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*Dated: January 28, 2013*

**The Chairman**  
**NAEAC Secretariat**  
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**HEC Sector H-8/1, Islamabad**

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**Subject: Accreditation Inspection Committee's (AIC) Report.**  
**(Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, University of**  
**Poonch, Rawalakot, AJK)**

*Respected Sir:*

The Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) constituted by your honor vide letter No. Dy. No. 817-NAEAC/ HEC-2012 dated October 2, 2012, visited the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, University College of Agriculture, Rawalakot, University of Poonch and conducted the accreditation through review meetings, interviews, individual meetings and group consultations and visits, etc. as per schedule given to us.

The Undersigned and Honorable Mr. Tahir Saleem Ex Chief/Project Director, NFDC, Islamabad, along with your office team spent two days (October 16-17, 2012) there for accreditation and evaluation of the degree programs offered by the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences as per necessary guidelines and the toolkit. The draft report prepared unanimously is annexed herewith for your kind information and further perusal please.

I thank you for your trust. Please acknowledge on the receipt report and let me know if anything missing or needed from this end.

**Prof. Dr. Safdar Ali**  
Convener of the AIC

Encl: (9 pages + Annexures)

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Composition of the Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) and the TOR were given in the following letter from NAEAC, Islamabad.

	<p><b>National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council</b>          NAEAC Secretariat, Room# N-2, N-Block, old Comsats building, HEC, H-8/1, Islamabad Ph# 051-90802681, Fax#051- 90802682 Website: www.naeac.org, Email: <a href="mailto:infonaec@yahoo.com">infonaec@yahoo.com</a></p>
	<p><i>Dy. No.817/NAEAC/HEC-2012</i> <span style="float: right;"><i>Islamabad: October 2, 2012</i></span></p>

**Subject: Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) for Accreditation of Degree Programs**

Chairman, Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture, Rawalakot, University of Poonch has offered degree programs of his department for external assessment and accreditation. Chairman National Agriculture Education Accreditation Council (NAEAC) has constituted an Accreditation Inspection Committee (AIC) of the following Experts/Program Evaluators.

- |    |  |          |
|----|--|----------|
| i  | <p><b>Prof. Dr. Safdar Ali</b><br/>         Dean, Faculty of Crop and Food Sciences<br/>         PMAS Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi</p> | Convener |
| ii | <p><b>Mr. Tahir Saleem</b><br/>         Tahir Saleem Ex Chief/Project Director, NFDC,<br/>         Islamabad,</p>                                | Member   |

2. The Accreditation Inspection Committee shall have the following **TORs**:

- To validate the self-assessment report (SAR) of the degree programs (B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc (Hons.), Ph.D.) prepared by the Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences
- To carryout external evaluation of the degree programs in a transparent, neutral, holistic and participatory manner for accreditation and rating **based on seven (7) evaluation criteria given in the Evaluation Manual.**
- To submit a synthesized and concise analytical report (7-8 pages only) consisting of SWOT analysis and actionable recommendations based on the interactions with the Dean, Chairman, Faculty Members, Students and Support Staff and Alumni as well as detail visit of physical infrastructure, facilities and other teaching-learning resources available for the degree programs.
- To submit clear, specific and justified degree programs accreditation and rating recommendations to the Chairman-NAEAC.

3. The AIC shall carry out the accreditation process **from October 16-17, 2012**. The draft report may be submitted to Secretary NAEAC within a period of two weeks of the on-site visit. The Experts/Program Evaluators shall be offered an honorarium of Rs.5, 000/- per day during the on-site accreditation visit of the degree programs besides TA/DA as per HEC rules.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,

**Naseer Alam Khan**  
 secretary, NAEAC

**Distribution:**

- i. Prof. Dr. Safdar Ali, Dean, Faculty of Crop and Food Sciences, PMAS AAUR, Rawalpindi
- ii. Mr. Tahir Saleem Ex Chief/Project Director, NFDC, Islamabad.

**Cc:** Mr. Nasir Rahim, chairman, Department of Soil and Environmental Sciences, UOP, Rawalakot.

## **2. Dept. of Soil and Environmental Sciences, University of Poonch, Rawalakot.**

### **• DEPARTMENT HISTORY & MAIN FEATURES**

The department of soil and environmental sciences took its roots from the commencement of B.Sc (Hons) degree program in soil science in 1986. This was a part of the constituent University College of Agriculture and Food Technology, Rawalakot established in 1980, under the University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir Muzaffarabad established the same year i.e. 1980.

On the creation of faculty of agriculture in 2004 the department of Agronomy and Soil Science became an independent department, and M.Sc (Hons) degree program in Soil Science commenced. Later on in 2007 the Ph.D program in Soil Science was initiated.

