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National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council

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**Report of the
Accreditation Inspection Committee
(AIC)**

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**Degree programs in Agricultural Economics,
KPK Agricultural University, Peshawar**

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1. Introduction:

The Chairman National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC) formed a two member Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) with Dr. Abdul Salam, Professor of Economics, Federal Urdu University of Arts, Science and Technology (FUUAST), Islamabad as its convener and Dr. Sarfraz Ahmad Mian, Professor at Pir Mehar Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University as Member. The AIC was tasked to carry out accreditation process of the degree programs: B.Sc. (Hons) Agricultural Economics and M.Sc. (Hons) Agricultural Economics of the Department of Agricultural Economics, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Agricultural University, Peshawar (Annex. 1). The AIC was provided a self assessment report (SAR) prepared by the Department of Agricultural Economics of the KPK agricultural University and an Evaluation Manual for Agriculture Degree Programs.

The AIC visited the KPK Agricultural University on December 1- 2, 2011, Mr. Naseer Alam Khan, Secretary NAEAC also accompanied the Committee. The AIC commenced its program with a meeting with the Dean Faculty of Rural Social Sciences, Dr. Munir Khan Khattak, also a professor in the Department of Agricultural Economics, in his office on December 1, 2011. Professor Munir Khan welcomed the AIC and provided background information relating to the Faculty of Rural Social Sciences. He informed the AIC that the Faculty of Rural Social Sciences at the KPK, in addition to the Department of Agri. Economics, consists of Department of Rural Sociology, Institute of Development Studies (IDS), Institute of Business and Management Sciences (IBMS) and Department of Agricultural Extensions and Education. After preliminary discussion in the Dean's office, meeting moved to the Committee Room of the University's Planning and Development Department for a presentation on the Department of Agricultural Economics.

2. Department of Agricultural Economics:

2.1. History of the department

Dr. Dawood Jan Khan, Associate Professor and Chairman of the Department of Agricultural Economics made a detailed presentation on the history and development of the Agricultural Economics Department that was **set up in 1965**. The presentation was attended by all the faculty members of the Department, Director and other staff of the University's Quality Assurance Cell and some other senior faculty members of the University. Dr. Munir Khan, Dean Faculty of Rural Social Sciences, chaired the meeting. Dr. Dawood Jan Khan informed the meeting that Department of Agricultural Economics, located in the Faculty of Rural Social Sciences, is the largest department, in terms of student enrollment, of the Faculty of Rural social Sciences. It is also one of the largest departments of the KPK Agricultural University.

2.2. Mission statement

“To develop and polish a cadre of professionals with specialized skills in Agricultural Economics serving as academicians, researchers and policy makers and lead the way as agents of change for agricultural growth and development that is essential to bring prosperity to society at large.”

2.3. Objectives and goals

- To enable graduate to analyze problems systematically and objectively and come up with practical solutions.
- To prepare skilled hands for a wide range of leadership roles, both in private and public sectors.
- To enable graduates to pursue higher studies, academic and policy research independently and guide and supervise the coming generations in such activities.
- To build capacity of the graduates through implementation of an updated curriculum consisting of core, major and elected subjects based on modern trends in Agricultural economics for practical solutions.
- To provide the graduate a sound academic background through conceptual teaching, home assignments, group discussion, presentations, etc.

2.4. Degree programs Offered

In pursuance of its goals and objectives Departments of Agricultural Economics offers following three degree programs:

- B.Sc. (Hons) Agriculture with major in agri. economics,
- M.Sc. (Hons) in Agricultural Economics, and
- Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics

3. Analysis of Degree Programs by Prescribed Criteria:

3.1. Criterion I: Strength and quality of the faculty

The Department has a teaching staff of 12 members: one professor, 3 associate professors, 2 assistant professors and 6 lecturers including 2 on contract and 2 as visiting faculty. One of the associate professors is on deputation and one lecturer on study leave. Three of the present faculty members have earned Ph.Ds, three are enrolled in Ph.D. programs; 2 at the KPK and one at the Arid University of Agriculture. The other four are M.Sc.(Hons.) in Agricultural Economics from the KPK and one is M.Sc in Economics and Finance. The Department seems quit well equipped in terms of the strength of the faculty, both in terms of its numbers and qualifications to cater for the current degree programs.

3.2. Criterion II: Curriculum design and development

BSc. (Hons) Program:

The department follows the curricula for all degree programs as per guidelines of the HEC. The BSc. (Hons) agriculture is of 4 years (8 semester) duration. Admission is open to students with FSc. It was explained by the Chairman that HEC policy is strictly followed to complete the requirements of the degree programs. The courses offered to the students majoring in agricultural economics provide a judicious mix of economic theory, quantitative methods and applied courses in various sub disciplines of agricultural economics. These are in line with the courses approved by the National Curriculum Revision Committee of the HEC and meet emerging requirements of the profession. The students are also exposed to important soft ware packages so as to introduce them to electronic data analysis and presentation of the results.

