CBSE
School Quality Assessment and Accreditation (Manual)

CENTRAL BOARD OF SECONDARY EDUCATION
Shiksha Kendra, 2, Community Centre, Preet Vihar, Delhi-110 092
India
## Abbreviations Used

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>NCF 2005</td>
<td>National Curriculum Framework 2005</td>
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<td>SQAA Checklist</td>
<td>School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Checklist</td>
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<td>SQAAF</td>
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<td>RTE, 2009</td>
<td>Right to Education, 2009</td>
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<td>FAM</td>
<td>Formative Assessment Manuals</td>
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<td>CCE T</td>
<td>Continuous and Comprehensive Teacher Manual</td>
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<td>COF</td>
<td>Classroom Observation Form</td>
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<td>COC-TIF</td>
<td>Class Observation Checklist-Teacher Interaction Form</td>
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<td>TD</td>
<td>Teacher Diaries</td>
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<td>Teacher Log Book</td>
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<td>Observations Schedule</td>
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<td>AEP</td>
<td>Adolescent Education Programme</td>
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<td>TT</td>
<td>Time Table</td>
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<td>AC</td>
<td>Academic Calendar</td>
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<td>HM</td>
<td>Health Manual</td>
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<td>CSS</td>
<td>Co-Scholastic Skills</td>
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<td>HOD</td>
<td>Head of the Department</td>
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<td>LS</td>
<td>Life Skills</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information &amp; Communication Technology</td>
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<td>Information &amp; Communication Technology Integration</td>
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<td>Parents Teacher Meeting</td>
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<td>LoA</td>
<td>List of Activities</td>
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<td>SC</td>
<td>School Calendar</td>
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<td>Environmental Education</td>
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<td>CCL</td>
<td>Child Centered Learning</td>
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<td>SCP</td>
<td>School Curriculum Plan</td>
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Chapter 1

School Quality Assessment

Quality Education as National Mandate

The Government of India has recently initiated a series of steps to improve the level of quality of education in the schools across the country. The latest policy document namely, the Eleventh Five Year Plan has also focused on improving the quality of school education. It reads as: “Quality of education is a much discussed issue and there is no clear consensus on what constitutes quality, how to measure it, or whether it can be measured at all. The meaning of 'improved quality' needs to be defined in operational terms through clearly identified outcome indicators for various dimensions like teachers' competence, classroom processes, teaching learning materials, students' performance etc.”

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 has categorically stated:

Every child between the age of 6 and 14 years would be provided free and compulsory elementary education.

It prevailed upon the Central Government to develop a framework of National Curriculum, develop and enforce standards for training of teachers, provide technical support and resources to the State Governments for promoting innovation, research, planning and capacity building.

It has also ensured that no child belonging to the weaker section or disadvantaged group is discriminated against and prevented from pursuing and completing elementary education on any ground whatever so.

Schools must have adequate infrastructure, teaching staff and learning equipment and provide special training facilities for their teachers (Chapter IV.6, 8).

The RTE while detailing the responsibilities of schools and teachers has stipulated that every school will admit at least 25% of children belonging to weaker section and disadvantaged group right from the pre-school stage (Chapter IV.12).

Further the school shall not subject a child to any screening procedure or hold back in any class or expel from school or subject to physical punishment or mental harassment.

The Central Government may issue such guidelines to the concerned Government or, as the case may be, the local authority, as it deems fit for the purpose of implementation of the act.

The concerned Government may issue guidelines and give such directions, as it deems fit to the Local authority or School Management Committee regarding implementation of the provision of the Act.

In the case of government Schools, it has directed schools to constitute a School Management Committee (SMC) and ensure that at least three-fourths of members of sub-committee are parents and guardians (Chapter IV.21).

The teachers are expected to maintain regularity and punctuality in attending schools; conduct and complete the curriculum within the specified time and assess the learning ability of each child.
• It has come down heavily on private tuitions and stated “No teacher shall engage himself/herself in private tuitions or private teaching activities”.

• The curriculum should be in conformation with values enshrined in the Constitution, should lead to all round development of the child, build up child’s knowledge, potentiality and talent and develop physical and mental abilities to the fullest extent.

• Learning should be through activities, discovery and exploration in a child centered manner and Continuous and follow Comprehensive Evaluation of child’s understanding and knowledge.

Reforms in CBSE:

The CBSE implemented Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) in its strengthened form in classes IX & X in 2009, replaced marks with grades in Class X and phased out Class X exams for students studying in Senior Secondary schools.

Academically speaking, we all know that the emphasis of Child Centered Education as and Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation is on holistic development of learners. This envisages conceptual clarification through experiential learning in classrooms as the focus is placed on both scholastic and co-scholastic areas along with developing life skills, attitudes, creative thinking, critical thinking, social skills and emotional skills. The task of institutionalizing the scheme was extremely challenging and the Board devised an action plan and undertook extensive teacher training programmes. For further capacity building, Mentor/Monitor framework was initiated by the Board. These Mentors worked as peer assessors. The Board appointed Principals as Mentors to visit a group of Mentee schools, document observations with regard to the implementation of CCE scheme, classroom review and submit an online report to the Board.

