



**PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORT**  
**Bachelor of Science Honours in Agricultural Technology and**  
**Management Degree Programme**  
**Faculty of Agriculture**  
**University of Peradeniya**  
**01.03.2020 to 05.03.2020**



**Review Panel:**

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**The Quality Assurance Council**  
**University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka**

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## Signature Page

1. University : **University of Peradeniya**
2. Faculty : **Agriculture**
3. Program : **Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Agricultural Technology and Management**
4. Review Panel  
Prof. G. Mikunthan (Chair)   
Prof. K L Wasantha Kumara   
Prof. Rohini Samarasinghe 
5. Date : 10.04.2020

## Section 1: Introduction to the programme

The University of Ceylon was established as the first university in Sri Lanka in 1942 with four Faculties' viz. Arts, Oriental Studies, Science, and Medicine. In 1952, the university administration was transferred to Peradeniya located in the Central Province approximately 6 km from the City of Kandy. The location selected in Peradeniya bears lush greenery vegetation and mist-clad mountains giving a lustrous and charming atmosphere. In 1967, the University of Ceylon divided, separating the University of Ceylon-Peradeniya as an entity confined to Peradeniya. In 1978, it was named the University of Peradeniya (UoP). At present, the University has 9 Faculties such as Agriculture, Allied Health Sciences, Arts, Dental Sciences, Engineering, Management, Medicine, Science, and Veterinary Medicine & Animal Science.

The University has about 700 hectares of land and the developed area covers approximately 130 hectares which occupies buildings of the faculties, halls of residence, staff bungalows, student's sports and recreational facilities, etc. All the places of religious worship exist within the University at different locations. It has an established Health Centre with physical and human resources with two ambulances giving a 24-hour service. The Health Centre is involved in collecting and removal of wastes and their management.

### Vision

The vision of the University is to be a centre of excellence in higher education with national, regional and global standing.

### Mission

The University of Peradeniya strives to offer globally recognized knowledge and education to knowledge seekers at undergraduate, postgraduate and non-graduate levels and deliver education, training and research programs by conducting professional and curriculum-based teaching and learning and conduct high quality research for national, regional and global needs whilst maintaining highest levels of efficiency, effectiveness, integrity and transparency in contributing to the development of a knowledge-based society.

### Goals of the University

1. Quality and relevance of all undergraduate & postgraduate programs in the University, enhanced to achieve international recognition in higher education.
2. Developed resources to enhance the quality of research contributing to the national and international requirements available.
3. Administrative and financial efficiency within the framework of corporate governance enhanced.
4. Opportunities for a wider range of educational programs to contribute to the development of a knowledge-based society increased.
5. Physical & human resources to offer a conducive and aesthetic environment for academic pursuits enhanced.

In pursuance of the policy in 1949, the first batch of students of Agriculture was enrolled in 1949 under the Faculty of Science. Hence the Faculty of Agriculture (UoA) of the University of Peradeniya has a 70-year history in higher education in Sri Lanka. It consists of eight departments of studies such as Crop Science, Animal Science, Agricultural Engineering, Agricultural Economics & Business Management, Agricultural Biology, Agricultural Extension, Food Science & Technology, and Soil Science. Further it has a residential sub-campus in Mahalluppallama for enhancing hands on training & community engagement, as well as three experimental stations/farms and an English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) to support its academic programme. It has three main outreach arms namely the Agri-Business Centre, Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, and Agricultural Education Centre. The Department of Agricultural Extension is unique, existing only at this Faculty in Sri Lanka.

The Faculty's mission is to strive for excellence in education, research and outreach in the agriculture sector for sustainable development. Service excellence, leadership, collaboration, adaptability and innovation are their shared values which have remarkably contributed to its stable growth and development and is comprehensively given in its publication "Milestones of Faculty of Agriculture (1946-2019)".

