The 68% Overlap:

An Analysis of Data Requirements
Across NAAC, NBA and NIRF Frameworks

Why Indian higher education institutions collect the same data three times — and how an integrated approach reduces effort by two-thirds while improving compliance quality.

68%

of data required across NAAC, NBA and NIRF is identical or substantially similar.
Yet most institutions collect it three times — separately — with different teams and different formats.

Abstract

This paper presents an analysis of data requirements across India's three primary quality assurance frameworks for higher education — NAAC, NBA and NIRF. Based on a systematic mapping of data fields across all three frameworks and validated through diagnostic engagements with 100+ institutions over 12 years, we find that approximately **68% of data requirements are common across frameworks**. *Despite this substantial overlap, institutions typically maintain separate data collection processes for each framework, resulting in duplicated effort, data inconsistencies, DVV failures, and NIRF score leakage. We propose an integrated data architecture — the Master Data Map — that enables institutions to collect data once and generate compliant outputs for all three frameworks simultaneously.*

1. Introduction

Indian higher education institutions face a unique compliance challenge. Three distinct frameworks — NAAC for institutional accreditation, NBA for programme-level accreditation, and NIRF for national ranking — each require institutions to collect, validate, and submit large volumes of institutional data.

In practice, most institutions treat these as three separate administrative processes: different teams, different timelines, different data formats. This fragmentation is costly. It produces duplicated effort, data inconsistencies between submissions, validation failures during DVV, and — most consequentially — silent score leakage in NIRF rankings that institutions rarely trace back to data quality.

Our central finding: 68% of data required across NAAC, NBA and NIRF is identical or substantially similar. Institutions that continue to collect this data separately are spending twice the effort for inferior results.

2. Methodology

We conducted a field-by-field mapping of data requirements across the NAAC SSR template, the NBA SAR, and the NIRF data submission portal across all applicable categories. Each field was classified as identical, substantially similar, or framework-specific — then validated through diagnostic work with institutions that had submitted to multiple frameworks in the same cycle.

3. Findings: The Overlap Domains

The 68% overlap is not uniform across data categories. It is highest in faculty and human resources data, and somewhat lower in financial data — though even there, the underlying source data is largely the same.

Data Domain	Overlap %	Key Fields
Faculty & HR Data	**85%**	Qualifications, PhD %, experience, publications, FDP hours
Student Outcomes	**78%**	Graduation rates, placement, higher education, median salary
Research Output	**72%**	Publications, patents, projects, consultancy, Scopus records
Financial Data	**65%**	Expenditure on faculty, library, equipment, scholarships
Student Data	**60%**	Enrolment, diversity, reserved category, fee reimbursement

| Overall Average | 68% | Across all data categories mapped in this analysis |

3.1 Faculty Data: The Highest Overlap Domain

Faculty qualification data is required by all three frameworks. Yet in most institutions, this data is maintained in three separate spreadsheets. When updates occur, they are made inconsistently — sometimes in one sheet, rarely in all three. The result is data inconsistency that DVV teams flag and NIRF portals reject.

DIAGNOSTIC FINDING — FACULTY DATA

In a diagnostic engagement with a university in Gujarat, the PhD percentage submitted to NAAC (58%) differed from NIRF (51%) in the same academic year. The difference arose from different counting methodologies applied by different teams to identical underlying data. This single inconsistency cost approximately 8 TLR points.

3.2 Research Output Data

Research publications, patents, funded projects, and consultancy earnings are required across all three frameworks. The Scopus affiliation problem is the most common research data failure: faculty publish papers with incorrect institutional affiliations, meaning the publications are not credited to the institution in NIRF's RP parameter.

DIAGNOSTIC FINDING — RESEARCH DATA

In a diagnostic engagement with an engineering institution in North India, 23 faculty publications in Scopus were not attributed to the institution due to affiliation discrepancies. These 23 publications represented approximately 12 RP score points that the institution was entitled to but not receiving.

4. The Cost of Fragmented Data Collection

Problem	Cause	Consequence
Data inconsistency between submissions	Different teams, different sheets	DVV flags, resubmission requests
NIRF score leakage	Undercounting in parameters	Silent rank loss — never traced
DVV failure	SSR figures differ from portal	Grade reduction, peer team queries
Duplicated effort	Same data collected 3 times	IQAC bandwidth consumed
Last-minute scrambles	No integrated calendar or system	Submission errors, deadlines missed

5. The Master Data Map: Collect Once. Comply Three Times.

Based on the overlap analysis, we developed the Master Data Map — a single data architecture that maps all required data fields once, with explicit outputs to NAAC SSR, NBA SAR, and NIRF portal fields. One source of truth. Three compliant outputs.

Data Category	NAAC Output	NBA Output	NIRF Output
Faculty records	Criterion II metrics	SAR Faculty sections	TLR parameter
Student outcome records	Criterion III placement	Student Outcomes (PO)	GO parameter
Research publications	Criterion III research	SAR research section	RP parameter
Financial expenditure	Criterion VI governance	SAR financial data	TLR — FRU metric
Student diversity data	Criterion II admission	Student profile	OI parameter

6. Observed Outcomes

Metric	Before Integration	After Integration
Data collection effort per framework	6–8 weeks per cycle	**2–3 weeks (shared)**
DVV clarification requests received	12–18 per cycle	**3–5 per cycle**
NIRF score improvement	Baseline	**8–15 points average**
Data inconsistency incidents	Frequent	**Near zero**

7. Conclusion

Indian higher education institutions do not lack data. They lack a system for collecting it once, validating it consistently, and deploying it across frameworks efficiently.

The 68% overlap across NAAC, NBA and NIRF is not a finding that requires institutions to do more. It is a finding that allows them to do significantly less — with better results. The integrated approach — **Collect Once. Comply Three Times.** — is both practically achievable and strategically superior to the fragmented model currently dominant across Indian higher education.