

6. Remuneration

A professional fee and daily allowance shall be paid to the assessors as per the approval of MoF. In case the Secretariat cannot make travel arrangement for the site visit, the assessors shall be entitled for mileage as per the existing rules. The assessors shall arrange their own logistics.

7. Access to Higher Education Institutions

The Secretariat shall inform the HEI based on plan of action. The HEI shall provide access to information as required by the assessors.

8. Amendments

The Council reserves the right to review and amend this ToR from time to time, as deemed necessary.