The Faculty is equipped with professionally qualified staff viz. 105 permanent academic staff, of which 35 are Professors (Senior/Professors/Associate) and 74 holds PhDs obtained from various internationally recognized universities. The Faculty also has 50 Temporary and 109 Academic support staff. The administration is empowered with the existence of a Senior Assistant Registrar and an Assistant Bursar. It has a branch Library which is used by both the undergraduates and the postgraduate students of Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture and an ICT Unit to cater to the needs of the students.

The Faculty offers three degree programs of which the Bachelor of Science in Agricultural Technology and Management was launched in 2006 and enrolled 192 students in 2019. It is credited with releasing results within two months complying with the UGC guidelines and the duration of the study program is maintained as 4 years. Graduates of this program have many avenues to secure their employment and it is reported that 94% of the graduates are employed.

Table 1. The number of students in the Faculty/programme at present- the breakdown in years:

Years	Academic year	Male	Female	Total
Firstyear	2017/2018	59	114	173
Secondyear	2016/2017	89	125	214
Thirdyear	2015/2016	55	88	143
Fourthyear	2014/2015	53	91	144
Total		256 (38%)	418 (62%)	674

Table 2. The maximum number of students enrolled in the last four years:

Year	Number of Students enrolled	Dropouts due to upgrading to other programs
2013/2014	192	32
2012/2013	162	15
2011/2012	159	11
2010/2011	177	06
2009/2010	183	07

Table 3. Numbers graduated from the programme over the past five years:

Year	Academic Program	Male	Female	Total
2019	2013/2014	46	101	147
2018	2012/2013	66	78	144
2017	2011/2012	57	88	145
2016	2010/2011	60	101	161
2015	2009/2010	62	102	164
Total		291 (38%)	470 (62%)	761

### Graduate Profile

The Faculty has a clear Graduate Profile outlining the necessary knowledge, skills and appropriate attitudes that best fit into the BSc (Honours) in Agricultural Technology and Management degree programme. It clearly identifies the capability of the graduates, making significant contributions to overall development, and to issues related to agriculture and allied activities.

The transformation of the degree in Agriculture into a degree in Agricultural Technology and Management in 2006, was an innovative and timely decision to emerge into a new window in the UGC admission criteria emphasizing the need for technology and management in agriculture. Having this idea, it was then decided by the UGC to introduce technology disciplines in many other universities. However, the Faculty identified that emergence of agriculture based technological disciplines have become a threat to their degree programme. The Graduate Profile was developed based on the SLQF and the SBS for Agriculture, and reflects the objectives of the degree program, synchronizing with the goals of the University and ultimately strengthening the mission and vision of the University of Peradeniya.

## Section 2: Review team observations on SER

The preparation of the SER was supervised by the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya and coordinated by a 3 member SER writing team appointed by the Faculty Board of Agriculture. The Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC) was given the responsibility of developing the action plan for the program review process and subsequently appointed eight sub-committees to work on the eight quality criteria. The SER writing team has received adequate training on “SER writing” through workshops and they were able to sufficiently communicate with sub-committee conveners to monitor the progress of activities.

The program review was an agenda item at meetings of the FB and FQAC throughout the process. Regular meetings were held by each subcommittee to collect evidence and address quality standards in preparing the SER. A satisfactory approach has been taken by the Faculty to make everyone aware of the PR, SER writing, and quality assurance process. The draft SER was reviewed by FQAC members, SER writing team, and members of sub committees and presented to the members of the Faculty board to obtain additional feedback. The final report was presented to a special Faculty Board to obtain its approval for submission.

The SER is comprehensive and well written to address all quality standards according to each criterion, that made it very convenient for the review team to undertake the desk evaluation. It was written following the PR manual where most of the evidences given were relevant to the PR manual instructions. The SER consisted of an in-depth SWOT analysis which enhanced the quality of the report.

