



MINUTES OF 15TH MEETING OF NATIONAL AGRICULTURE ACCREDITATION COUNCIL

14 JULY 2020

15th meeting of National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council was held virtually on 14th of July, 2020 via ZOOM at 11:30 a.m. chaired by Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq A. Rajwana, Chairperson National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC).

2. The meeting commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran. The Chair in his opening remarks welcomed all the participants and brief introduction of members.

3. The Chair warmly welcomed senior and new council members and complimented them for their support and commitment to participate in an urgent meeting on short notice to discuss serious challenges arose due to COVID-19 pandemic. Chair also appreciated and acknowledged Prof. Dr. Nadeem Akhtar Abbasi, PVC, PMAS AAUR and Ex-Vice Chairman, NAEAC (2016-2020) for his meritorious services, hard work and dedication to advance council whereby it is recognized and valued in whole Pakistan.

4. Chairperson highlighted the operational activities and achievements of council during 2019-20 including twenty three accreditation and evaluation visits, in which 64 degree programs in eight HEI's across country were evaluated, eight zero visits of 22 degree programs, two review meetings with the Heads of Agriculture Education Institutions, five quality assurance & accreditation awareness seminars and one training workshop for departmental focal persons of HEI's from KP were conducted. The Chair informed honorable house that, due to COVID-19 pandemic the regular accreditation visits couldn't be carried from March 2020 onwards so, council in consultation with relevant HEI's created a history by conducting two virtual accreditations in Institute of Agricultural Sciences, University of the Punjab, Lahore and Faculty of Agriculture, University of Sargodha. The house appreciated the efforts made by council secretariat and ensured their sustained support to carry new initiatives under challenging environments.

5. After the introductory remarks by the Chair; item-wise agenda of the meeting was presented before council members for consideration and approval. A summary of decisions taken in the meeting is given below:

Agenda Item#1: Confirmation of the Minutes of 14th Council Meeting of NAEAC

6. Minutes of the 14th Meeting of the council were presented for confirmation before the council members. In the absence of any comments and objections, *the minutes of the 14th Meeting of the council were approved as presented.* It was agreed that, the points raised by Prof. Dr. Fayyaz Ul Hassan Sahi and Prof. Dr. Qamar Uddin Chachar will be placed in the next council meeting as separate agenda item for discussion.

Agenda Item # 2: NAEAC Policy Guidelines for Online Teaching

7. Chairperson briefed the honorable members for the imminent need for drafting Policy Guidelines for Online Teaching (PGOT) due to COVID-19 pandemic which has forced almost all HEI's to go for online teaching. He further added that this draft was prepared after two consultative virtual webinars conducted on 08.07.2020 and 09.07.2020 with the administration and faculty of forty seven HEI's across Pakistan. After presenting PGOT chairperson requested the honorable members for their valuable suggestions in order to improve the drafted policy. After detailed discussion following policy guidelines for online teaching was approved by the council unanimously as given in annexure-I.

List of Participants of 15th Council Meeting held on July 14, 2020

1. **Prof. Dr. Ishtiaq A. Rajwana**, Chairperson, NAEAC/Pro-VC, MNS-University of Agriculture, Multan
2. **Prof. Dr. Nadeem Akhtar Abbasi**, Ex-Vice Chairman, NAEAC/Pro-VC, PMAS-AAU Rawalpindi
3. **Dr. Nadia Tahir**, Managing Director, Quality Assurance Agency, HEC, Islamabad
4. **Prof. Dr. Ghulam Jilani**, Pro-VC, Lasbela Uni. of Agriculture, Water & Marine Sciences, Uthal, Lasbela
5. **Prof. Dr. Qamar Uddin Chachar**, Dean, Faculty of Crop Production, Sindh Agri. University, Tandojam
6. **Prof. Dr. Fayyaz Ul Hassan Sahi**, Dean, Faculty of Crop and Food Sciences, PMAS AAU, Rawalpindi
7. **Prof. Dr. Shafqat Saeed**, Dean, Faculty of Agriculture & Environmental Sciences, MNSUA, Multan
8. **Dr. Abid Mahmood**, Director General (Research), AARI, Faisalabad
9. **Mr. Muhammad Aslam Niazi**, Principal, Balochistan Agriculture College, Quetta
10. **Ms. Nighat Jawwad**, CEO Food Tech Solutions, Lahore