MSc. (Hons.) Program

Eligibility criterion for admission to M.Sc.(Hons) program is a degree in B.Sc.(Hons) Agricultural Economics, with a CGPA of 3.0 and above. Total credits prescribed by the Department for the completion of this program are 47, including 10 compulsory credits for thesis research. The courses offered for M.Sc (Hons) program are as approved by the National Curriculum Revision Committee of the HEC and in line with the requirements of the profession. The students are exposed to important software packages for data analysis and presentations in addition to courses in economic theory and quantitative methods. Department chairman distributes the courses among faculty members with their consultation. Faculty members are required to provide course outlines to the classes at the beginning of the semester.

The degree programs, as mentioned above, are designed to meet the ever increasing requirements of Agricultural Economists in the country/ province. The programs include a combination of core courses in economic theory, quantitative methods and agricultural economics so as to equip the future professionals with sound knowledge of modern economic theory and analytical skills to address the emerging challenges and issues in farm production, processing, marketing, and rural development.

Overall 206 students graduated in all programs (134 in BSc, 67 in MSc and 5 in Ph.D. including males and females) during the period 2006-2010. Average student/ faculty ratio turned out as 6.53:1 in BSc and 5.8:1 in MSc during 2008-2011. It indicates that interaction among students and faculty is satisfactory. Adequate transport facilities are in place.

3.3. Criteria III: Infrastructure and learning resources

The AIC during its visit to the KPK Agricultural University campus, inspected lecture rooms and met with students during the classes of two courses. The Committee also enquired from the students about the availability of various facilities on the campus and future prospects

for the graduates of the department. The Committee also met with the regular faculty members of the Department, discussed various academic and research programs and solicited their views and suggestions for the improvement and development of the degrees programs at the university. In addition the team visited the Central Library of the university and briefly met with the Librarian and Additional Librarian.

Most of the faculty members, especially in graduate classes, were reported to encourage interaction and participatory discussion of the students. Teaching at undergraduate levels remains lecture oriented, with not much emphasis on student participation, discussion and dialogue.

The department does not have a computer lab of its own. The students in the department rely on the courtesy of the Institute of Business and Management Sciences for the use of computer lab. The interaction with students highlighted the need for internet facilities on urgent basis and setting up a computer lab and departmental library. The students were also concerned the shortage of space in terms of class rooms and other teaching facilities and equipment in the department. The 2-3 class rooms currently at the disposal of the Department are insufficient and also lack modern facilities and equipment like multimedia.

The Central Library is housed in an excellent building and has adequate facilities for students study in the library. It has digital access to several professional journals, courtesy HEC. The Central Library is also equipped with facilities for Video conferencing.

3.4. Criteria IV: Student support and progression

Admission to B.Sc. (Hons) program is open to student with F.Sc. and duration of this program is 4 years. Each academic year consists of two semesters of 18 weeks each. **A student of 1st year must pass each course with at least a D grade and have an over all CGPA of 2.5.** During the first two years courses relating to various disciplines of agriculture are offered to all the students enrolled in B.Sc. program. It is the third year when student select their major area including agricultural economics.

University follows a semester system. Grading of students is based on the marks obtained with following distribution: 30% for mid term, 10 % for quiz/ assignment and 60 % for the final exam. The marks obtained are divided into letter grades: A, B, C, D, etc. **To assure transparency and fairness in the grading system, graded papers should be shown to the students and discussed with them if need be.**

Student enrollment in general has shown an increasing trend. However, the AIC observed that student enrollment in B.Sc. (Hons) in agricultural economics program had steadily declined from 75 in 2008 to 32 in 2011. On enquiry from the AIC it was pointed out this had resulted from the allocation of quota of students among various departments as some departments did not attract sufficient students. If this is true, it is neither in line with the increasing requirements of

agricultural economists nor allowing the students selecting the subjects with their natural aptitude. Thrusting study program subjects on student which they do not like may adversely impact their future careers and professional development. It would also lead to inefficient and wasteful use of resources. **Accordingly, AIC recommends the authorities to rescind this quota policy and let the students choose the subjects in line with their merit and interest. .**

Internship program for B.Sc (Hons) Agriculture Students was launched a few years ago so as to provide hand on and practical training. . The program aimed at exposing the students to real life problems so as to make them aware of the practical issues and real life challenges at early stages formative years of their life. Both the students and teachers were appreciative of the value and utility of the internship scheme. AIC noted with concern the impending winding up of the program and urges the authorities to reconsider their decision.