The attempt to make academic and non-academic staff aware of the PR process, in addition to creating awareness among students and all categories of staff, was commendable. It was observed that academic, academic support, non-academic staff, and students were aware of the Program Review (PR) process and the SER writing team was able to obtain adequate support from all these categories. Further, the support from more senior academic members who were experts on quality assurance for SER writing was noteworthy and this was evident while reading the well written SER. All academic, non-academic members, alumni, and students were highly cooperative with the review team during the review process.

The review team acknowledges the Dean’s cooperation and flexibility in inviting participants to the meetings, having a gender balance and especially representing all ethnic, religious and batches of students. Adequate time was given in the daily site visit schedule to peruse the evidence, even till 6.00 pm. The site visit schedule was finalized by incorporating all the sections by giving priority for perusing the evidence in support of the SER. The evidence was perused in such a way that at least two reviewers had seen the evidence while the third reviewer had gone through the evidence of other criteria allocated at a time. The evidence was arranged in order and clear identifications were given in the folders of each standard. In addition, original documents such as the publications of the Faculty, books published by staff members and the materials produced by students through the programs organized by the Agribusiness Centre, were also displayed. A summary of the list of evidence was printed and displayed for easy reference. The review team appreciates the efforts taken by the Dean and his team for making such arrangements including logistics. The extensive cooperation extended by the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Director/IQAU and especially Dean, Coordinator of FQAC, SER writing team, staff members, students, stakeholders

helped us to expedite the task conveniently and meaningfully. A special word of thanks to the Coordinator of FQAC, who stayed patiently with the review team throughout the site visit, collecting attendance sheets of all meetings, scanning and writing a CD, not missing any photographs and important documents provided for reference.

### **Section 3: Description of the review process**

The reviewers [Prof. G. Mikunthan (Chair), Prof. K. L. Wasantha Kumara (Member) and Prof. D. S. RohiniSamarasinghe (Member)] were given 4 weeks for ‘Desk Evaluation’ of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) on BSc (Honours) Agricultural Technology and Management Degree programme of the Faculty of Agriculture, UoP. Final remarks of the ‘Desk Evaluation’ for each standard of each criterion were discussed among the team members at the pre-site visit meeting on 02 August 2019 at the UGC Auditorium. A schedule was prepared for the four- day site visit (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020) and the Dean and FQAC Coordinator of the Faculty of Agriculture, UoP was informed

The program review panel commenced its review process on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020, with the Chair of the review team visiting the sub-campus at Mahalluppallama and with the pre-review meeting at Hotel Oak Ray Regency in Kandy at 7.30pm. The review process commenced on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020. During the period of review, the review team met with the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dean/FoA, Director/IQAU, Coordinator/ FQAC, Director/SDC, Director/ CGU, Academic staff including Proctor, Deputy Proctors, Student counsellors, Academic Sub Wardens of the Faculty, Librarian & Library staff of the FoA, Medical Officer of the University Health Centre, Administrative staff of FoA, academic support staff of the Faculty and farms, ELTU staff, technical officers of the FoA, members of the alumni association, and undergraduates of the Faculty (The complete list of meetings is given in Annexure I, the participants in Annexure II & the selected photos as evidence in Annexure III).

#### **Site Visit**

The review team visited the FoA, UoP on Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> March at 8.00am and concluded the review at 3.30pm on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The coordinator/FQAC and the Dean of the FoA warmly welcomed the review team and facilitated the review process by arranging all documentary evidence in order.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2020, the meetings started at 8.00am with the introduction of the review team to the Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Director/ IQAU at the Senate Room of UoP by Dean and FQAC Coordinator of FoA. The review team explained the purpose of the visit and the Vice Chancellor explained his views about the QA process. Next, Director/IQAU made a presentation on the present ranking of the university, academic and non-academic cadre and its issues, and then presented documents such as By-Laws, Strategic Plan, Operational Plans with targets and level of achievements. The IQAU was established in 2016 and obtained EQA support for accreditation, Licensing and Qualification & Standardization. All documents and policy manuals are uploaded on the IQAU website.