The department was reorganized in 2009 and renamed as Department of Soil & Environmental Sciences 2009. On the establishment of the University of Poonch, Rawalakot in March, 2012, the Department part of the University and the student enrolled after March, 2012 will get their degrees from the University of Poonch, Rawalakot.

The department has produced 180 B.Sc. (Hons), 21 M.Sc.(Hons). Currently enrolled for B.Sc. (Hons), M.Sc.(Hons) and Ph.D. are 23, 16 and 3 students, respectively.

The department has completed five projects while four are ongoing (it is unnecessary list them). The faculty has produced 67 publications during the last five years (2008-12), of which 50 are in the international journals.

Being a newly established university, the department of soil and environment sciences stands out prominently, being the oldest, in the university setup. Surprisingly university was only setup this year in March while the department had its origin as far back 1986 under the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir which was setup in 1980. The laboratories are well equipped, rather over equipped, though some of the equipment needs to be put into operation (it will be unnecessary to add the list of equipment to this report). The library facility, both the central and the department, was very good and contained most of the reference material (list of books is available but it will be too much to add to this report). However, the glass / green house and field facilities need strengthening. This is important from the research point of view.

### 3. CRITERION ANALYSIS

#### **Criteria I: Strength and Quality of Faculty**

The total faculty of the department is 10. All are full time faculty members except two who are part time faculty. The student teacher ratio is 1:10. The evaluation committee met Professor/HOD, and Assistant Professors of Soil Science to discuss their academic background, areas of interest, and their perceptions about the academic programs, students and peers opportunities for professional growth besides research opportunities, facilities available, teacher-student relationship, teaching load and strengths and weaknesses of the program. It was done by calling the faculty staff of various levels and holding frank and free discussions assuring them that the objective of this visit was to effect improvements rather than a criticism of their program.

Following is the upshot of the discussions held at length:

1. Mostly teachers were happy and satisfied with the facilities, support and the teaching environment. They, in fact, seemed enthusiastic and committed to their profession, which augurs well and is a happy sign.
2. The space in the laboratory was up to the mark, which is a good sign for a good quality education.

#### **Criteria II: Curriculum Design and Development**

The curriculum is a reflection, how far it is supportive in achieving learning objectives and student learning outcomes. The team members were informed that degree level curriculum has been developed with the collaboration of HEC through its Curriculum Review Committees (CRCs). The member of the curriculum review committee (CRC) is Prof. Dr. M. Kaleem Abbasi from this department . A uniform curriculum approved by HEC has been adopted by all the Agricultural Universities/Colleges. Generally, maximum weightage is given to final exams (60 per cent), followed by mid term (30 per cent) and assignments/quizzes, etc. (10 per cent). To keep abreast of the latest knowledge in the concerned discipline, it is imperative to have a regular review and update of the curriculum. In the recent years, feedback mechanism is considered extremely useful for participatory and objective decision making. The Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) of UOP has made positive efforts to develop this mechanism on regular basis for continuous improvement of teaching learning quality.

The expert committee felt that the objectives / goals of the degree programs, and both the curricula content were standard. The books prescribed more than adequately meet the requirement. Students as a tradition

depend on how the faculty teaches them, because it is the faculty that sets the standards irrespective of the reading material, which, of course, the brighter students do make use of. Thus, the student perception of the curricula was rated as very good.

### **Criteria III: Infrastructure and Learning Resources**

Being a newly established university, the department of soil and environment sciences stands out prominently, being the oldest, in the university setup. Surprisingly university was only setup this year in March 2012 while the department had its origin as far back 1986 under the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir which was setup in 1980.

Three laboratories are well equipped, rather over equipped, though some of the equipment needs to be put into operation (it will be unnecessary to add the list of equipment to this report).

The library facility, both the central and the department, was very good and contained most of the reference material (list of books is available but it will be too much to add to this report). However, the glass / green house and field facilities need strengthening. This is important from the research point of view.

### **Criteria IV: Students Support and Progression**

The evaluation committee was apprised that students are provided handouts in the class and/or a folder containing topics wise data and lecture material for the given class and semester, which are placed in the library. The teachers provide handouts of lectures along with some presentations on multimedia. Students were of the opinion that the number of assignments should be increased and more quizzes should be conducted to keep the students fully involved in the semester system. A few internship reports were checked and found of good quality. Internship and practical training might be a regular feature with a view to developing a strong and effective program. Students' attendance is well maintained and their attitude towards their studies is encouraging. It seems their perceptions about degree programs should be satisfactory. It is good to see that girls get hostel accommodation within the university campus, While there may be some opportunity for students to avail of the scholarships, currently the students seem to be self-supporting and hardly any financial support from the university are banks in the form of interest-free loans is available.