Subsequent to this preparation, the first Summative Assessment Examination for Class IX and X was conducted in September 2010 while Summative Assessment-II Examination was held in March 2011. The Board conducted this Summative Assessment-II examination for the students studying in schools upto secondary level and for those students who wished to switchover to other Boards for the Senior Secondary stage. For the schools affiliated with the Board upto the Senior Secondary level the schools were given an option to conduct their own Summative Assessment-II Examination. To facilitate these schools, the syllabus and question paper designed in different subjects for Classes IX and X for Summative Assessment-II was circulated by the Board.

To ensure standardization and uniformity the Board framed the question papers for different subjects and sent them to the schools. The marking scheme for these question papers was also provided by the Board to ensure uniformity in evaluation, even in the internal examinations. The schools were allowed to use the question papers provided by the Board in their entirety or mix and match the questions from the question papers provided by the Board (keeping in mind the question paper framework/blueprint as per the Board’s Sample Papers) or design their own question papers on the lines of the Sample question papers provided by the Board.

The schools were also asked to send data of School Based Assessments done by the school for the students of class IX and X to the Board in the format provided by the Board. This data was to be submitted online by
April 2011. In order to verify the assessments done by the schools, the Board asked some of the schools (randomly selected through a computer programme) to submit the ‘Evidence of Assessments’ conducted by them in respect of the students of classes IX and/or X. These ‘Evidence of Assessments’ submitted by the schools were subsequently put to scrutiny by different experts.

The Board has issued a Consolidated Qualifying Certificate (Certificate of Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation) from 2011 onwards to all the students who appeared for the Summative Assessment-II Examination of the Board.

**Need for School Quality Assessment and Accreditation (SQAA):**

Assessment and Accreditation essentially aims at Institutional capacity building for continuous quality improvement through self-analysis and self-monitoring of quality enhancement processes.

Assessment and Evaluation of an Institution is intended to be a means to document its Educational Quality and Institutional Effectiveness. Fostering Institutional improvement and demonstrating its accountability are complementary processes that assure the quality of an Institution. The validity of such an assurance depends on many dimensions of assessment. Without a clear sense of the purpose of assessment, knowledge of what is to be assessed and an understanding of how the results of assessment will be used, assessment efforts may often become an end itself. If the results of an assessment are not useful thereafter for planning and arriving at reflective decisions, accredited schools would only be data-rich and response poor Institutions.

The need for quality assurance arises from the following:

a) Assessment and Accreditation provide an incentive for self-study and self improvement.

b) It reassures external stakeholders such as employers, professional bodies and the general public, about the legitimate quality of the assessed and accredited CBSE schools as well as the relative quality status of the institution as compared to other similar institutions.

c) Third party assessment and accreditation and the resultant certification, vouch for the competence of the institution assessed, to provide education of a high standard.

d) Assessment and accreditation would enhance the responsiveness of communities of learners.

e) Accreditation would ensure that institutions prepare the students for citizenship responsibilities, successful careers, acquisition of life skills and life-long learning.

f) On the whole, it would help institutions in capacity building.

After the initial affiliation process of the CBSE, periodic visits though conducted, do not always lead to a sustained effort to benchmark quality. In most schools the indicator of quality is often reflected in examinations results. CBSE now envisions quality to be pervasive in all aspects of school education. Accordingly, a mechanism of Accreditation of its affiliated schools has been initiated. The process of accreditation would monitor identified outcomes at all levels and across all spheres of school education. It would help teachers, educational administrators and all other stakeholders involved in school education to learn from this exercise and improve themselves.
It refers to a voluntary method of quality assurance mostly achieved through interventional and participative processes carried out by peer assessors on behalf of an agency or the Board. It is both a process and a status. As a process it reflects the fact that in the process of achieving accreditation the school goes through a process of self discovery and self audit as well as external review by peers which help to qualitatively improve the institution. In terms of status, it provides public with the information that an institution / school meets the standards of quality set forth by an accrediting agency.

**Philosophy of School Quality**

Quality is a complex issue in education and should be seen in a holistic manner. Despite rapid development of educational evaluation and increased emphasis on quality issues in almost every strand of life, there is no simple view of a high quality education system. Good education is closely interconnected with cultural, political, social and economical contexts. Each education system that wishes to establish a quality assurance system within its structures, has to start this work by analysing various aspects of excellence in education and defining its own idea of quality.

**Quality in Education**

At the dawn of Industrialization, schools were called upon to produce qualified workers and managers. During the cold war, education was seen as a vehicle to promote peace. In the 21st century, it is teachers who have to raise awareness among learners on issues and concerns of environmental awareness in order to save planet Earth and ensure future life.

In the new era of learning societies, there is a paradigm shift regarding the conceptions of knowledge and learning. The new thought process is that it is far more valuable to be able to process information and construct new knowledge than merely be familiar with the quantum of knowledge. Education and learning have played a key role in the cultural evolution of people. Skills such as gathering and analysing data, applying knowledge in new situations, solving problems and regulating our own intellectual processes are the core of high quality education and learning.

