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## **Managing Quality Assurance and Accreditation Criterion in Nepalese Higher Education Institutions**

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### ***Abstract***

This study explores how Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus (MRMC), Ilam, applies the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) criteria set by Nepal's University Grants Commission (UGC). Using a descriptive case study approach, data were gathered from interviews, institutional reports, and observations, focusing on eight key areas including policy, planning, and public information. The findings highlight MRMC's significant progress through strategic planning, program expansion, and improved infrastructure—such as launching B.Sc. in Horticulture and BBA programs and forming a Quality Monitoring and Check Cell. However, the campus still faces challenges like limited academic autonomy due to its dependence on Tribhuvan University, weak research and consultancy efforts, poor student support services, and fragmented information systems. Financial dependency on government grants and resistance to digital reforms also hinder advancement. While MRMC is on track for QAA re-accreditation, requires greater autonomy, better resource, improved governance, and stronger institutional quality assurance. This case offers valuable lessons for higher education institutions in Nepal.

*Keywords:* management, criterion higher education, academic institution, governance

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## Introduction

Quality Assurance refers to the systematic process, procedure and policies implemented to insure that product, services or system meet defined quality standard and requirements (Harvey & Green, 1993) Accreditation is a formal, external process by which an authorized body evaluate and recognized an institution or program as meeting predefined standard of quality (Eaton j. S, 2012). Quality is the factor that distinguishes success or failure of any institution. Quality means addressing the voice of students of shaping the needs of society and job market through the standard design curricular, co-curricular and extracurricular activities in a specific way of efficient and effective implementation comparing with others being strict to regulatory authorities, policies and instruction for obtaining the set of objectives of education. "The QAA Guidelines of UGC 2013 provide a structured framework for assessing and accrediting higher education institutions in Nepal. The process emphasizes self-evaluation, external peer review, and adherence to defined quality standards across academic and administrative domains. The ultimate goal is to foster a culture of continuous improvement and accountability in Nepal's higher education sector."

A variety of public and private institutions grouped under several universities define Nepal's higher education environment. As of 2022–23, 1515 campus-based colleges (affiliated, constituent and private) nationwide were under the supervision of 16 universities and 4 health science academies. With more than 75% of enrolled students in Tribhuvan University (TU), the oldest university (founded in 1959), continues to hold a dominant position. Mid-level universities like Kathmandu, Pokhara, and Purbanchal are also part of the system, as are more recent federal universities like Agriculture & Forestry, Mid-Western, Yogmaya, Far-Western, Nepal Open, and Janak. Although access has improved, quality issues have escalated due to the rapid expansion. Critics have described "distrust" in the efficacy of the system due to overcrowding, underinvestment, and outdated curricula.

As of the end of Fiscal Year (FY) 2023/24, Nepal's Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system, administered by the University Grants Commission (UGC),

has shown progressive engagement among higher education institutions (HEIs). The following table summarizes the key metrics of QAA participation over recent fiscal years:

Stage of QAA Process	FY 2020/21	FY 2023/24
HEIs Enrolled in QAA Process	384	335
Self-Study Reports (SSR) Submitted	167	177
Peer Review Team (PRT) Assessments Completed	75	109
Institutions Accredited	53	95

*Source: UGC Nepal, 2025.*

*Note:* The decrease in total enrolled HEIs from 384 to 335 between FY 2020/21 and FY 2023/24 may be attributed to the delisting of institutions that did not complete the accreditation process within the stipulated timeframe. (source UGC Nepal).

These figures illustrate a gradual yet steady progression in the QAA process. While the number of accredited institutions has increased, it still represents a modest proportion of the total HEIs in Nepal. The data indicates that many institutions are in intermediate stages of the accreditation process, such as SSR submission and PRT assessment. Continued efforts are necessary to support these institutions in advancing towards full accreditation, thereby enhancing the overall quality of higher education in Nepal.

In light of this, quality assurance has become more well-known both internationally and in Nepal. In order to address accountability in higher education, QA and accreditation changed internationally in the 1990s (e.g. Kells & van Vught 1988). QAA has also been given top priority by the Nepali government, which places a strong emphasis on external assessment of institutional quality in the 2019 National Education Policy and later Higher Education Reform Projects. [ugcnepal.edu.np](http://ugcnepal.edu.np) [ugcnepal.edu.np](http://ugcnepal.edu.np). In order to spearhead the effort, the UGC (Nepal's highest education authority) established a Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC) and a QAA Division in 2007. To specify accreditation procedures, standards, and goals, guidelines have been published (UGC, 2013).