#### **Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC) of FoA**

The review team visited the FQAC and discussed the quality assurance aspects and staff engagement of the QA process. The FQAC has been established with a coordinator and provided important policy documents and guidelines for implementation of the quality culture in the Faculty. The activities of QA have been identified as a compulsory agenda item at the Faculty Board

meetings. All necessary documents such as the organogram and policy documents are nicely arranged in this room and uploaded in the IQAU website.

### **Meeting with Dean and the Staff of the FoA**

The review team met the Dean and members of the FoA at 9.00am in the Faculty board room and the Dean presented an overview of the FoA, respective study programs and structure of the B.Sc. AgTech&Mgtstudy program, highlighting how it grooms students, Faculty Quality Assurance Cell, and preparation of the SER Report. The presentation was very comprehensive and informative to the review team. The strength of the Faculty is shown by both human resources and physical resources (MI Sub Campus, Dodangolla Experimental Station, Livestock Field Station, Mawela–Udaperadeniya, Meewathura), with outreach arms especially unique to them.

### **Meeting with the staff of the FoA**

The meeting was held only with the Faculty staff in the permanent cadre excluding the Dean and HODs of the Faculty. The review team discussed QA aspects and the Teaching-Learning process with the staff. This meeting revealed that academic members have a clear awareness of the QA process and maintains a good rapport with the Dean and Heads of Departments. It was evident that student progression, innovations in teaching and learning, research and academic collaborations with national/international organizations and community outreach programs by students and the staff are in place. There was no gender-based harassment and grievances of academic members. The participation of academic staff for all meetings (the first meeting and debriefing with academics) with the review team was very high.

In addition to the permanent cadre, the review team had a separate meeting with temporary academic staff (Temporary Assistant Lecturers/Demonstrators) and discussed their understanding and contribution to the QA activities. The young academic staff revealed that they concentrate more on teaching and learning activities in practical classes. Many of them are engaged in student counselling and hostel management as sub-wardens. Contribution towards research was found to be more joint research with senior academics and international collaborations. They are offered induction programs on QA at the beginning.

### **Meeting with Administrative staff**

The meeting with administrative staff of the University, Registrar, Bursar, DRs, SARs, SAB, AB, and Works Engineer indicated that they have been doing their duties without much difficulty. The review team realized that administrative staff in the Faculty maintain a good rapport with the staff and students. The examination unit of the Faculty has not been fully computerized yet. The Bursar faces some issues regarding urgent requests for money from academic staff, delayed payments, and not having the authority to handle all the money. The administrative staff requested to provide more ongoing training programs relevant to their management operations.

### **Meeting with Directors of Centres**

The discussion with three Directors of the main outreach arms (namely Agri-Business Centre, Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, and Agricultural Education Centre) revealed that those centres provide strong practical knowledge through farm community programs, short term extension programs at national and international level, business creation and entrepreneurship courses to strengthen students' learning and research capacity, to improve the quality of the study programs. This setup was identified as one of the best practices in the Faculty. However, the centres were highly engaged in invention and innovation rather than venture creation. There were no established incubator/s.

### **Meeting with Proctors & Students Counselors**

The review team had a discussion with the Proctor, Deputy Proctor, and Student Counsellors. The Faculty has established a Student Advisory & Welfare Committee (SAWC) with 25 members under the SAWC Director. It is a very proactive one. It conducts orientation programs on the 1<sup>st</sup> day for newcomers, provides support for students' emotional issues especially in English Language, IT, and health problems through strengthening the student-staff relationship. Students are guided by counselors and there is a separate time period each Friday in their timetable. In addition, the Faculty provides a counseling booklet on the very first day in their orientation package including all internal and external counselors' information to contact them without delay.

The Faculty has a Rag Prevention Committee and Hardship Fund scholarships for needy students under the welfare unit.