The Indians viewpoint considers education as an emancipating and liberating force, a process that manifests 'perfection' already existent in man. Metaphysically, quality education is concerned with the nature and destinations of human beings. While for western theorists, evolution is primarily biological, the Indian viewpoint includes evolution of the mind and consciousness with the body as its host.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, the notion of quality includes all the attributes of a thing, except those of relation and quantity. The British Standards Institution (BSI 1991) defined quality in functional terms as the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear upon its ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs. Since quality is a dynamic and positive idea, it has endless possibilities of evolution and unfolding, making it an endless journey with a deliberate purpose and design and not necessarily a destination (Shejwalkar, 1999).

**Parameters of Quality Assessment**

School Quality Assessment and Accreditation (SQAA) is a commitment by Central Board of Secondary
Education to provide global parameters of attainment as standards in schools affiliated to it. The CBSE aspires to lay down a set of standards and best practices as paradigms for attaining the benchmark in an individual institution for the upliftment of learning outcomes in the domain of school education imparted to children.

The CBSE School Quality Assessment and Accreditation (SQAA) is holistic as it covers all aspects of a school functioning, namely its Scholastic and Co-scholastic Domains, Infrastructural Areas, Human Resources, Management and Administration, Leadership and Beneficiary Satisfaction.

The Seven Domains identified by CBSE are in fact focused on the seven areas and processes of developing the capabilities of school holistically. By participating in the process of accreditation the institutions will raise their bar of excellence and move towards continuous improvement in quality.

The Domains are further divided into Sub-Domains which qualify the various aspects of that particular domain. Each sub-domain has a number of indicators under which benchmarks have been developed with a weightage of between 0-7. The bands are 0 or 1, 2, 4 and 7 and if an institution falls between these bands they can also score 1, 3, 5 or 6 respectively.

Setting the Context:

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) is a registered society and an autonomous organization under Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. The Board has approx. 11,500 schools affiliated to it in India and abroad. These schools are managed by different management bodies such as Kendriya Vidyalaya Sanghatan, State Governments, Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya Sanghatan, Central Tibetan Schools Association, Educational Trusts and Societies and companies established under Companies act. The objective of the Board is to serve the educational institutions effectively while keeping in view the educational needs of the students. CBSE through its scheme of Accreditation aims at fostering a sense of quality assurance in its affiliated schools.

Framework of SQAA

Educational quality as a system has inputs such as students, infrastructure, resources and teachers. The processes are admission, instructions, evaluation etc. while the outputs are the students and their behavioral, academic, physical, social and emotional qualities. These components of inputs, processes and outputs are not independent of one another but they are interlinked and interdependent in a systemic manner. Key inputs include schooling, curriculum, students, teachers, support staff, administrators, facilities, classrooms and policies. Key processes are Curriculum Development, Accreditation, Teaching, Financial Administration, Management, Student Support Services, Human Resource Management and Community Services. Similarly key outputs are quality of students, research findings and community services.

The current practice of academic planning for school education is largely a 'top down' annual exercise. Its focus is on how teaching time should be allocated for teaching of subject content over the year, and stipulating other activities that will be conducted in schools. To be meaningful, academic planning has to be done in a participative manner by heads and teachers coming together and debating on issues related to
each aspect of planning the Annual Curriculum Plan (ACP). This will include augmentation and improvement of the physical resources of the school, addressing the diverse needs of students for life-long learning and identifying the inputs and academic support that the school needs in order to respond to these needs from time to time. Thus accreditation is an important process through which schools can enlist the involvement and support of each aspect of the community in the education of children.

The seven Domains identified by CBSE refer to interrelated processes which define an institution qualitatively. These assessments will focus on contexts, processes and results that describe the school community.

The emphasis in all the seven domains is on the outcomes: excellence in academic and non-academic activities are tangible and overt, whereas outcomes in terms of discipline, punctuality, cleanliness, and job satisfaction are largely intangible and covert. Thus, certain dimensions are prerequisites for quality and certain others are the manifest forms of quality. From such a stance, quality is built on certain foundations, which are as important, if not more, as the known indicators of quality. Hence, the first stage is to clearly define the indicators of quality, as far as possible, in measurable terms. The quality of students, teachers, leadership qualities of the principal, physical infrastructure, instructional resources, and financial resources are some of the examples of inputs for quality.

### Domains of SQAA

1. **Scholastic Academic Processes and Outcomes**

   The many systems and operatives that make education a functional and living entity are a part of academic processes and products. By including within their wide realm policy makers, schools and their managements, principals, teachers and above all the learners, these processes allow the creation of cohesive and creative learning spaces.
The 3 sub-domains of this domain are as follows:

1.1 Curriculum Planning
1.2 Teaching Learning Processes
1.3 Student Assessment and Performance

1.1 Curriculum Planning is at the very core of the school education providing the basis and scope of teaching learning. The National Curriculum Framework has been used essentially as guidelines. They convey the intent of the planners in terms of what is considered appropriate for effective teaching and learning in school systems which are otherwise diverse and dissimilar.

