

To

Naseer Alam Khan
Secretary NAEAC
NAEAC Secretariat Room # N-2, N-Block,
Old Comsats Building, HEC, H-8/1,
Islamabad

Subject:

Accreditation Inspection Committee Report

Kindly find enclosed herewith accreditation Inspection Committee Report of the Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch, Rawalakot for your kind perusal and record.

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf
Prof. (Retd.) Agronomy
PMAS-Arid Agriculture University,
Rawalpindi



Confidential

National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council

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

**on
Department Agronomy
Faculty of Agriculture,
University of Poonch, Rawalakot
Azad Jammu & Kashmir**

**by
Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ashraf
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Acknowledgment

The evaluation team acknowledges the support and cooperation of the honourable Dean, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch, Rawalakot Azad Jammu & Kashmir Chairman and faculty/staff members of the Department of Agronomy, The immense help, guidance and logistic support of Mr. Naseer Alam Khan (Secretary) and other staff of NAEAC Secretariat is highly appreciated.

**Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC),
NAEAC**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF AIC EVALUATION REPORT

The Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) constituted by the National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC) for the external assessment of the degree programs of B. Sc. (Hons) Agri. and M. Sc. (Hons) Agri. offered by the Department of Agronomy, University of Poonch, Rawalakot, AJK visited department on October 16, 2012. The NAEAC secretary and the AIC members visited the office of the Dean, Faculty of Agriculture. The secretary Naseer Alam Khan highlighted the aims and objectives of this review process. Dr. Muhammad Yousaf Khan Dean, presented a detailed overview of academic programs being offered in the faculty. The tentative schedule provided by the NAEAC was followed by the AIC and detailed interviews and discussions were held with the Chairman, Dean, faculty members and senior students of the department. The team also visited and examined lab facilities, class rooms, offices, faculty library and research farm.

a) Accreditation Inspection Team

In pursuance to its mandate given by the HEC under clause 10 subsections (d) and (1) of the byelaws of NAEAC, an Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) constituted was comprised of following scientists to review the Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch, Rawalkot for assessment and accreditation of degree programs:

i) Dr. Muhammad Ashraf

Professor (Retd.)Agronomy
Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University,
Rawalpindi.

Convener

ii) Dr. Rashid Ahmad Shad

Chief Scientific Officer (Rtd),
National Agricultural Research Centre,
Islamabad.

Member

b) Terms of References of the Committee (TORs)

1. To validate self-assistance report (SAR) of degree programs (B.Sc. and M.Sc. (Hons) Agri. prepared by the department.
2. To carry out external evaluation of degree programs in a transparent, neutral, holistic and participatory manner for accreditation and rating of the degree programs based on evaluation criteria of NAEAC.
3. To submit synthesized and consolidated report (7-8 pages) consisting of short introduction, brief criterion-wise analysis, self-explanatory SWOT Analysis and explicit actionable recommendations based on the validation of SAR and interaction with Chairman, Faculty Members, students and supporting staff as well as detailed on-site visit of physical infrastructure, facilities, and other teaching-learning resources available for degree programs.
4. To submit clear, precise and justified actionable accreditation and rating recommendations about the degree programs to the Chairman, NAEAC.

History & main features of Agronomy department, Faculty of Agriculture, Rawalakot,

The Accreditation Committee was given a detailed briefing by Chairman Agronomy department regarding its history, mandate/vision, mission, program goals and objectives, faculty, students, research projects and future plans. He also mentioned role of Agronomy in economy of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, The University College of Agriculture, Rawalakot was established in 1980. Agronomy as a major subject was offered in the same year for B.Sc. (Hons) Agri. program. Moreover, Agronomy department was established in 2010. The department is engaged in producing highly skilled and technically sounds manpower to solve the problems related to crop production and soil management. The academic standard of Agronomy department is appreciable as has so far produced B.Sc. (Hons) Agri graduates having an average 3.95 CGPA.