The QAA criteria of UGC Nepal are structured around eight core areas designed to ensure comprehensive quality assurance in higher education institutions. These include: Policy and Procedures - establishing institutional vision, mission, and quality assurance

mechanisms; Curricular Aspects - relevance, flexibility, and regular updating of curricula; Teaching-Learning and Evaluation System - effective pedagogy, student engagement, and fair evaluation methods; Research, Consultancy, and Extension - promotion of research culture and community outreach; Infrastructure and Learning Resources - adequate facilities, libraries, and ICT resources; Student Support and Guidance - academic, personal, and career counseling services; Information System - collection and use of data for decision-making and improvement; and Public Information - transparency through accessible institutional information. Together, these standards aim to enhance institutional performance and ensure accountability, relevance, and continuous improvement in Nepalese higher education (UGC, 2013).

Managing QAA criteria in Nepalese higher education institutions requires a systematic and collaborative approach, as evidenced by empirical studies conducted in accredited institutions. Successful institutions often establish dedicated Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) to oversee the implementation of QAA standards. These institutions prioritize capacity building, regular self-assessment, and stakeholder involvement - including faculty, students, and administrators - to align with the eight core criteria set by UGC. Empirical findings suggest that strong leadership commitment, clear institutional policies, and ongoing training significantly enhance the ability to meet QAA requirements. However, challenges such as limited resources, lack of technical expertise, and resistance to change still affect effective implementation. Institutions that integrate quality assurance into their strategic planning and daily operations are more likely to sustain accreditation and foster a culture of continuous improvement.

Mishra and Jha (2023) examine the nascent quality assurance (QA) and accreditation system in Nepal's higher education, arguing that these recently introduced mechanisms are crucial for enhancing academic standards but remain at an early stage of development. They outline how QA frameworks have been launched through national reforms and contend that without strong institutional commitment and implementation, the potential benefits of accreditation cannot be fully realized (Mishra & Jha, 2023). The chapter highlights that accreditation is intended to ensure accountability and excellence, linking

robust QA processes to improved teaching and learning outcomes. However, the authors find that practical adoption has been uneven: many institutions face resource and capacity constraints and often perceive accreditation requirements as an additional bureaucratic burden. By providing a comprehensive contextual review, Mishra and Jha contribute to the field by identifying key challenges (such as policy gaps and limited stakeholder engagement) and suggesting that strategic planning and institutional support are needed to strengthen Nepal's QA regime. This analysis offers valuable insight into the country's evolving higher education landscape, although it would be further enriched by empirical case studies or data to substantiate the claims. Overall, the chapter is a timely assessment of QA emergence in Nepalese higher education (Mishra & Jha, 2023).

Biswakarma and Dhakal (2024) critically examine the implementation of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) policies within Nepalese higher education institutions, focusing on the hospitality education sector. Utilizing a descriptive research design with a mixed-methods approach, the study gathered data from 14 hospitality management professionals and 97 students. Findings reveal that while Nepal has acknowledged the importance of QAA and developed relevant policies, significant challenges hinder effective implementation. These challenges include ambiguous policy guidelines, insufficient resources, limited stakeholder awareness, and resistance to change. The authors advocate for enhanced stakeholder engagement, clear policy frameworks, and transparent feedback mechanisms. They also emphasize the need for resource allocation, capacity building, and professional development to strengthen QAA practices. This study contributes valuable insights into the complexities of policy implementation in Nepalese higher education and offers practical recommendations for improving quality assurance system.

Despite growing attention to Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) in Nepalese higher education, existing research remains largely conceptual or policy-focused, with limited empirical investigation into how institutions manage QAA criteria in practice. lacking broader comparative analysis across public and private universities or diverse academic disciplines. This narrow scope leaves gaps in understanding the institutional

processes, stakeholder involvement, and long-term impacts of QAA implementation. Furthermore, methodological limitations such as small sample sizes, cross-sectional designs, and sector-specific biases hinder the generalizability of findings. In response to these gaps, the present study to examine the current practices adopted by Nepalese HEIs in managing QAA criteria set by UGC, and to assess the challenges of implementation of QAA criteria across a range of higher education institution in Nepal. Ultimately contributing to a more comprehensive and data-driven understanding of QAA practices in the Nepalese context.

