



AIC Report

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Introduction

University of Management and Technology was established as a project of the Institute of Leadership & Management (ILM) Trust. School of Professional Advancement (SPA) is one of the ten academic schools of the University of Management and Technology (UMT), Lahore. Currently, more than 100 different degree programs are being offered by the university. As a sub-unit of UMT, School of Professional Advancement (SPA) is offering 13 master degree programs including Master in Agribusiness. SPA is multi-disciplinary and participant-centered learning platform for people who have lifelong learning objectives. SPA offers professional education programs specifically designed for mid-career professionals and job seekers. The SPA has been established to provide a technological and professional base for upward mobility and professional growth of individuals who are engaged in various professional fields. It equips the participants with the critical and analytical skills and competencies required to sustain themselves in the dynamic corporate environment.

The Master of Agribusiness (MAB) program is an important offering of SPA which has attracted wide community of students who have agricultural background. The need for launching Master of Agribusiness is evident from the demographic, geographic and climactic challenges of Pakistan. This program aims to produce new generation of agricultural executives who will have the capacity to change the business landscape of agriculture.

MAB degree course was first offered in Fall-2010 with the approval of Academic Council and Consensus of 30 different agribusiness firms and institutions. Agribusiness Management Program has been started with the thorough consultation of major Agribusiness firms of Pakistan like Ali Akbar group, Auriga, Dairy solutions, K&Ns, Mitechal Farms, Sphire Dairy Farms, Nestle, Profarm, FMC, Pioneer and Monsanto. These firms not only support the program but also facilitate our graduates in provision of internships and jobs. The first batch of MAB has already graduated and all the students have secured good jobs in their last semester.

Master in Agribusiness is comprised of 20 courses of three (03) credit hours each besides two (02) projects of six (06) credit hours individually. Student of the programme supposed to take these projects as internship with any of the agro industries of Pakistan. It has been thought that the degree programme will cater the needs of Agricultural Business Executives for the future. This report will encompass the strength and weaknesses of the degree programme in order to realize its potential on the realm of existing educational facilities available with respect to agricultural sub-sector of the economy.

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Executive Summary

University of Management and Technology Lahore offers the degree of Master in Agribusiness. The programme seeks to impart training in the Conceptual and applied aspects of the Subject. A number of Courses are offered in diverse areas related to agribusiness. The Students are required to Complete research Projects in Collaboration of various agro-based enterprises. The Students admitted to the degree programme have no training/educational background in agriculture and related disciplines. The faculty entrusted with teaching various Subjects is generally comprised of people who do not have sufficient training/technical know-how, teaching and research experience in agribusiness. Most of the faculty is hired from agro-based enterprises and/or various Private Sectors Organizations. As Such, there is an acute dearth of regular teaching Staff in the department in the relevant field. The Department has the requisite infrastructure and other facilities to run the programme. However, there is strong need to hire regular teaching Staff in the discipline of Agribusiness and related areas to ensure continuity and success of the programme. The Curriculum requires revision and there is strong justification for adding new Courses, given recent trends of the market.

Curriculum Design And Development

- Training objectives of the degree program
- Core Courses
- Elective Courses
- Final Project
- Internship/Industrial Training
- Admission Policy and Requirements
- Academic Progress and Monitoring
- Student Development and Career Advice

**Draft Report on
Accreditation of Master in Agribusiness Degree Program
School of Professional Advancement (SPA)
University of Management & Technology (UMT), Lahore

Major Criteria (1-4)

1. Strength and Quality of Faculty

- Apparently 3-4 full time faculty members of the SPA are engaged in the subject degree program but it has been observed that only one full time faculty member is attached with the Master degree program in agribusiness. Hence, accessibility of all the faculty members to students is uncertain.
- The degree program is heavily relying upon visiting faculty members who do not have their academic/professional degrees in agribusiness. Their affiliation with agricultural related businesses is not enough to teach agribusiness related courses without having substantial knowledge of technical concepts and jargons, theories, laws and principles of agribusiness and marketing. Mere attachment with an agro-based industry does not qualify them to impart the subject matter to master level students.
- None of the faculty member holds Ph.D degree in the field of agribusiness.
- Hence, the degree program is seriously deficient in relevant faculty.