### **Meeting with Students and Students' Societies**

Discussion with students (1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> years) attached to the B.Sc.AgTech & Mgt., FoA revealed that they are all satisfied with the teaching and learning activities with the available facilities. They are also highly satisfied with the In-Plant Training program and internship arrangements made by the Faculty at national and international level. Students appreciated the academic staff commitment, counseling and their relations with the students. Students are aware of the QA system in Sri Lankan HEIs and the importance of it.

The discussion provided information on students' progression and their extra-curricular activities such as cultural events and community outreach activities. Students organize social and cultural events throughout the year. More events are funded by the Faculty outreach arms other than students fundraising programs. However, few students are involved in sports activities. The evidence reveals that students are engaged in outbound training activities designed by each department.

### **Meeting with Alumni Members**

The review team met about 32 members of alumni. They were highly satisfied as graduates of the Faculty and they were very enthusiastic in responding to the queries of review team. They proposed to update the curriculum based on the changing global and national trends, allocate more time for industrial training, undertake more collaborative research between industry and the Faculty, and recruit industrial mentors, rather than academic mentors, to provide assistance and positive attitudes of work for undergraduates. Alumni also expressed their willingness to serve in any committees, to

contribute towards the best fit of the program into the current global need. The review team encouraged the Alumni Association to do more interactive programs with the Faculty.

### **Meeting with Library Staff**

The team visited the Agricultural Library and it is conducive to all students and staff. It provides inter loan library facilities and plagiarism checking software for the Faculty while professionally operating the library. The librarian coordinates many academic activities (*i.e.* information literacy course) with students, academic members and other administrators of the Faculty. The library committee meetings have been conducted regularly. There is a sub-committee engaged in the QA works. They have grievances about insufficient servers to upload more information such as digital resources to their stakeholders and expect a separate server to enhance the services. However, electronic databases are not fully provided to the staff and students at present. In addition, the main library of the university offers services to the Faculty.

### **Meeting with IT Unit & Technical Officers**

The Faculty has a separate computer unit and it is equipped with 90 computers for the students. These facilities are shared by eight departments in the Faculty and it was revealed that these facilities should be expanded. However, they get extended facilities from the university's main computer centre. The Faculty makes possible more web-based learning by uploading learning materials through the "e-HUB", which provides an excellent service to the students. Technical offices are satisfied with their work and offer significant services to all the departments in the Faculty.

### **English Teaching Unit (ETU)**

The review team visited the ETU and had a lengthy discussion with its staff of five qualified young academic members. They expected to have ongoing training programs to provide better services to the students. They provide 2 non-credit courses in the program and provide more support for students to overcome their learning-based issues and terminologies in agriculture and management fields. However, there is no 'Gavel Club' or 'Toastmaster' programs for students to actively engage in and improve their leadership and communication skills.

### **The Career Guidance Unit (CGU)**

The Faculty has a separate unique CGU. The Director of CGU organizes various career development activities for the Faculty. Student ambassadors from each department of the Faculty work as messengers of the CGU and they maintain the 'Career Hub' website to inform all programs and activities conducted by the CGU. The Faculty has established the "Robarosiya Society" to identify training needs of the students as well. Career guidance programs for the students have considered the need assessment and students' request as well. The CGU conducts programs such as career skills development, communication and leadership skills development, CV writing, mock interviews, Job Fair, competition for Business Plan writing, ethical harmony programs, etc. Students

can register for these programs through the Career Hub. However, the CGU faces some budget issues and staff problems during their operations, and it was found that some of the activities are organized through external support.

### **Staff Development Centre (SDC)**

The review team visited the SDC which has separate modern buildings with centralized programs for all staff of the university. The Director, who is also from the FoA, coordinates all staff development programs and each Faculty shares the funds. It has provided ongoing induction programs for academic staff and other relevant courses based on the needs of each Faculty. Non-academics programs are funded by the university. However, there were no tailor-made courses and therefore, the review team was of the view that tailor made courses for the benefit of the university staff should be arranged.