Degree programs offered

- B.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. (Four years)
- M.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. (Two years)

2. CRITERION-WISE ANALYSIS

Criterion I: Strength and Quality of Faculty

The faculty members at department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch are competent enough having current knowledge and skills in their field of specialization. The department has 07 faculty positions i.e. 01 Professor, 01 Associate Professor, 03 Assistant Professor and 02 Lecturers (Annexure 1). The range of experience of the faculty is from 2.5 years to 30 years. Two Ph.D. Assistant Professors are on interim placement and have recently joined the department. Faculty composition of the department does not conform to HEC criteria. There is no system in place for training of newly inducted faculty. The department is deficient in supporting staff according to the standard criteria. Text books have been written by agronomy faculty and also there are fairly good number of publications by agronomy faculty in proceedings/journals of international repute. Teacher-student ratio conforms to the standards laid down by NAEA council. This makes enough expertise to meet the needs of an independent department to fit into the HEC requirements.

Most of the faculty members are satisfied with their jobs and agreed that salary package is fair and reasonable. The faculty members are enthusiastic about establishing collaboration with foreign universities. Moreover, adequate opportunities exist for academic progress. The entire faculty has membership of various national and international professional societies and the faculty participation in seminar/conferences is appreciable. Students are generally satisfied with course content taught in lectures and practicals.

Criteria II: Curriculum Design and Development

The Department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch, Rawalakot, AJK is undertaking teaching and research for 04 years B.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. and 02 years M.Sc. (Hons.) Agri. degree programs. The objectives of curricula are well defined, narrated as preamble and are inline with the HEC guidelines. The revised curricula approved by HEC have been in practice since 2009. The curricula adopted have been gone under major revision during the last 2-3 years through brainstorming efforts by University Professors and Research Scientists. Therefore, the current curricula are in line with national and international standards. This has been implemented through department board of studies, faculty board of studies, academic council and university syndicate. Admission and withdrawal policy was found well documented and transparent.

Majority of the students are satisfied with academic programs and with contents of the curricula. Classes are being taken regularly and course contents of various courses are covered within the stipulated period of time. Evidence of internship program and course file was also produced before the AIC team. The parents get information about education of students and jobs opportunities being offered. As a result, students are being well equipped with the latest subject knowledge. The faculty members of department are also involved in various activities at national and international levels.

Criteria III: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

There is 01 research laboratory and 01 teaching lab in Agronomy department. Laboratories are spacious and working capacity of research lab is 30 and teaching lab is 40 students. The scientific equipments available in the labs included: spectrophotometer, infrared gas analyzer, microscope, pH meter, EC meter, soil sampler set, oven, electrical balance, Kjeldahl apparatus, planimeter, leaf area meter, field balance, vacuum desiccator and digital grain moisture meter (Annexure-2). The laboratories are fully operational but inadequately equipped. Moreover, safety arrangements are not observed in labs. There is no greenhouse facility in the department but a little growth chamber and farm building is under construction. The experimental area of research farm is 04 acres. The field area

is easily approachable. The department owns tractor and tractor mounted implements viz: ridger, cultivator, planker, blade, bed maker, rotavator, disc plough, disc harrow, drill, inter-row cultivator, trolley and thresher (Annexure-3).

Presently, there is only a faculty library and text books are arranged subject-wise in steel almirah. There are 1000 text books of Agronomy in faculty library. Copies of Agronomy Journal, Crop Science, Weed Science, Science International are also there in faculty library. Space for students in the library is sufficient. Moreover, a departmental library is in a process of being established. There is no computer lab at departmental level but the work is in progress to provide internet services and access to online journals to each and every student and faculty member.

Criteria IV: Students Support and Progression

The nature of admission response in B. Sc. (Hons) 5th semester is moderate. The average students intake in B. Sc. (Hons.) 5th semester is 15. There are instances of dropouts but CGPA is reasonably good. There is only one merit scholarship. The USAID/ HEC need-based scholarships, Kashmir Council and Pakistan Baitulmal for B. Sc. (Hons.) and scholarship loans are available. The University owns 03 commuter buses for student transport.