Curriculum for the 21st century must aim at reducing content and focus on conceptual understanding; engage students towards higher-level, complex thinking and develop deeper understanding of social realities and provide opportunities for self-discovery and self-learning.

A good curriculum, therefore, will be interdisciplinary, linked with the local community and environment and cater to students with different and varied learning needs. It would naturally have an element of review and reform and will be structured so as to engage the learner in multiple ways and enable lifelong learning skills.

1.2 Teaching Learning Processes

The teaching and learning processes are complementary to each other and form the basis of academic processes and products. Starting from something as fundamental as the content knowledge of the teacher they widen to include his/her ability to synthesize this knowledge with various other skills in order to engage the learners cognitively and challenge them to think, reflect, internalize and express.

It is imperative that we move towards systems where learners take charge of their own learning, engage readily with activities, ask questions and use technology. Team work allows for collaborative learning and cooperation as much as individual achievement and excellence. As students are motivated, they will acquire and enhance their research skills, be more socially sensitive and responsible.

1.3 Student Assessment and Performance

The teaching learning process is incomplete without assessment. Assessment provides a feedback to both the learner and the teacher about the transaction taking place in the classroom. Regular and periodic assessment using a variety of tools and techniques can help in identifying the levels of attainment and impediments to the same.

Quite obviously, this entails a deeper connection with the students and the maintenance of data and documentation. In devising the parameters of assessment, both academic and co-scholastic areas should be kept in mind. These should also be shared with learners and structured for helping the student to improve their performance.

2. Co-scholastic Processes and Outcomes

The Scholastic and Co Scholastic components make for an education that is holistic and
comprehensively assesses an individual's potential, capabilities and interests. However, over the decades, educational systems in our country have emphasized scholastic over the co-scholastic. This has also shaped the social perceptions about individual worth and achievement, limiting them to a narrow sphere of academics. The co-scholastic sphere which covers the wider ambit of education remained a grey area in planning educational curriculum and practices, till recently.

The sub-domains of Co-Scholastic Processes and Outcomes are as follows:

2.1 Life Skills  
2.2 Value Systems  
2.3 Attitudes  
2.4 Work Education  
2.5 Visual and Performing arts  
2.6 Co-Scholastic Activities  
2.7 Health and Physical Activities, Health Cards

3. Infrastructure – Adequacy, Functionality and Aesthetics

This is a vast area and covers facilities provided by the school in the areas of space, safety requirements, health management and the aesthetic component. Provisions need to be in place for buildings to be friendly for the differently abled. Through its eight sub-domains all major aspects associated with infrastructure are accounted for in a simple and easy manner for institutions to follow. This is the second largest domain in the CBSE School Assessment and Accreditation System.

The following are the sub-domains of Infrastructure – Adequacy, Functionality and Aesthetics:

3.1 Classrooms, Library, Laboratory, Computer Labs and ICT Facilities, Playground and Transportation Facilities  
3.2 Principal's office, Staff Room and Administrative Offices  
3.3 Sports and Games facilities, hobby Rooms, Arts and Music Dance facilities.  
3.4 Girls' rest room, Infirmary, Water and Sanitation, Health Management Facilities.  
3.5 Furniture, Lighting and Ventilation  
3.6 Safety and Disaster Management Provisions (fire extinguisher, emergency exit, DM Club, Drills)  
3.7 Provisions for Differently Abled Children and Inclusive Practices  
3.8 Eco-friendly Orientation, Aesthetics, Lawns and Green Plants.

4. Human Resources

This domain first adhers to the major boundaries of teacher to section ratio, as well as working days and then moves on to mandate Service Rules and Records, Recruitment Practices, Academic
Supervision and Continuing Professional Development. School staff refers to all employees, both teaching and non-teaching.

The following are the sub-domains of Human Resources.

4.1 School Staff (teaching and non-teaching)
4.2 Parents
4.3 Alumni
4.4 Students

5. **Management and Administration**

Leadership starts with a vision. Management ensures that processes and practices are aligned with the vision and are ingrained in the system, so that the users actively promote the essence of the vision.

The Management and Administration Domain has been divided into the following sub-domains:

5.1 Institutional Planning Mechanisms
5.2 Institutional Improvement and Process of Accreditation and Certification.
5.3 Goal Setting and Policy Making
5.4 Effective Co-ordination within the school
5.5 Resource Management
5.6 Relationship Management (staff, parents, community, alumni etc.)
5.7 Activity Management
5.8 Data and Record Maintenance
5.9 Oral and Written Communication
5.10 Standard Operating Procedures
5.11 Financial Administration

6. **Leadership**

The potential role of the Principal is in providing academic leadership to their schools.

