

Higher Education Institutions to be categorised as 'accredited' or 'not accredited', grading system to go.

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Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the country will no longer be given grades under the accreditation system, rather they will be categorised either as "accredited" or "not accredited", the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) decided on Saturday. In an executive council meeting held on Saturday, the NAAC also decided that the accredited institutions will be further given levels between one and five to encourage them to achieve the highest level.

These sets of reforms will be implemented in two stages -- the binary accreditation (accredited or not accredited) system in the next four months, and Maturity-Based Graded Accreditation (level 1 to 5) by December. The level-grading system shall enable Indian institutions to significantly improve their quality and position themselves among the global best, the official said. The official also said that an expert committee set up by the ministry has suggested a set of transformative reforms to strengthen the periodic approval, assessment, and accreditation, and ranking of HEIs.

A new "One Nation One Data Platform" has also been proposed to ensure integrity and transparency in handling institutional data collected for varied purposes like approval, accreditation, and ranking, with an in-built design for collateral cross-checking of the authenticity of data. Additionally, to enhance the validity and reliability of the data "stakeholder validation" has been proposed to integrate stakeholders as part of the accreditation and ranking process.

The NAAC conducts the Assessment and Accreditation exercise utilising the expertise of a large number of academics from universities, colleges, research and development organisations and government entities across the country as part of Peer Review Teams.

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