A strong student-teacher interaction exists through tutorial meetings, department/faculty seminars, and workshops etc. Medical facilities for students are appropriate. There is n't any hostel accommodation for students however sports facilities are under-construction. Field trips are being arranged by the department.

Criteria V: Research and Consultancy Activities

There are two research projects underway and two others are awaiting approval of various funding agencies. Funds amounting to Rs. 8, 75, 000/- allocated for faculty and post-graduate students research are being utilized effectively.

The findings and output of the faculty and students research is being regularly published in HEC approved/impact factor journals. So far 25 research papers have been published by Agronomy Faculty in impact factor journals. The articles of immediate impact on crop productivity are not being published. The faculty also renders advisory service to NGOs, general farmers, seed growers, NRSP and Women Works Organization etc.

The department has an effective academic collaboration with all main agricultural research institutes of Pakistan and AJK.

Criteria VI: Governance and Leadership

The Governance and administrative authority is well defined. The chairman is responsible for all administrative and management matters of the department. Well-defined and documented rules and regulations are being implemented in day-to-day affairs. The academic setup rests with the department and financial matters are controlled by the University authorities.

Annual calendar of activities is prepared and published with the help of faculty and staff and is followed strictly. Course files are well maintained. Placement bureau and alumni association have not been well established.

Criteria VII: Recent Innovations and Best Practices

A Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) has been established by university authorities to ensure quality of degree programs. Distribution of courses is well balanced in terms of theory and practical classes. The allocated credit hours to theory and practical are satisfactory and well maintained. The classes are being taught regularly and course contents are completed within stipulated period of time. The students-teacher assessment is being carried out and operated through questionnaires provided by

QEC as per HEC directives. The good practices noted in this department are the student excursion in rural areas, field trial demonstration, use of multimedia, E. Library and farm machinery. We noted an enthusiastic look of faculty and students towards teaching, research and activities like participation in seminars and workshops etc.

SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL DEGREE PROGRAMS

SWOT analysis of degree programs is as:-

1) Major strengths

- The classes are being taught regularly and course contents are completed within the stipulated period of time.
- The entire faculty is highly skilled and has expertise in their respective areas of teaching and research. They are in a process of formulating research groups and preparing research projects
- The departmental library and laboratories are being established. Young teachers are very enthusiastic about their career development and trying to seek collaboration with international institutions. The faculty library has sufficient number of agronomy text books. Curricula were found to be good and course contents of each course were relevant to the objectives and mission of the department.
- The department owns tractor and the latest tractor-mounted implements.

2) Major weaknesses

- The posts of Professor and Associate Professor of Agronomy may be created and be filled out to strengthen the academic profile of the department.
- Agronomy department also lacks qualified and well-trained lab staff.
- Inadequate office space for the faculty, shortage of communication facilities, lack of controlled environment facilities and lack of computer lab etc.

3) *Major opportunities*

- Abundant job opportunities exist for agronomy graduates in different government and non-government organizations.
- Technical guidance for students is available from agronomy faculty of diverse background for their undergraduate and post-graduate studies.
- The faculty of agronomy have an opportunity through competition of training leading to Ph. D. and post-doctorate for their career development.
- An opportunity also exists to win projects from national and international donors.

4) *Major threats*

- Admission of students in B. Sc. (Hons) Agri. based on only F. Sc. (Pre-Medical) having urban background.
- Reduction of credit hours of general courses of agronomy for B. Sc. (Hons) Agri. program.
- Violation of merit in admission and recruitment of faculty and staff.
- A trend of shifting emphasis from teaching to publications is developing.
- Lack of hostel accommodation and transport facilities for male students.