## **Methodology**

This research use Pragmatist Paradigm. The mixed-method case study approach is a research methodology that integrates both qualitative and quantitative methods within the structure of a comprehensive, in-depth case study. The reality is understood through the practices and challenges of Nepalese HEIs in managing QAA criteria. The study gathers knowledge from both structured data and subjective perspectives of key stakeholders. The institutional values and challenges in implementing QAA criteria while aiming for real-world improvements. Descriptive and explorative research design were used to examine current practices adopted by Nepalese HEIs in managing QAA criteria set by UGC.

Data for the study are collected from both primary and secondary sources where, primary sources include structure and semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders such as administrators, QAA coordinators, and faculty members involved in QAA processes and secondary sources include analysis of institutional documents such as: Self-Study Report (SSR), Strategic Development Plan (2066–2071), Annual Report (2025), Academic journals and relevant official publications. This study utilized purposive sampling, selecting participants who are directly engaged in or responsible for implementing QAA-related activities. This study employs purposive sampling, focusing specifically on Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus (MRMC) Ilam, Eastern Nepal. As a constituent and autonomous campus under Tribhuvan University, MRMC serves as the designated research site. The study employs descriptive and thematic analysis to interpret the qualitative and quantitative data.

## Results

The University Grants Commission (UGC) of Nepal has delineated eight core criteria within its Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) framework to ensure comprehensive quality in higher education institutions (HEIs). These criteria, as outlined in the UGC's QAA Guidelines and the Handbook for Self Study and Peer Review, serve as benchmarks for institutional assessment and continuous improvement. Below is a detailed institutions explanation of each criterion:

### Policy and Procedures

MRMC has established a clear vision and mission, supported by strategic and action plans developed through participatory approaches involving stakeholders. The campus has formed various cells, such as the Job Responsibility Scheme Cell, to define and evaluate the responsibilities of departments and individuals, ensuring accountability and effective governance.

### Curricular Aspects

Institutions must ensure that their curricula are relevant, flexible, and regularly updated to meet the evolving needs of society and the job market. This involves incorporating feedback from stakeholders, integrating interdisciplinary approaches, and aligning programs with national and international standards.

### Teaching-Learning and Evaluation System

HEIs should adopt student-centered teaching methodologies that encourage active learning and critical thinking. Faculty development programs are essential to enhance pedagogical skills. Additionally, institutions must implement fair and transparent evaluation systems to assess student performance effectively.

### Research, Consultancy, and Extension

A robust research culture is vital for academic excellence. Institutions are expected to promote research activities among faculty and students, establish Research Management Cells (RMCs), and engage in consultancy services and community outreach programs.

Collaborations with industry and other academic institutions are encouraged to enhance research output and societal impact.

### **Infrastructure and Learning Resources**

Adequate infrastructure, including classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and information and communication technology (ICT) facilities, is essential to support effective teaching and learning. Institutions must ensure the availability and accessibility of learning resources to all students and faculty members.

### **Student Support and Guidance**

HEIs should provide comprehensive support services to students, encompassing academic advising, career counseling, psychological services, and financial aid. These services aim to foster student development, well-being, and success throughout their academic journey.

### **Information System**

The establishment of an Education Management Information System (EMIS) is crucial for data-driven decision-making. EMIS facilitates the collection, analysis, and dissemination of information related to academic programs, student performance, faculty activities, and institutional operations.

### **Public Information**

Transparency and accountability are reinforced through the dissemination of accurate and up-to-date information about the institution's programs, policies, and achievements. HEIs are expected to maintain active communication channels, such as websites and publications, to keep stakeholders informed.

Collectively, these criteria provide a comprehensive framework for assessing and enhancing the quality of higher education in Nepal. They encourage institutions to adopt best practices, engage in continuous self-evaluation, and align their operations with national and international quality standards.

The Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system in Nepal, administered by the University Grants Commission (UGC), mandates that Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) demonstrate balanced excellence across eight specific criteria. Each criterion carries an assigned score, and institutions must meet a minimum point threshold per criterion (typically 60%) as well as a satisfactory total score to qualify for accreditation. This approach ensures holistic institutional development rather than fragmented progress.