A visionary leader to understand the way learning occurs creates plausible situations conducive to learning, views knowledge as personal experiences constructed in the shared context of teaching learning, rather than embedded in the external reality of textbooks. A leader is sensitive to the social, professional and administrative contexts in which he needs to operate, develops appropriate competencies to be able to create actual situations for scaffolding. He develops an artistic and aesthetic sense in children through art education and addresses the learning needs of all children, including those who are marginalised and disabled. A leader views appraisal as a continuous educative process.
The following are the sub-domains of Leadership domain:

6.1 Vision and Mission statement
6.2 Strategic Plans for School Improvement
6.3 Quality and Change Management
6.4 Scholastic Leadership
6.5 Collaborative Leadership
6.6 Innovative Practices

7. **Beneficiary Satisfaction**

Schools shall be successful in meeting this standard when it has the understanding, commitment and support of stakeholders. School personnel need to seek opportunities for collaboration to help the institution become a hub of excellence.

The following are the sub-domains of the Beneficiary Satisfaction Domain.

7.1 Student Satisfaction
7.2 Teacher Satisfaction
7.3 Office Staff
7.4 Principal
7.5 Management
7.6 Parents and Alumni
7.7 Community

The school should foster effective communication and interpersonal skills which lead to better social skills. The benefits of involving all stakeholders in decision making are that schools can foster collaboration with community stakeholders to support student learning, have a formal channel to listen to and communicate with stakeholders and productively use the knowledge and skills of stakeholders to enhance the work of the school.
Chapter 2
School Quality Assessment and Accreditation

Accreditation: Its Meaning

Accreditation can be defined as an affirmation of Quality. The Accreditation of a school would mean certification of a school's functioning assessed on the basis of predetermined norms in pre-defined areas. The Accreditation is actually intended to serve the purpose of a handy index for the stakeholders since it would give an immediate insight about the state of affairs in a school.

Accreditation, in the context of the schools affiliated with CBSE, would be a written recognition given on the basis of a structured report made by an independent accreditation agency. It also reflects as to how the internal operations of a school converge vis-à-vis broad objectives of the Board. It ensures the integrity of the schools and reaffirms their sustained commitment for the pursuit of excellence.

Incidentally, Accreditation is not principally about external scrutiny alone. It is about continuously trying to do better. It does not end with the affirmation of a status qualifying an institution as `Accredited'. It includes a structured follow-up procedure to ensure that recommendations made by the accreditation agency are dealt with appropriately and action plans are drawn up and implemented in the school to improve upon.

Vision

The Vision of CBSE School Quality Assessment and Accreditation (SQAA) is:

To provide a quality benchmark in the concept, establishment and running of effective systems within an institution in accordance with changing socio-economic and cultural contexts and new research

To assess them through standardized instruments and processes of internal (self evaluation) and external assessment (peer review) which will encourage sustained qualitative enhancement.

Mission

In order to attain the quality in school education as envisioned above, CBSE SQAA strives:

To arrange for periodic assessment and accreditation of schools.

To stimulate quality learning environment

To promote student centered non-discriminatory curriculum with enough scope for innovation and research.

To encourage self evaluation and objective peer review with a focus on continuous improvement of the school communities.

To encourage schools to continually draw from all the stakeholders-students, parents, teachers,
managements and local community members to support the school system for ongoing research and development.

To strengthen and encourage the initiative as envisaged by CBSE from time to time.

**Objectives of Accreditation**

To assess and endorse that an institution/school meets established standards.

To assess the effectiveness of an institution in creating the most innovative, relevant, socially conscious eco-oriented learning environment for all its staff and students.

To involve the faculty comprehensively in institutional evaluation and planning for enhancing effectiveness of a school.

To establish criteria for professional certification and upgrading of standards.

To encourage continuous self assessment, accountability and autonomy in innovation in school education.

To encourage continuous professional development and capacity building of teachers.

**Value Framework for CBSE SQAA**

Schools function in a dynamic context with enormous challenges ahead of them. The impact of technology on educational delivery, the impact of globalization, changing employability skills, need to develop collaborative Life Skills and bringing in research based innovation and best practices in the areas of curriculum reform, and assessment and evaluation have been taken into consideration while formulating the core values for the Accreditation framework.

1. **Nurturing national pride and fostering Nation Building**

   The NCF 2005 has recommended that quality is a systemic attribute rather than a feature of instruction. Quality is not merely a measure of efficiency: it also has a value dimension. The attempt to improve the quality of education will succeed only if it goes hand in hand with steps to promote equality and social justice.

   Schools and school education need to develop a Value Framework based on the constitutional ideals of social justice, equity and access.

2. **Creating Global Citizens**

   The imperative of CBSE-SQAA is also to empower schools to move towards skill development of students at par with their counterparts elsewhere in the world. This implies that institutions need to be innovative, creative and quality conscious.

3. **Inculcating values among students**

   The CCE framework projects a value system based on Article 51A of the Indian Constitution - Fundamental Duties which provides the most comprehensive list of values which should be inculcated by every citizen. The cultural pluralities and diversities prevalent in the country need to
be a part of the awareness of school children. Respect for the Nation, rendering National Service, promoting harmony and spirit of unity, transcending religious, linguistic and regional or sectional diversities, working towards removing bias towards practices derogatory to the dignity of women, preserving the rich heritage of our culture, protecting and conserving the environment, developing scientific temper and spirit of enquiry, protecting and safeguarding public property, striving towards excellence in all spheres of individual and collective activity are values which provide an intensive framework for a Value Based Curriculum for Schools. The SQAA examines how these values are being imbibed within the school curriculum.