### **University Health Centre (UHC)**

The UHC provides proper health services to students and all academic and non-academic staff as a small hospital. It provides a 24-hour service for students and staff and the average number of out-patients for a day is 125. The medical centre has 4 medical offices, 9 nurses, 2 PHIs, 3 drivers for 2 Ambulances with in-patient ward facilities for 25 persons (10 males and 15 females), dispensary, pharmacy and laboratory facilities, etc. The Center provides First-Aid training programs, health and educational programs, environmental and waste management programs for students. It also provides free of charge, medical testing support for sports students. One medical officer has been assigned to the Dengue control program, Canteens and Hostels inspection programs. It is evident that physical wellbeing is perfectly looked after, but no professional Psycho-Socio counselors are available at present. In addition, dental facilities are not available while, differently abled students do not have adequate access to the health Centre.

### **Observing Teaching Sessions, Practical Sessions & facilities**

The review team had the opportunity to observe teaching sessions of two lecturers. The lecture rooms have adequate modern facilities with a large space to accommodate more than 300 students in each batch. The lecturers used multimedia aids to deliver their lectures. The academic staff uploads lecture materials through Agrie-Hub/LMS prior to the lectures and all students bring hard copies of the lecture notes to the lecture hall. However, the team observed that the large group lecture sessions were more based on teacher-centered learning in the observed classes. The exam hall is well designed and furnished to accommodate nearly 300 students at one time.

The review team also observed the students' practical sessions in laboratories. Students are divided into small groups for lab sessions and rotate with 9-10 assistant lectures/demonstrators in an effective way. The laboratory spaces are adequate, but some instruments and facilities are inadequate to provide proper laboratory work. Further, the review team visited the Livestock Field Station at UdaPeradeniya and observed one of the practical sessions where students were engaged in small group activities. Students are actively engaged in these sessions and are fully satisfied with their practical work. Two international students (one from Nepal & the other from Africa) also

participated. Laboratory and farm based practical sessions are clear evidence for student-centered teaching sessions during the site visits.

In addition to above visits, after discussing with the Dean/Agriculture, the Chairman of the review team visited Mahailuppallamasub-campus on his way to the University on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2020 and observed the facilities and had discussions with the staff in-charge, Marshal, sub-warden and students to obtain a the clear picture of its operation.

### **Sports, Canteen and Hostels**

Sports facilities including indoor and outdoor games, playground, swimming pool, gymnasium, accessibility to physical fitness and exercise machines are adequate & standard. These sports facilities provide sufficient opportunities for the students to develop their sports talents and physical fitness. Meeting with students revealed that they hardly engage in sports activities and therefore, in order to build stable and balanced agri-tech professionals, the Faculty should encourage students to use available facilities and engage in different sports activities.

Very good canteen facilities are available to the students in hostels and students are also satisfied with those facilities.

## Section 4: Overview of the Faculty's approach to quality and standards

The Review team observed that at the University level the IQAU was established in 2016, which is the apex body for creating awareness, assisting, planning and implementing quality assurance, and is the coordinating body with the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the UGC. It has 9 FQACs representing each of the 9 Faculties. However, the IQAU was not included in the University's Organogram found in its website. Further, the composition of the IQAU Management Committee that appears in the website, does not include representation from the three existing postgraduate institutes (PGIA, PGIS & PGIHSS) or their IQACs in its quality enhancement system. When it was pointed out at the discussion, the positive response of the Vice-Chancellor and Deputy Vice-Chancellor in agreeing to include their representations showed their enthusiasm and commitment to strengthen the quality enhancement system at the university level. The role played by the Director of the IQAU, to enhance the quality assurance system by having workshops and seminars for the staff and students and especially transforming all the degree programs into the SLQF, is appreciated.