Actionable Recommendations

- The posts of Professor and Associate Professor Agronomy be created and should be filled out.
- The department needs more space for faculty offices
- There is an immediate need to strengthen departmental labs and library.
- The department needs equipments like drying cabinets, ovens, cool incubators, desiccators, electrophoresis and high speed centrifuge, chemicals for protein detections.
- A computer lab should be established for students with the latest computers and internet facilities.
- Lab's supporting staff must be selected on the basis of relevant qualification/ experience for handling scientific instruments/equipments safely. A qualified electric engineer may be appointed at faculty level to look after working and maintenance of lab equipments.
- The international journals be subscribed and communication facilities be upgraded.
- A trend of shifting emphasis from teaching to only publications may not be encouraged and emphasis should be placed on writing text books.
- Admission of students in B. Sc. (Hons.) Agri. Should be based on F. Sc. (Pre-medical) and also F. Sc. (Pre-engineering) having rural background.
- The principle of merit/natural justice may strictly be observed for admission of students, selection/promotion of faculty/staff etc. Moreover, admission in agriculture should be restrained only to sons of farmers.

Evaluation Criteria for Agricultural Degree Programs

Sr No	Criteria	Points Assigned	Points Awarded
Major Criteria			
1	Strength and Quality of Faculty	250	200
2	Curriculum Design and Development	150	140
3	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	200	150
4	Students Support and Progression	100	60
Sub-Total (a):		700	550
Minor Criteria			
5	Research and Consultancy Activities	150	107
6	Governance and Leadership	100	75
7	Recent Innovations and Best Practices	50	35
Sub-Total (b):		300	217
Grand Total (a+b):		1000	767

Prof. (Retd.) Dr. Muhammad Ashraf

Name and Designation

Signature of Program Evaluator

3. FINAL RECOMMENDATION

The department has research farm, laboratories, equipments and qualified teaching faculty to cater the needs of present level of enrolment of B.Sc. (Hons) Agri. and M.Sc. (Hons) Agri. On the basis of inspection/evaluation the team unanimously recommends accreditation of degree programs of department of Agronomy, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch, Rawalakot, AJK in “X₁” category of National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council/HEC with scope for up-gradation to category ‘W’ after appropriate improvements with due course of time.

Signatures of AIC Members

Name and Designation

Signatures

Dr. Muhammad Ashraf

(Convener)

Professor (Retd.) Agronomy Department
Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University,
Rawalpindi.

Dr. Rashid Ahmad Shad

(Member)

Chief Scientific Officer (Rtd)
National Agricultural Research
Centre, Islamabad

Comments and Signatures of Chairman

I agree with the observations and recommendations made by the peer team in this report.

Chairman

Department of Agronomy
Faculty of Agriculture, University of Poonch,
Rawalakot, AJK

Faculty Profile**(Annexure-1)**

Sr. No.	Name	Designation	Highest qualification	Experience
1	Prof. Dr. Muhammad Hussain	Professor	Ph.D.	30 Years
2	Dr. Muzammal Hussain Siddiqui	Associate Professor	Ph.D.	29 Years
3	Dr. Faisal Zahoor	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	03 Years
4	Dr. Muhammad Waseem	Assistant Professor (HEC IPFP)	Ph.D.	5 months
5	Dr. Khurram Mubeen	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.	02 months
6	Mr. Muhammad Jamil	Lecturer	M.Sc. (Hons.)	07 Years
7	Mr. Khalid Mehmood	Lecturer	M.Sc. (Hons.)	03 Years

List of Lab. Equipments**(Annexure-2)**

Sr. No.	Name of equipment	Quantity
1	Microscope	03
2	Spectrophotometer	01
3	Infrared gas analyzer	1
4	EC meter	1
5	Kjeldahl apparatus	1
6	Soil sampler set	2
7	Oven	1
8	Electrical balance	1
9	Field balance(50kg)	2
10	Vacuum dessicator	1
11	Digital grain moisture meter	1

LIST OF FARM EQUIPMENTS**(Annexure-3)**

S. No.	Implement	Quantity
1.	Tractor	1
2.	Ridger	1
3.	Cultivator	1
4.	Planker	1
5.	Blade	1
6.	Bed Maker	1
7.	Rotavator	1
8.	Disc plough	1
9.	Disc harrow	1
10.	Drill	1
11.	Inter row cultivator	1
12.	Trolley	1
13.	Thresher	1
14.	Reaper	1
15.	Rotatry machine	1