



AIC Report

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Department of Agronomy

Lasbella University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Science, Uthal

Criteria for Agriculture Degree Program Evaluation

Agronomy B.Sc (Hons) 2014-15

Lasbella University of Agriculture, Water and Marine Science, Uthal

S. No.	Criteria	Points Assigned	Points Awarded
A. Major Criteria			
1	Strength and Quality of Faculty	250	160
2	Curriculum Design and Development	150	120
3	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	200	110
4	Students Support and progression	100	60
Sub - Total (A)		700	450
B. Minor Criteria			
5	Research and Consultancy Activities	150	60
6	Governance and Leadership	100	60
7	Recent Innovations and Best practices	50	20
Sub - Total (B)		300	140
Grand Total (A+B)		1000	590

(Five hundred ninety only)

59%

Name and Designation

Signature of Program Evaluator

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The degree program at Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, LUAWMS, Uthal was started from 2006. Department of Agronomy has no permanent set up as it is situated in old building of Faculty of Agriculture, LUAWMS, Uthal. Dr. Mustajab Ahmed Khan, Associate Professor on contract is working as chairman and Prof. Dr. Ghulam Jilani as Dean, Faculty of Agriculture. Since its establishment 35 students pursued agronomy degree program in the 5th semester. The teaching faculty with 5 members PhD (1), M.Sc (2) and faculty for PhD abroad (2) are working in the department. There is no senior faculty of professor level. The courses are offered successfully but there is limited number of teachers with sufficient semester wise work load. The entire faculty is working on full time basis with experience of 2-3 years. The students as well as faculty have access to internet and computer in the main faculty building.

The department of Agronomy has two class rooms, one as general and second for major subjects. The practical facilities of both lab and farm are available for the undergraduate students at department and faculty farm. Field trips on public and private farms are arranged frequently for practical training of the students.

The department of agronomy has proper academic forum like board of studies for taking decision regarding curriculum or any program. The faculty members have no any research project on their credit. The department of agronomy has no separate library but in Faculty library this section has a set of 50 books available covering undergraduate curriculum of Agronomy.

Looking into inadequate faculty members, class rooms, lab, library and multimedia there is urgent need for appointing permanent senior faculty members on regular basis and also provide above facilities in the department of agronomy, faculty of Agriculture. However, technical and non-technical staff may also be appointed at the earliest to run department activities smoothly.

Based on the review and assessment of available faculty, infrastructure, facilities and resources the AIC assessed B.Sc. (Hons) Agronomy program in category Y2 with score of 59% implying the program has to be revisited with in a period of one year.

INTRODUCTION

LUAWMS campus is situated in coastal Arid ecological conditions of the Lesbella region. The area has a lot of potential for growing agricultural and horticultural crops (including fruits and vegetables). The LUAWMS campus offers programs in Agriculture, Livestock, Water and Marine sciences since its establishment in 2005. This is a very remote area, so teaching and non-teaching staff members are paid hardship allowance.

CRITERIA WISE ANALYSIS

Strength and Quality of Faculty

At present there are three (03) faculty members working in agronomy holding M.Sc (02) and PhD (1). The faculty members are quite young having experience of about 3 years. Two lecturers are serving on regular basis and one Associate Professor on contract. Two more faculty members will join soon after completing PhD from china. None of faculty members in agronomy have HEC/PSF funded project. The faculty has no research paper on their credit published in HEC recognized Journals. It has been observed that there is no senior faculty present to provide leadership in agronomy in the days to come. The last batch of undergraduate program has passed 8th semester with 10 students having major agronomy in 2014–15. However, present faculty is capable of teaching and guiding agronomy as major subject. The student–teacher ratio is not working well since 2-3 years as students enrolled in general courses are not taking interest in agronomy as major. The teaching/ learning methods adopted by the faculty are fairly good. Faculty was hardly satisfied for the job and environment to work under professional code of ethics is fully observed. The faculty members are enthusiastic to participate in seminars/ conferences/ workshop/ study trips.

Curriculum design and development

The department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture offer undergraduate courses adopted from the scheme of studies as finalized by HEC constituted National Curriculum Review Committee are well structured and compatible with emerging needs and flexible at minimal level to offer choices for the students in seeking jobs. The meeting of Board of Studies and faculty are held regularly by taking academic decisions. Student's perception about the quality innovation and new knowledge is fairly satisfactory. At present faculty members and students rely on main university and faculty library with a good collection of text books.