Proxy:

1. **Mr. Liaquat Ali Bhutto**, Director, Agriculture Research Institute, Tandojam, Sindh
2. **Dr. Riaz Ahmad Afridi**, Deputy Director Planning / Eco-physiologist, Directorate General Agriculture Research KP
3. **Dr. Muhammad Shakeel**, Director Research Quetta, Baluchistan

Moderator:

Mr. Kausar Saeed Awan, Liaison Officer, NAEAC Secretariat HEC Islamabad

National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council Policy Guidelines for Online Teaching

Higher Education Commission permitted all HEI's to commence online classes to cater the academic requirements of University students during unprecedented and challenging times of covid-19 pandemic. The spring session 2020 saw the commencement of online classes in large numbers by the educational institutes as almost all institutes switched to online teaching for the safety of students and faculty. This policy guideline is a provisional draft and is effective currently for online/hybrid class work due to the closure of educational institutes. These policy guidelines will facilitate the online/hybrid mode of teaching in agricultural institutes during the current outbreak as well as a general preparation for such challenges in future. Besides this policy NAEAC approves all the recommendations of HEC Covid-19 Policy Guidelines including creation of Online Academic Council (OAC) in HEIs to approve online teaching and to resolve disputes or complaints. Besides HEC Policy Guidelines on Covid-19, below mentioned SOP's should also be adopted to ensure online teaching quality.

NAEAC STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR ONLINE TEACHING

Accreditation of agricultural degree programs is a holistic process, implemented for the assurance of academic quality in HEIs. It necessitates agricultural institutes or programs to follow a specified criterion. The covid-19 pandemic has significantly contributed to the shifting of educational institutes to hybrid learning/online methods of education. No compromise on standards of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (TLA) is acceptable during online education. Approval of Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the execution of TLA from OAC and other statutory bodies is mandatory. In order to facilitate HEI's NAEAC has established following SOP's for online quality education:

Teaching

- Course teaching mode must be clearly defined (online or requiring physical presence/or mix. In agricultural education large number of courses require lab/field work, practical modules etc that may be developed by the relevant teacher recorded in the field or lab (Academic Studios) and made available for necessary demonstration work and shared with the students through most convenient means (Online sharing, USB, CD's etc.). Efforts should be made by HEI's to create a parallel system of academic studios for the recording of lectures/practicals/field work by designated and trained staff having sufficient equipment so that the teachers should only focus on academics.
- In certain cases where applicable HEI's may facilitate the students to conduct field/practical work/projects in nearby agricultural research stations by devising a fool proof monitoring mechanism. Students should record all the activities they conduct as proof and should be submitted to the relevant faculty.
- It should be ensured to get all students on board and the quality of education must be maintained. All students should attend online lectures and those who could not access the lectures online, the institute shall devise mechanism of making course material available online or sending all recorded and

reference materials on CDs/USBs to home addresses of the students at some periodic intervals in time. No student should be left out for any reasons to have access to the online lectures.

- All HEIs should take special initiatives to strengthen quality of online programs and should focus on capacity building of faculty and relevant field and lab staff by devising appropriate mechanism and nominating departmental focal persons for online quality education. IT committees should be formed to coordinate with all departments/campuses/colleges to provide training (Microsoft Team, Zoom, Moodle, Skype for business, Google classroom and other soft wares) as well as data for mapping gaps and need assessment for continuous improvement. All such records must be kept saved for NAEAC accreditation inspection committee AIC as and when required in future.
- In certain cases where applicable HEI's may opt to conduct practicals/lab and field work in batches by allowing limited number of students to join campus under strict compliance to SOP's due to any operational difficulties in providing online/offline video/audio recordings.
- Despite all the efforts for successful and productive online teaching if a student wants to withdraw based on inaccessibility or any other issue with online teaching, he/she may be allowed to do so, without having any adverse impact on his enrollment, provided a minimum CGPA is maintained as per semester rules. In such a case, the course(s) will be treated as "freeze" and no fee shall be charged for re-enrolment at a later stage for the students who are interrupted in an ongoing semester.
- In all such specialized teaching conditions HEI's must follow the HEC uniform semester rules in true letter and spirit to avoid any spiteful situations in future. Other rules and regulations of accreditation process as approved in NAEAC bye-laws will remain same.
- Beyond doubt mix teaching (face to face/online/offline) takes lot of toil so teaching load should be reduced and limited to maximum of 3 courses/9 credit hours/teacher to ensure quality.
- In order to be prepared for such situation in future online classes should be a mandatory part of regular teaching. HEI's are encouraged to devise a sustainable mechanism across the board in all degree programs.