4. Promoting the Use of Technology

Technology has become the greatest quality enhancer in the sub-domain of teaching learning processes. The learners in the 21st Century are technology driven. Classrooms of today have to be technology enabled to motivate and sustain learner interest. Good governance and the management of complex administrative functions becomes greatly enhanced through the use of technology. Electronic data management, documentation and recording in implementing assessment reforms will greatly help schools to become standardized and qualitative. All schools should move towards designing effective websites to disseminate relevant information to all stakeholders.

5. Creating Hubs of Excellence

All institutions need to move towards becoming ‘Hubs of Excellence’. The purpose of the school assessment is not to create islands of excellence but help all institutions to go through a rigorous process of self audit and reflection, build on their strengths and work on the areas that need attention.

**Purpose of Accreditation**

The purpose of accreditation of schools is basically to provide a comprehensive assessment of the school with focus on intrinsic characteristics “as it exists” in the school. It also aims at creating an avenue for school in reorienting its processes, practices and approach for achieving both external quality (beneficiaries being nation, society, parents, students) and internal quality (Spotting and limiting dysfunction; weaknesses; beneficiaries being school’s management & employees). Accreditation of schools indicates that the educational institution has conducted a self-evaluation of all of its programs and hosted a visiting committee to evaluate the institution in terms of its own stated educational goals and the standards for accreditation set up by CBSE SQAA. The grant of accreditation is a testimony to the fact that the accredited school has met the prescribed standards fixed by the accrediting agency. It is not to compare or rank the schools.

**Features of accreditation**

To be accredited, schools must:

a) **Meet the required standards of SQAA:**

The standards require that the school has a clear vision and purpose, has effective and responsive
leadership; has a vigorous curriculum taught through sound, research-based methods, collects, reports and uses performance results, provides adequate resources and support for its educational programmes; and values and communicates with its stakeholders.

b) Engage in continuous improvement:
To demonstrate continuous improvement, the school must identify a shared vision, maintain a school-wide profile of the current reality, establish plans, assess the implementation of interventions, and document the results of its efforts to improve student learning and school effectiveness.

c) Demonstrate quality assurance through internal and external reviews:
Schools must engage in a continuous process of self-assessment and review.

Core Principles
CBSE Accreditation Manual is based on the following Core Principles:

A. Quality is contextual
The concept of quality is most contested among educational thinkers, because quality is not a constant attribute but a variable. Hence it is contextual. If the context changes the parameter of quality also changes. The context of one school is different from another. There are more than forty school boards with three Boards at the national level, of which two are in the formal sector and one in the non-formal sector. The schools are run by thousands of management bodies which influence their educational processes and functioning, governance and leadership.

Understanding and evaluating the quality of education requires a holistic picture of the unique and complex character of schools, boards and government policies and the way in which they interact inside and outside the school thereby affecting student achievement. Therefore it is important to consider the entire context in which a school functions. In light of the varying context in states, culture and communities, a common standard applicable to all the schools is to be developed.

In India, schools are governed by Policies of the state government, affiliated boards and respective managements. The school board is more influential, as it governs the policies that impact the eventual outcome of the institution. The context of the CBSE accreditation process is “National Policies and stated regulations” and the Accreditation Manual is designed exclusively for schools affiliated to CBSE.

B. Quality is a progressive attribute
As the quality of the students, teachers and school systems improve over time, the quality standards need to be progressive. Quality enhancement is an ongoing process. It changes in step with developments from time to time. Newer quality standards are evolved and communicated by way of policies and regulations to ensure sustainable quality upgradation. Since this document is policy driven, it addresses the progressive attributes of quality.
Advantages of Accreditation
The school is able to maintain a level of quality and helps to identify its areas of improvement.
The students are able to assess themselves against acceptable set of norms.
The parents are assured of set standards of teaching and learning.
The process benefits all stakeholders within the school system – the Management body, principal, teachers, students, parents and community.
It facilitates institutions in recognizing their strengths and weaknesses and gives detailed guidelines and recommendations for capacity building.
It empowers Schools' policy makers to refine their formulation and allocation of resources.
The community, society, industry have the assurance of obtaining professionals whose human behavior and ethical approach to the work process helps an organization have a value based system of work.
The CBSE SQAA is an affirmation of “Quality”. It is the means of demonstrating confidence in the schools' purpose and performance. The goals are effectiveness, improvement and public assurance. Accreditation will not involve ranking institutions, but rather, will establish a level of acceptable quality for all accredited institutions while respecting the unique missions of the institutions involved. Accreditation of school will indicate that the educational institution has conducted a self-evaluation of all of its programs and processes.

Who should apply?
A school which is affiliated to the Central Board of Education for a minimum period of three years can apply. A School must apply to the CBSE between June and 30 September of the academic year in progression or as per details made available from time to time.