### **Criteria V: Research and Consultancy Activities**

There seems to be adequate research and consultancy activity in the department. The team was briefed that it was mandatory for the teaching faculty to devote 80 per cent time to teaching and 20 per cent to research. The department had completed **five** research projects from different donors- PARC, HEC, PSF, and Germany. The four research projects are on- going.

### **Criteria VI: Governance and Leadership**

The highest administrative governance authority is the Vice Chancellor, followed by the Registrar, Treasurer and Controller of Examinations. The part of the organizational setup of the faculty is controlled by the Dean and Vice Chancellor of the University. The Vice Chancellor is the overall controlling authority. Important bodies of the university include the Syndicate, the Senate, Academic Councils, Advanced Study & Research Board, Finance & Planning Committees, Selection Board, Boards of Studies, Directorate of Students' Affairs and Hall Warden. The rules and procedures of the university are well organized and documented. All bodies of the university function within the framework of well defined rules and procedures. To further improve leadership in research and teaching, an exchange with other universities, local and abroad, will be of great help.

### **Criteria VII: Recent Innovations and Best Practices**

We could see research potential in the students as there was highest number of research projects being run by the department. The students were happy and working very hard for new findings in soil science discipline. This sets a research culture trend in the students and faculty members.

## **4. SWOT ANALYSIS OF THE DEPT DEGREE PROGRAMS**

Based on the assessment of 7 individual criteria, and the expert committee places Soils and Environmental Department of the University of Poonch, Rawalakot in category  $X_2$  in view of newly emerging institutions with good prospectus to rise higher in intellectual field, provided financial and administrative support is forthcoming positively and the reading and research culture is inculcated among the alumni.

However, it would be appropriate to add some remarks about the strength and weaknesses besides the opportunities offered.

### Major strengths

- The department is well established, though the university is new.
- Well equipped laboratory is a major strength.
- Library facilities are excellent.
- There is a good relationship among the faculty and the administration besides the students.
- The staff seems very honest and committed to the profession.

### Major weakness

- The faculty requires strengthening, which hopefully will be done on the arrival of the foreign educated and trained personnel.
- The green / grass house and free facilities needs strengthening.
- There need to be developed a local society for interaction between the teachers and the taught and for the presentation of the interim findings.
- Interaction with farmers and other organizations needs strengthening.

### Major opportunities

- Funding seems to be coming forth adequately.
- AJK presents vast opportunities for agriculture development.
- The faculty has opportunities to interact national and internationally.

### Major challenges

- To project the department in the national and international scenario.
- The department could initiate its own good quality newsletter which should contain interim research findings.
- Research – education – extension linkage is the biggest challenge so that the university serves the interests of farmers.

### General recommendations

**Faculty development program** should be strengthened.

**Infrastructure** – hopefully the university gets its new campus.

**Library** – though adequate, yet there is always room for improvement and to acquire more and more literature.

**Budget** – currently adequate yet it has to be watched and stable resources exploited.

**Dissemination of information** – though the faculty publishes its findings through research forums yet there is urgent need for dissemination of technical information through local and English medium (Farming Outlook is one outlet).

**Departmental seminars** should be encouraged.

### **Recommendations**

The infrastructure is amicable and good. However, they need to yet develop a good greenhouse facility and a meeting room. We should encourage that the department arranges monthly seminars in which the faculty members present some of the latest developments in the field of soils and environment related to plant nutrition and soil conservation. However, the performance of the faculty is really good and needs encouragement. Some of the strengths and weaknesses having already been pointed out in the foregoing section, the committee recommends that the department be graded as X category (i.e. in the middle band – X2).

## **ACTIONABLE RECOMENDATIONS**

Some of the immediate actionable points emerged from the discussion are as under:

- Periodicals and journals for faculty and students
- More HEC opportunities, scholarships and financial aids
- Provision of more equipment and trained laboratory staff
- Develop green house facilities.

## **5. LIST OF ANNEXURES**

1. Evaluation Criteria and Program Ratings
2. TOR of the Committee

AIC Draft Report Visit on October 16-17, 2012

## 6. Evaluation Criteria for Agricultural Degree Programs

Sr. No	Criteria	Points Assigned	Points Awarded
<b>Major Criteria</b>			
1	Strength and Quality of Faculty	250	194
2	Curriculum Design and Development	150	112
3	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	200	135
4	Students Support and Progression	100	68
Sub-Total (a):		700	509
<b>Minor Criteria</b>			
5	Research and Consultancy Activities	150	101
6	Governance and Leadership	100	74
7	Recent Innovations and Best Practices	50	38
Sub-Total (b):		300	213
Grand Total (a+b):		1000	722

1. Prof. Dr. Safdar Ali  
Chairman, Department of Soil Science and S&WC  
PMAS Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi

Convener

2. Mr. Tahir Saleem,  
Ex. Chief/Project Director, NFDC, Islamabad

Member