2. Curriculum Design and Development

- Following courses/subject matters are deficient in curricula of the degree program;
 - Factor Markets Analysis
 - Postharvest Losses and Management
 - Agricultural Finance
 - Food Marketing
 - Agricultural Production Systems of Pakistan
 - Agricultural Policy and Price Analysis
 - Agricultural Cooperatives and Management
 - Product Development and Value Chain Analysis

- Out of 16 foundation and core courses (48 credit hours) only five courses (15 hours) are agricultural specific. Hence, considering the title of the degree program, agribusiness may be given due weightage.
- Two Projects of six (6) credit hours each are good to train the students about applied aspects/problems in agribusinesses/industry. However, offering project in first semester is too early as students with diverse academic background are in the process of learning basics of the agribusiness and can not dwell well in the project reports. Therefore, sequence of offering courses may be reviewed.
- Specialization courses overwhelmingly focused on livestock which does not constitute whole of the agribusiness. Therefore, some other major areas may be added.
- Poultry is one of the leading segments of agro-industry of Pakistan. Hence, the subject matter may be adjusted in curriculum appropriately.
- Invited lectures of key entrepreneurs of agribusiness/industry and agriculture subject overall may be made a regular feature of the degree program.
- Evaluation of students through solitary final exam is not sufficient criterion and one mid term exam may be incorporated in order to assess students' academic strength and giving them ample time to make up, accordingly.
- While interacting with the students it appears that scheme of the degree program fails to acquaint students about their scope of job and application of their knowledge in real life.
- Curricula may be designed in such a way that instills entrepreneurial skill among the students rather than job seekers.

3. Infrastructure and Learning Resources

- Class rooms are fairly equipped, furnished and spacious.
- Faculty offices are adequate and satisfactory in condition.
- Library facility is available with annual resource allocation of Rs. 3.0 million
- On line access to HEC databases, PCTAS, etc. is available with back up power generation facility.

MINOR CRITERIA (5-7)

4. Students Support and Progression

- Transport and hostel facilities are available.
- Assistance in job placement is being provided to students.
- No mention about student recreational and medical facility.

5. Research and Consultancy

- Students are being provided opportunities to excel in agribusiness research under built-in “Project” activity in their curriculum. However, it is desirable that their research work be widely circulated and published.
- Internship/project provides an opportunity to students and teachers to identify problems/issues encountered by the relevant industry /agribusiness concerns.

6. Governance and Leadership

- Organizational structure is fairly good however there is a need to develop yearly calendar of events, invited lectures and visits to agribusiness enterprises located in different cities of the country.

7. Adoption of Good Practices

- Encouragement to students for taking project of agro-industry.
- Seeking affiliation with foreign universities and institutions.

SWOT ANALYSES:

Major Strengths:

- Excess to agro-industry people and establishments.
- Running more than 100 in campus different programs which provide ample opportunities to students to interact inter-program and think originally in devising their research projects.
- Fairly good infrastructural facilities.

Major Weaknesses:

- Shortage of trained full time faculty.
- Inadequately designed curriculum and selection of subject matter.
- Low accessibility of students to faculty members because of their visiting status than full-time.

Major Opportunities:

- Opportunities for increasing relevant faculty members.
- Opportunities to develop well crafted curricula and choice of topics/contents.
- Opportunities to undertake students' research projects with well reputed agro-industrial establishments.

Major Threats:

- Equivalence and competence of the subject degree with MBA in agribusiness degree awarded to students having B.Sc. (Hons) Agriculture degree.
- Competence of the students to compete with more specialized relevant degree programs being offered by other academic institutions.
- Low intake of students.

Final Recommendation:

- Full time specialized faculty in agricultural related sciences and/or agribusiness may be recruited. Their placement will enhance pure academic-teaching environment within the campus and flourish R&D culture.
- Heavy reliance on visiting faculty may be discouraged.
- Existing curriculum may be reviewed after induction of well qualified and trained faculty.
- Intake requirement of the degree program may be reviewed in order to bring it at par with other similar academic pursuits of the country. Alternately, some deficiency courses or zero semester may be offered.

Evaluation Criteria Weightage for Agriculture Degree Programs

Sr. No.	Program Evaluation Criteria	Points Assigned	Points Awarded
Major Criteria			
1	Strength and Quality of Faculty	200	70
2	Curriculum Design and Development	150	50
3	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	200	140
4	Students Support and progression	150	80
Sub - Total (a)		700	340
Minor Criteria			
5	Research and Consultancy Activities	150	80
6	Governance and Leadership	100	60
7	Recent Innovations and Best practices	50	25
Sub - Total (b)		300	165
Grand Total (a+b)		1000	505