However, there is dire need to have access to reference books and research journals of good repute. The completion of theory and practical courses are fairly good as it was evident from faculty course files. The course registration and withdrawal policy is well established and without any discrimination. For the sake of academic record all faculty members maintain course files as was evident after random verification by the AIC team. But, there was a little observation regarding lab practical's and farm experiments and their breakup. The recommendation is needed to be outlined from same course offered in next semester. The students were generally satisfied about teachers' performance.

Infra-structure and Learning Resources

At present, the department of Agronomy has two class rooms, one general and second for major subject with capacity of 20 students. There is one Agronomy lab with insufficient tools and equipments facilities for conducting basic practicals. The faculty of Agriculture has more than 360 books on agriculture, but only 50 books are of Agronomy. The Agronomy books provide a good base knowledge in teaching and learning agriculture. Students have access available to main library at university campus. The library facility was quite good and students' opinion about library facility was satisfactory. The department of Agronomy is working under less conducive environment of old building with limited offices, class rooms, laboratory and library facilities available for faculty members and students. The departmental facilities are expected to be improved by shifting into new faculty building. The campus has farm area of 125 acres reserved for agronomy and other departments of Faculty of Agriculture which is in the reach of the students. However, the area needs to be developed properly for students' practical work.

Students Support and Progress

The admission to B.Sc. degree program in the department of agronomy is not satisfactory. Need based scholarships are available to students. The students enjoy hostel, indoor and outdoor sports facilities at the campus. The dispensary is present in the campus to provide medical aid to the faculty, students and supporting staff. There is also auditorium hall and buses available for faculty and students for various programs. The students' interaction with teaching staff and attitude towards studies was encouraging. Students; attendance record was well maintained and their perception about degree programs was quite positive but with more demand that students are willing to participate in seminar/ conferences/study tours & field trips but there was shortage of financial support.

Research and consultancy Activities

There is shortage of funds and research grants from external sources as HEC. The amount of research grant of agronomy department was not known by the chairman, a senior faculty member. However, the funds were released on need basis for any important event in the department. The department of agronomy has not started postgraduate program with courses and research yet due to shortage of teaching staff, no postgraduate lab and no student enrolled in M.Sc program. However, teaching faculty in the department of agronomy renders advisory services to farmers, NGOs and private companies.

Governance and leadership

The organizational setup, rules and procedures, administrative control, financial resources are sufficient and well defined to run the institution under the statues and regulation of LUAWMS. The implementation of statutory rules/regulations is intact along with operational budget which is available to run the institute smoothly. The academic setup rests with department of agronomy under Dean, Faculty of Agriculture. Whereas, financial matters are controlled by the Director Finance, which mainly depend on the university, LUAWMS, Uthal. A placement bureau exists and is operational in the university through selection board.

SWOT ANALYSIS

Major strength

- HEC recommended curriculum has been adopted for four years degree program.

Major Weaknesses

- Faculty of three including one PhD (contract bases) more PhD qualified and experienced faculty is needed.
- Serious shortage of lab equipment, farm machinery and implements.
- Very limited IT facilities, reference material and few books.
- More class rooms are required along with multimedia facilities.
- More teachers' offices and students' common room are required.

Major Opportunities

- Students graduating in agronomy may get jobs in both public and private sectors.
- Faculty in agronomy may develop a model farm for teaching and research purpose.
- Faculty may transfer new technology to farmers field.
- Faculty may organize technical seminars and field trips and farmers field days.

Major Threats

- Limited resources and academic/ technical facilities may lead to drop in student intake.
- Decline of student number may increase drop out in B.Sc. degree program.
- Uthal being hard area, may discourage intake of urban students.

Actionable Recommendations

- B.Sc. (Hons) program may induct senior and experience faculty in agronomy.
- Lab and farm facilities need to be further developed to provide sound base for practical training of students.
- Recruitment of technical and supporting staff based on relevant qualification and experience should be done for handling scientific work.
- Budget allocation for development of research laboratory and library.
- Strengthening and upgrading of IT facilities and other learning resources.
- Provision of more faculty offices, class rooms and common room etc.

Final Recommendation

A critical evaluation of the B.Sc. (Hons) degree program in Agronomy scored 59% and made it eligible for interim accreditation in category Y2 of degree program having some major shortfalls. The evaluation program in Agronomy should be kept under continuous observation and re-evaluated by Council after atleast one year.