### **Managing QAA criterion Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus (MRMC), Ilam**

Mahendra Ratna multiple campus ilam, has undergone extensive internal review and strategic planning to align itself with these QAA expectations. The institution's Self Study Report (SSR), Strategic Development Plan (2066–2071), and Annual Report (2025) reveal its preparedness and long-term vision. Below is an analytical overview of how MRMC addresses each QAA criterion, and how it can enhance institutional management accordingly.

#### **Policy and Procedures**

MRMC has a clearly defined Vision, aiming to transform into Ilam University by promoting academic excellence, especially in Eastern Nepal. The Mission emphasizes qualitative, job-oriented education through scientific approaches. These are supported by documented objectives, including infrastructure development, research strengthening, and institutional self-reliance. Governance is ensured through a structured Operation Committee, Executive Committee, and functional subcommittees like the more than 20 Quality Monitoring and Check Cells. To maintain alignment with QAA, MRMC should ensure continuous policy review, regular stakeholder engagement, governance and transparent decision-making mechanisms.

#### **Curricular Aspects**

The campus offers diverse academic programs under five faculties, including Humanities, Education, Management with self-sustain progam BBA, MBS, and a specialized B.Sc. in Horticulture - the first of its kind in the region. Curricula are largely developed by Tribhuvan University (TU), but the autonomous status allows MRMC to

adapt and contextualize content where appropriate. MRMC also Conducted non-credit program such as Entrepreneurship support program in last year. The Strategic Plan highlights the intention to extend postgraduate and diploma programs and reform existing syllabus for better academic outcomes. To further meet QAA benchmarks, MRMC must actively participate in curriculum feedback, course evaluation, and stakeholder-informed reviews.

### Teaching-Learning and Evaluation

The teaching-learning environment at MRMC is characterized by regular academic calendars, internal assessments, and efforts to integrate both electronic and non-electronic resources in classrooms. The faculty includes a significant number of Master's degree holders, and internal evaluations are conducted through tests, presentations, and practical. New talent faculties are recruited based on a structured selection process involving demonstrations and interviews. For greater alignment with QAA, MRMC must further strengthen faculty development programs, encourage PhD and MPhil studies, and promote student-centered learning practices and continuous internal assessment reforms.

### Research, Consultancy and Extension

MRMC has made notable progress in fostering a research culture by establishing a Research Unit and conducting faculty-led research initiatives. It has maintained linkages with Sikkim University and local development stakeholders for academic collaboration and community extension programs. Several workshops, seminars, and publication initiatives have been undertaken, though there is room for expansion in consultancy services and interdisciplinary research. Moving forward, MRMC should allocate a dedicated budget for research, implement incentive mechanisms for publications, and formalize consultancy practices to meet QAA expectations for research productivity and societal impact.

### Infrastructure and Learning Resources

The campus has invested significantly in physical and academic infrastructure, including separate faculty buildings, hostels, Sworna Pustakalaya (Library), E-library, and

labs for horticulture and agriculture education. The Strategic Plan emphasizes classroom expansion, digital upgrades, and lab enhancements. According to the Annual Report, facilities like sports grounds, canteen, first aid room, dressing room, drinking water filter and computer centers have also improved. To meet QAA standards more robustly, MRMC must continuously evaluate infrastructure utilization, ensure accessible learning resources for all students, and modernize facilities to meet growing academic demands.

### Student Support and Guidance

MRMC demonstrates strong commitment to student welfare through initiatives such as orientation programs, career counseling, Job market, bridge courses, and a dedicated Grievance Redressal Cell. Students are also provided with co-curricular opportunities, such as debate competitions, cultural events, and sports activities. The SSR outlines how student feedback is considered in planning and evaluation. However, enhancing structured mentorship programs, mental health support, and alumni networking will further improve student engagement and success, aligning with QAA standards for comprehensive student support systems.

### Information System

Information management is partially digitized at MRMC through email systems, Facebook page, fixed the information officer, website, an E-library, and internal communications. A foundational Information System exists, but integration remains limited. The Strategic Plan outlines the need for a more robust Management Information System (MIS) to handle academic records, faculty performance, and student progression effectively. Implementing a centralized MIS and training staff to manage data analytics and evidence-based reporting will enable better institutional decision-making and transparency in line with QAA benchmarks.