Who will administer the Accreditation?
The agencies empaneled with the Board have developed the School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Manual which will be used in the pilot phase. This Manual alongwith the instruments is the guideline for conducting the accreditation process.
The agencies will be trained by CBSE on this Manual and will further train Peer Assessors for conducting the process of accreditation in schools. It is expected that the Peer Assessors will be principals who are either working or retired from schools with a vast experience and rich insight into the processes that make a quality institution. It is also expected that the agencies and the assessors will apprise themselves of the latest reforms being conducted by CBSE as well as the Manuals and support material developed by the Board for successful implementation of reforms.

Schedule for the Agency authorized by CBSE
The Agency authorized by the Board to conduct the Accreditation will keep the following points into considerations:
Identification of the schools to be assessed  SQAA
Date and place where SQAA is to be conducted
Expected time and duration for each major assessment activity
Identification of peer assessors as individuals capable of managing significant direct responsibilities regarding the objectives and scope of accreditation
Training of peer assessors to conduct the accreditation
Schedule of meetings and interaction sessions with all stakeholders of the school (SAC)
Confidentiality requirements and assessment of SQA At report submission
Working documents designed for assessment including SQAAF, Safety Checklist , Observation Report Formats, Documents for supporting evidence for conclusions reached by assessors.
Creating on Accreditation Corner on their own website for CBSE SQAA and uploading online/offline formats of all instruments.

Process of Accreditation

A school affiliated to the CBSE and intends to get accredited is advised to set up a School Accreditation Committee(SAC),which will coordinate with the Accreditation Agency through the entire process of accreditation.

The process of accreditation involves the two essential stages:

1. **Self Review** using **School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Form** (SQAAF).
2. **Validation** by external Peer assessor Team by visiting the assesses school.

The accereditation is valid for a period of three years

(Refer Chapter 4 for the details regarding the process of Assessment and Accreditation)

CBSE SQAA Assessors

Assessment of a school is intended to be a means to document the strengths and weaknesses of educational practices and institutional effectiveness leading them to desired accountability. CBSE SQAA is aimed to help the schools to know the 'Quality index' that could help the managements to clearly visualize their unique features as also to be aware of what could be improved further.

As is the universal practice for quality assessments everywhere in the world, the human agents (Peer Assessor) form the core of CBSE SQAA. While all efforts have been made to standardize the entire process of SQAA by introducing objectivity at all levels of the process, it is presumed that the ideas and processes can only be translated into successful results with the help of skills of the team of Assessors especially instruments.

CBSE SQAA manual as stipulated that the external assessment team shall be called Peer Assessor Team (PAT). The approach of the team would be non-threatening and confidence building. PAT is not an inspecting team, hence the use of the terms 'Assessment' 'Assessor' and 'Assesse'. The Peer Assessors may
preferably be chosen from those who have gained experience while undergoing the process of CBSE SQA of their own institution. All Peer Assessors essentially have fully developed 'tangible' and 'intangible' skills which form the core of their good judgments leading to reliable and credible Assessment results.

**Constitution of Peer Assessment Team:**

Peer Assessors are Principals or educators with vast experience in school education who have been selected, trained and deployed to undertake the CBSE SQAA assignments. CBSE SQAA Peer Assessor Team is empanelled by the authorized agency. It is primarily a three member team which is national in character. Generally, the team has mixed representation from the state to which the institution belongs and other states. They are chosen from the school system and the Chairperson is normally nominee of the CBSE empanelled by the board. In case of a big school (with strength above 3000), one more member may be added for every 1000 students. These members will also be Peer Assessors or experienced Principals.

The SQAAF PA team is perceived to be collegial in nature. The Chairperson is the overall incharge of the team. It does not undermine the position of other members of the team. The relationship of all the team members is more of 'academic equality' leading to consensus approach rather than the 'hierarchy' that works through majority vote. Confidentiality is the hallmark of the PA Team.

The CBSE will appoint observers from time to time to oversee the school visits by the Agencies and PAT.

CBSE SQAA Peer Assessor Team needs to

- Understand the background and purpose of the School Quality Assessment & Accreditation Process.
- Plan and organize work to meet required time table and keep people focussed.
- Facilitate co-operation between individual and groups for smooth execution of the process.
- Obtain and evaluate the evidences fairly and objectively.
- Review, absorb and assess written and verbal information quickly and objectively.
- Arrive at generally acceptable conclusions based on the observations and findings during the process.
- Practice highest order of integrity and be able to sustain pressure to change for fear or favour.
- Be available and commit adequate time and attention for SQAA.

**Skills of the Assessor**

It is universally known that effective assessment requires a wide range of Assessor' skills at all the stages of the School Quality Assessment and Accreditation. CBSE SQAA Manual clearly envisages and stipulates the following for its Peer Assessors.
What guides CBSE SQAA Peer Assessor?