The office of the IQAU is next to the Vice-Chancellor's office in the Senate Building and is equipped with adequate physical resources and supported by a Staff Assistant to assist with the work. The IQAU was established as per the UGC's Circular and it has developed a draft of its By-Laws which are still under discussion. Quality Assurance is incorporated in the Corporate/Strategic Plans of the University. The IQAU has implemented many activities by conducting workshops especially awareness programs on the SLQF and coordinating writing of the SER.

It is noteworthy that the University has the expertise to enrich the culture of quality within, since its own senior staff members were three former Directors of the QAAC and incredibly all were from this Faculty. The review team observed the Vice-Chancellor's and Deputy Vice-Chancellor's passion and timely action towards ensuring quality education by giving importance to the establishment and functioning of the IQAU and supporting all of its activities. It was also indicated in the website that currently the University is ranked number 1 among Sri Lankan Universities based on many ranking systems, due to their commitment and adherence to quality standards in their governance and management, ensuring quality education.

The team observed the good practices adopted by the Faculty to assure higher standards of academic quality of the B.Sc. (Hons) AgTech&Mgt degree program. It has 105 academic staff out of an existing cadre of 136, of which 70.4% are with PhDs and 33.6% are Professors. The Faculty's credibility in promoting new areas of knowledge is witnessed by training 94.5% PhDs from leading universities abroad. This outstanding staff strength enabled the Faculty's governance and management being decentralized, through having highly qualified senior staff members in the Faculty's Standing Sub-Committees ensuring the culture of high quality at various levels. Equally, it has 250 non-academic staff to support its quality education. The Faculty offers 3 Honours degree programs and the workload of the academic and non-academic staff members is shared conveniently.

The IQAU is working in collaboration with the Faculty Quality Assurance Cell (FQAC), which was established as per the UGC circular in 2015. Curriculum development, revision, and implementation are looked after by the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC), which is a long standing sub Committee of the Faculty and quality assurance is a major concern of the CDC.

The Chairman of the CDC is a member in the FQAC Committee. Similarly, the Faculty has 10 other Faculty sub-committees to decentralize the work load with the involvement and commitment of highly qualified academic staff. The FQAC is headed by a dynamic coordinator who is a senior staff member of the Faculty. The academic staff, administrative staff, non-academic staff, and students are well aware of the quality assurance activities within the institution that are implemented by IQAU, FQAC, and CDC.

All Faculty Sub-Committees contributed towards the improvement of quality standards of the Faculty and the degree program. The commitment, teamwork and concern of the Dean/Faculty of Agriculture, Heads of Departments, and Coordinator/FQAC towards sustaining quality enhancement, planning & implementation of activities are highly commendable.

The Review team is impressed that the Faculty staff members cooperated well with the FQAC in gathering documentary evidence and arranging them in an orderly and easy manner, facilitating the reviewers to peruse the evidence without much difficulty. In addition, original documents including books written by staff members, and outcomes of the students' engagement in innovative product development were also displayed and a summary of all the documentary evidence was printed on a banner and displayed, for easy reference. The SER writing team members were very cooperative and was present throughout the period when evidence was perused. The Coordinator of the FQAC was with the review team, organizing all the meetings, getting attendance of the participants, and assisting to peruse the documents and his commitment to these tasks is highly appreciated. A few of the SER writing team and temporary staff members were present in rotation with the review team throughout and provided required documentary information for any clarifications on the evidence for a few standards. It must be noted that all the staff members were aware of the quality assurance process and the purpose of the Program review.