### Public Information

MRMC disseminates public information through its prospectus, website, notice boards, and brochures. Stakeholders can access details about academic programs, admissions, and events. The Grievance Cell also ensures community concerns are

addressed. However, QAA requires a more active engagement with the public—this includes publishing annual reports online, showcasing academic achievements, maintaining updated faculty profiles, and enabling open feedback channels. MRMC must modernize its digital presence and ensure that all key public documents are regularly updated and accessible.

MRMC Ilam has demonstrated sincere efforts across all eight QAA criteria and has established itself as a growing academic center in Eastern Nepal. However, to fully satisfy the point-wise minimum standard, continuous improvement in research, digital systems, and faculty development is essential. By implementing its Strategic Plan with commitment and aligning all operations with the QAA framework, MRMC can not only secure accreditation but also achieve its long-term vision of becoming Ilam University.

### **Challenges in Implementing QAA Criteria at Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus (MRMC), Ilam**

The implementation of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system requires comprehensive reform in institutional governance, teaching practices, research culture, student support, and information systems. While MRMC has made commendable progress, several structural, managerial, and resource-based challenges affect full and effective implementation of the QAA framework.

#### ***Policy and Procedures***

Though MRMC has documented vision, mission, and goals, challenges persist in operationalizing and reviewing these policies consistently across all units. The Strategic Plan lacks an integrated system for monitoring performance indicators and does not fully involve all stakeholders (students, parents, alumni) in feedback loops. The Quality Monitoring and Check Cells exist but require capacity enhancement and autonomy to function more effectively.

#### ***Curricular Aspects***

While MRMC offers diverse programs, curriculum ownership is limited due to dependency on Tribhuvan University. This restricts timely updates and contextual

modifications. There's also lack of systematic feedback collection from employers, alumni, and students to inform curriculum reforms. Moreover, interdisciplinary and emerging fields are underrepresented, despite regional demand.

### ***Teaching-Learning and Evaluation***

Despite employing qualified faculty, MRMC faces issues related to faculty shortages, lack of regular professional development, and limited adoption of innovative pedagogy. The absence of systematic internal assessment moderation, weak tracking of learning outcomes and over-reliance on traditional lecture methods hinder effective teaching-learning practices. ICT integration is still at a foundational level.

### ***Research, Consultancy, and Extension***

Research is still emerging at MRMC. While a Research Unit exists, funding is insufficient, and most faculty members lack research training and publication experience. The institution also struggles with establishing regular consultancy services and maintaining structured community extension programs, limiting its relevance to regional development and practical application.

### ***Infrastructure and Learning Resources***

Though basic infrastructure such as libraries, labs, and hostels are in place, MRMC still suffers from space limitations, outdated lab equipment, and insufficient digital resources. The E-library and ICT facilities are not fully integrated into teaching. There is also limited accessibility for students with disabilities, which challenges inclusive education delivery.

### ***Student Support and Guidance***

Student support services, including orientation and counseling, are present but not institutionalized or resourced adequately. There is no formal career placement unit, and mental health support services are absent. Tracking student progression and dropouts is done inconsistently. Furthermore, alumni engagement in mentoring or financial support is minimal.

***Information System***

MRMC lacks a fully functional Management Information System (MIS). Data is fragmented across departments, making data-driven planning, monitoring, and evaluation difficult. There is a gap in capacity for digital record-keeping, and a lack of training among administrative staff to use digital platforms effectively. This affects reporting, decision-making, and transparency.

***Public Information***

While the campus provides basic public information, digital outreach is limited and outdated. The website is underutilized for publishing academic calendars, reports, or achievements. The institution does not use social media or community radio effectively to engage with external stakeholders. There is also no system to collect and respond to public feedback formally.

**Cross-Cutting Institutional Challenges*****Financial Dependency***

As a publicly funded constituent campus, MRMC relies heavily on TU and UGC grants, limiting its flexibility to implement new initiatives or hire additional staff.

***Autonomy Limitations***

Although declared autonomous, MRMC's academic autonomy is constrained due to central TU control over curricula, exams, and faculty recruitment.

***Limited Industry Linkages***

There is a weak connection with local industries and employers, reducing opportunities for internships, real-world learning, and employability.