In order to arrive at creditable and reliable assessment for / or against an Institution; CBSE SQAA Assessor is guided by well defined principles for effective assessment. He/ She is able to practice the given standards through his/her personal assets such as inter-personal competencies and professionalism in performance, some of these guiding principles are as follows:
I. Objectivity:
Objectivity is the function of impersonal and non-opinioned judgment. In CBSE SQAA, the Peer Assessor is skilled in gathering and reporting facts, collaborating them with multiple sources and creating balance of viewpoints. The transparency of his / her thoughts feed into the objectivity that he / she practices. So his objective opinions depend on:

- reliance on facts submitted in SQAAF
- extra effort made to fill the information gaps through evidence, during school visit.
- the transparent process practiced in validating and arriving at conclusions using Domains and Sub-Domains.

II. Empathy:
The ability to put him / herself into the shoes of assessee school members to understand the cause with which the school is being run and administered, guides Peer Assessor's judgment during the assessment process. So, the PA

- does not get into the mission of fault finding; he / she deals with more of what is good than simply ‘what is not’
- recognizes and promotes initiatives.
- shares ideas and opinion as ‘an equal than a superior’ who knows all

Creating a Climate of Acceptance and Respect
- Being in harmony with the school environment
- Avoiding words, thoughts, gestures and tone implying judgement or criticism
- Avoiding or unduly influencing the school members with his / her opinion.

III. Communication:
CBSE SQAA Peer Assessor draws lot of his / her strength from effective and appropriate communication. The assessor is:

- a patient listener
- able to choose appropriate language to engage the assessee school members in meaningful interactions
- able to produce coherent and fluent reports
- capable of giving adequate feedback with clarity and precision.

IV. Credibility:
Peer Assessor's credibility emanates from his / her person , his / her work and the method that he / she follows. The Peer Assessor, therefore, makes assessments which are
acceptable to all stakeholders
based on consensus building
positive
in time with prescribed standards and norms
reflective of quality

V. **Adaptable:**
CBSE SQAA is a rigorous process but does not provide room for rigidity. During the entire process of assessment, the Peer Assessors role model themselves as:

- agents of change.
- advisors to identify areas which need change.
- motivators to the assessee schools to adopt innovative practices in place of unproductive traditional practices.

*Joining with the Assessee School*

- Shoulder to shoulder approach
- Honouring the school as it exists
- Responding to school's individuality and special features
- Sharing the experience of assessment process together

VI. **Team work:**
The entire approach of CBSE SQAA is to emphasize on team work. Central control and co-ordination by the leader not withstanding, the Peer Assessor endeavours to enhance the importance of every member of the team. The Peer Assessor:

- promotes collective thinking
- practices circular strategy
- awards mutual autonomy and co-operation
- is an equal by the side and not a sage on the stage
- provides functional leadership

VII. **Industrious**
Being aware that Assessment has a Beginning, a Middle and an End
Patiently and Skillfully moving to the conclusion
Working out suggestions for Growth / Development
VIII. **Zealous Observer**

- Being curious and interested
- Exploring
- Questioning and enquiring
- Being non-intrusive

IX. **Analytical**

*Analyzing Data In Association with the Assessee School*

- Discussing perceptions during the assessment process
- Discussing what possibilities are feasible
- Acknowledging the best practices'
- Being honest

*Recording All Available Information*

- Being sensitive to every bit of information
- Being like a sponge
- Looking for patterns and exploring possibilities

X. **Impartial**

- Being an optimist
- Building and using inter-personal rapport
- Enjoying the whole experience
THE SCHOOL ASSESSMENT AND ACCREDITATION [SQAA] PROCESS

Appointment of Agencies
CBSE employs transparent selection procedures to empanel Accreditation agencies

Schools fill in Form of Intent and send online to CBSE

Pre-Planning Stage
• On receiving Form Letter Intent from a prospective school, CBSE sends an e-mail to the Accreditation Agency.
• Accreditation Agency appoints Peer Assessors Team (PAT) and sends an acknowledgment to the school

Agency orient PAT on the CBSE Manual

Submission of SQAAF by the Schools
• Assessee School to fill and submit the SQAA form online / by post along with related evidence to support the data.

Pre visit- Analysis Stage
Peer Assessors Team (PAT) and CBSE authorized Agency collate and analyse data, gathered from SQAAF along with evidences and documents submitted by applicant school. Only if the school scores 50% initial score (overall) the school plan visit.

School Visit by Peer Assessors Team
Peer Assessors Team [PAT] visits the school (if the school gets the minimum qualifying score) on a mutually convenient date to analyse the data submitted by the school
• PAT to focus on –
  - Chapter 3: SQAA Domains and Sub-Domains
  - Instruments 2, 3, 4, and 5 : Questionnaires (Students, teachers, parents and non teaching staff)
• Information is gathered through interaction following the administration of questionnaires, which is analysed by acquiring the same from different sources like – physical observation, institutional records etc.
• The final score to be recorded on Score Card and shared with CBSE and school.

PAT Prepares Reports
1. School Quality Enhancement Report - SQER (For Schools)
2. School Quality Assessment and Accreditation Report (SQAAR) - for CBSE and School