Students in the M.Sc (Hons.) program have **to submit a thesis** and defend it before an external examiner. Research topics are generally selected by the students and then supervisors are allotted. Thesis research helps in training the student in undertaking research, familiarizing with and building analytical skills. **Given the faculty resources and trained manpower the Department of Agri. Economics can play a crucial role in analyzing various economic issues of the province. The faculty may like to concentrate on focused research by selecting a broad research area and then assigning students on different topics within the selected area.**

The graduates and alumni of the Department, established in 1965, were reported to be serving in many international organizations and reputed foreign universities besides manning many important positions in national and provincial academic, research and development institutions.

The Committee on the bases of its discussions with students and faculty and its own experience is of the views that senior faculty need to teach the **basic courses to the BSc students so as to motivate the promising young students to major in this subject.**

3.5. Criteria V: Research and consultancy activities

Senior faculty members are, inter alia, involved in research activities in addition to teaching and supervising student research. As informed by the Chairman 7 research projects were completed during last few years. About 50 percent of the faculty, mostly the senior teachers, has won research grants various national and international organizations. Nevertheless, there is need to encourage and guide the young faculty for writing research papers and get these published not only in Sarhad Journal of Agriculture but also in journals of international repute.

The Committee observed that young faculty is quite enthusiastic in undertaking research projects and getting publications in national and international journals. But given the teaching load, young faculty is constrained in its research activities and need encouragement and guidance to pursue research activities in collaboration with their senior colleagues.

3.6. Criteria VI: Governance and leadership

The environment in the department is quite collegial. The Chairman has maintained the departmental tradition of consultation with his colleagues. All important issues are discussed and decided through consensus among the faculty members. The department is following the administrative as well as procedural rules as per KPK University policy. The AIC however noted that financial powers at department level have become outdated and need to be revised in line with trends in market prices etc.

3.7. Criteria VII: Recent innovations and best practices

The faculty members in department are committed to maintain supply of well trained graduates to the community. Many initiatives and BMP have been adopted to improve the study programs. The faculty has provided assistance to the government through its research and consultations on various policy related issues and other development problems. Thesis research has been directed to solving problems faced by farmers and agriculture sector. The faculty was able to publish research reports related projects in areas of WTO, dairy, trade liberalization, trade performance, technology adoption in agriculture specifically wheat, trade in food products; etc.,

The courses offered in the Department in line with the mission of the department and program objectives, **however, need to provide more elective/optional courses to broaden the opportunities for choice to the students.**

The exact number of student who have graduated from the Department established in 1965 is not known. But the graduates of the department were reported to be serving in many international organizations and reputed foreign universities besides manning many important positions in national and provincial academic, research and development institutions.

4. SWOT Analysis:

4.1. Strengths

- Mature leadership
- Competent faculty with a judicious mix of experience and youth
- Balanced course work combining theory and applications
- High standing of the graduates of the department
- Interactive environment with the active involvement of faculty
- Good student/faculty interaction

4.2. Weaknesses

- Shortage of faculty at senior levels
- Inadequate office space and class rooms facilities
- Insufficient budget and financial powers
- Lack of computer lab and internet facilities for student
- Lack of departmental library
- In-breeding in faculty recruitments
- Inadequate representation in national and international seminars, conferences

4.3. Opportunities

- Growing demand for well-trained agricultural economists in public and private sectors
- Vast opportunities for agri economists/ economists in teaching, research and field departments, both in the public and private sectors
- Local and foreign demand for well trained agri economists
- Funding of collaborative research projects by national and international agencies
- Potential for multi-disciplinary research with leading role for agricultural economists.
- Competitive programs for future challenges to agriculture
- Scholarships and financial aid for students
- Alumni get-to-gather at department level
- Linkages with foreign universities and organizations

4.4. Threats

- Overloaded faculty
- Less number of research projects
- Inadequate infrastructure
- Retention of qualified faculty given the increasing number of private universities.
- Lack of department library
- Insufficient computer and internet facilities for students
- In-breeding in faculty recruitments

5. Actionable Recommendations:

- Recruitment to senior faculty positions
- Provision of more office space and class rooms
- Multi media facilities in the lecture rooms
- Provision of more budget and financial powers
- Subscription to reputed journals in the department
- Establishment of computer lab and departmental library
- Provision internet facilities to students
- Nominations of faculty to national and international seminars
- Initiation of multidisciplinary research projects
- Developing department-industry linkages
- Developing international links with universities and research organizations
- Avoiding in-breeding in future faculty recruitments

Final Recommendations:

On the basis of the inspection/evaluation, the team recommended Accreditation/rating of the Degree Programs of Agri. Economics, KPK Agricultural University, Peshawar in the middle band (73% score) of “X” category of National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council/HEC.