***Resistance to Change***

Institutional resistance to new policies, especially digital systems or performance-based incentives, slows reform.

MRMC Ilam shows strong commitment toward QAA implementation but faces systemic, financial, and operational challenges. Addressing these will require a coordinated leadership approach, stakeholder participation, and strategic investment in human and digital capital. With sustained efforts, MRMC can position itself not only as a QAA-certified institution but also as a model regional academic center aligned with its long-term vision of becoming Ilam University.

## Discussion

The implementation of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) system requires comprehensive reform in institutional governance, teaching practices, research culture, student support, and information systems. While Mahendra Ratna Multiple Campus (MRMC), Ilam, has made commendable progress in aligning with the QAA framework set by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Nepal, several structural, managerial, and resource-based challenges continue to affect its full and effective realization.

MRMC has established a solid foundation across all eight QAA criteria, with documented vision, mission, and strategic objectives that align with its long-term goal of transforming into Ilam University. Initiatives such as curriculum diversification, faculty recruitment, research unit formation, and infrastructure expansion reflect strong institutional intent. The integration of specialized programs like the B.Sc. in Horticulture and Floriculture Management and the establishment of a Quality Monitoring Cell signal the campus's readiness to meet national quality standards. Moreover, efforts to enhance student support services, co-curricular engagement, and public information dissemination contribute to a more student-centric and community-responsive environment.

However, the process is not without significant challenges. One critical issue is the limited academic autonomy due to continued dependency on Tribhuvan University for curriculum development and program approval, which restricts timely innovation and contextual relevance. Similarly, the campus's research ecosystem remains underdeveloped, with inadequate funding, limited faculty research output, and lack of structured consultancy mechanisms. The absence of a fully functional Management Information

System (MIS) impedes data-driven decision-making, while student support services such as mentorship, career guidance, and mental health support remain insufficiently institutionalized. Despite digital advancements, the integration of technology into classroom pedagogy and administrative processes is still evolving. Furthermore, MRMC's financial dependence on government and UGC grants, alongside insufficient local resource mobilization, constrains long-term sustainability and flexibility in implementing quality initiatives.

To address these constraints, MRMC must strengthen internal quality assurance structures, promote faculty research and professional development, and invest in digital infrastructure. Establishing feedback loops with stakeholders, expanding alumni engagement, and enhancing industry-academic linkages can further enrich institutional performance. In this context, MRMC represents both the potential and the complexity of implementing QAA in semi-autonomous campuses within Nepal's public higher education system. Strategic and phased interventions, rooted in institutional commitment and supported by national policy, will be essential for MRMC to fully institutionalize QAA and emerge as a replicable model for academic excellence in the region.

## **Conclusion**

Quality assurance and accreditation have become firmly embedded in Nepal's higher education agenda. A comprehensive national framework is in place – backed by strategic plans, legal mandates, and integration into national education reforms. However, as this analysis shows, managing QAA effectively across Nepal's diverse HEIs remains challenging. Major hurdles include sustaining funding beyond project cycles, strengthening institutional QA infrastructure (IQACs and data systems), and clarifying governance arrangements (autonomy of QAAC/EQAAC).

Our review identifies several actionable priorities. First, the Nepalese government and UGC should secure a long-term financing mechanism for QA (potentially through a dedicated fund or performance-based budgeting) to replace expiring grants. Second, all HEIs must upgrade their internal QA capacity: this entails not only forming IQACs (already mandated) but staffing them and training members in audit and assessment

methods. Third, fostering stakeholder engagement is essential: institutions should institutionalize forums for student, industry, and community input on quality matters, transforming QA from a compliance exercise into a collaborative process. Fourth, human resource development needs emphasis: the UGC and universities should offer systematic professional development (pedagogy, research, QA) to faculty and administrators.

In the long run, Nepal's ambition to "bring the entire higher education system under one umbrella of QAA" will depend on integrating these management reforms. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the QAA process itself (including periodic reviews of the QA system) will help refine policies. Meanwhile, sharing lessons from hospitality education and other sectors (as we have done) can guide more responsive practice. With concerted effort on governance, resources, and culture, Nepal's HEIs can progress from merely implementing QA procedures toward *achieving* genuine quality improvement, thereby fulfilling the promise of their national accreditation framework.

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