Learning

- OAC should certify that every course must have a set of learning outcomes. These learning outcomes should be achieved during the online/amalgamated educational approach in a progressive manner. Thought provoking assignments, conceptual quizzes and their evaluation by faculty must be executed on weekly basis. Results of assignments and quizzes must be shared with the students in the same week they are conducted for continuous improvement of the learning process.
- HEI's must have secured LMS, Bandwidth and IT support to enable sustained delivery of online classes maintaining all essential records (Timetable, class status, student's attendance, course material etc). Students should have easy access to all helping materials and other assignments as well quizzes through digital means.

- Efforts should be made to facilitate students to conduct final research project/internship in safe and healthy conditions by devising alternative mechanisms to traditional forms. However, the essence should remain the same to a greater extent.
- As this is new mode of learning for the students therefore teachers should design the course in such a way that it creates interest among the students, and they should be eager to be a part of this new mode of learning. In order to make the lectures effective the teachers should split the lectures into multiple segments of 10-15 min and after each segment the teacher may ask questions to retain student's attention.

Assessment

- Student's assessments are core to learning. Therefore, HEIs are guided to plan courses in such a way that it replaces face-to-face TLAs. Students should be assessed regularly during studies in a semester and should be marked in a single scheme of evaluation all through the departments. Assessment record should be managed preferably in a Learning Management System (LMS) for online evaluation. However, in case of some limitations in LMS system, as observed during ongoing assessment, an alternate/substitute online assessment system (e.g. google Forms, Whatsapp etc.) may be used with the approval of OAC. For more details on assessment tools HEC COVID 19 guidelines should be consulted.
- Regular departmental meetings be conducted online to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration for healthy academic environment and dissemination of SOP's for health and safety of teachers/students/staff under COVID-19.
- Proper monitoring & feedback /evaluation mechanism be developed to record student's participation and time spent on course platforms. It includes off-line listening to recorded lectures and timely addressing the assignments, quizzes, projects etc.
- Assessments, number of quizzes and type of assignments should cover learning outcomes of the courses pertinently. Timely marking of assignments should be ensured by focal person online quality education and the assessments must be shared with students online.
- Assessment records for assignments, quizzes, projects, exams etc of all online courses should be kept for record. Evidence must be shared with NAEAC as and when required.
- In order to facilitate office of controller of exams in keeping assessment records and notifying results, HEI's should devise uniform assessment (marking/weightage for midterm, practical, final, quizzes, assignments etc) models for all departments.

VIRTUAL ACCREDITATION

In order to save time and meet the ever increasing demands for accreditation by HEI's virtual accreditation will be carried out in two phases:

Phase-I: NAEAC would virtually carryout all the components of the accreditation itinerary including opening session with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Directors and Faculty Members, presentation by relevant HOD, meeting of AIC members with faculty members and interaction with students as well as virtual visit of infrastructure. Provisional AIC assessment report will also be provided to HEIs after completion of all formalities. HEI's opting for virtual accreditation must have the following:

- An approved SOP for online teaching by OAC under the guidelines provided by HEC.
- Effective and accessible online records (LMS/Google Forms) for the AIC.
- Online meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, HOD and faculty. Interviews with faculty, students, staff, alumni etc.

Phase-II Execution of normal accreditation in physical mode may also be carried out to validate the AIC provisional report after normalization of the situation.