The Faculty has a Sub Campus, established in 1968, at Mahailuppallama in the Anuradhapura district, which is situated 128 km away from the main campus and is within the Fields Crops Research and Development Institute which carries out research on dry zone agriculture, In-Service Training Institute, Office of Seed Certification Service, Seed Production farm and Farm Mechanization Research and Training Centre of the Department of Agriculture. This 25ha residential campus has all the facilities for teaching, research and outreach activities and especially provides access for effective community engagement as a part of the degree program. First year students are trained in this campus, to understand the principles together with practical knowledge, through memorable hands-on experiences in groups. This is a real practical experience and exposure for them, encouraging interest to continue their studies comfortably. The Campus has adequately spaced administration sections, a museum, an auditorium, classrooms, branch library, and computer unit, sports facilities with a ground, canteen, hostels and a field equipped with a net house. Two vehicles are stationed for their mobility and it has an Officer-in Charge, a Marshal and other officials to provide a safe and harmonious environment for the students who commence their studies with a positive mindset. Community engagement programs are organized for the students to associate with the surrounding farming community and to understand their challenges and to propose solutions. In addition, the Faculty also has three other farms with crops and livestock to enrich practical learning in their program.

The Faculty initiated outcome-based education and student-centered learning into the degree program while designing it in 2006 and it was further strengthened by improving a few sections of

the curriculum in 2012 producing able graduates with high employability of 94%. This was monitored by the CDC and reported to the Faculty Board, discussed and the necessary actions were taken. The students who passed out from this program have necessary life skills, which in turn evolved into a standalone tertiary quality education in agricultural technology and management. This uniqueness set a landmark to be a separate window in enrollment of the students to the Agricultural technology and Management.

The University has a well-established library with a valuable collection of books, periodicals and other teaching resources and it was further strengthened by having branch libraries especially for agriculture. This branch library is meant for agriculture related subjects targeting undergraduate and postgraduate students. E-based referencing is made possible through the branch library and it caters to all students of the B.Sc. (Hons) AgTech&Mgt and postgraduate students of the PGIA, UoP.

Usage of the LMS is maximized in teaching, learning and assessment of courses, and a blended learning experience is highly utilized through Agrie-Hub by the staff and students. Several student-support mechanisms are in existence which provides academic support to the students facing difficulties in IT and English. Mentoring programs including Academic and Career Counseling are done effectively through well designed mechanisms. Psychosocial counselling is also done by having trained staff counsellors for the students who are in need. Issues of differently abled students are addressed by the FB through a disability act of the University and new buildings have provisions for their mobility.

Student assessments are carried out as per the examinations By-Laws of the University and subsequently the Manual of Procedures for Preparations and Conduct of Examinations, which was compiled in 2019. It is noteworthy that results were released on time perhaps within two months as per the UGC Circular and all these processes are found in line with the SLQF.

The review team noted that FoA of UoP follows a mechanism of scrutinizing the examination papers ensuring high quality and procedures to maintain fairness and transparency of student assessment. Students have opportunities to go through the marking of the answer scripts by consulting the respective Heads of Departments except for the end semester answer scripts. The Faculty adopts the UGC Circular 978 dated 9.04.2012 giving provisions for re-scrutinizing the marks and grades of undergraduates. Second Marking is not practiced which hastens the evaluation process, enabling the release of results within 3 months. Alternatively, if answer scripts are also made available to students through some mechanisms to check the figures to avoid any human errors in calculation or transferring the marks within the scripts, it will be much appreciated.

The Faculty has a definite mechanism through which the Faculty Research Committee encourages staff to engage in high quality research. Research publications were summarized in two volumes titled Decades of Research (from 1948-2009 & 2009-2018), which highlighted 17 staff patents, many Presidential Awards, 40 MoUs signed with local and foreign institutions and many international collaborations. In addition, students are trained in quality research by assigning highly specialized staff in various disciplines based on their choice of disciplines, offering selected courses and seminars to enrich their knowledge in conducting research, provision of presenting their findings at the Faculty organized undergraduate research conference. The Faculty is credited with 3 undergraduate patents, hosting an exhibition in 2018 and enabling a few students of the Agribusiness Centre to visit institutions abroad including IRRI.

In order to strengthen professional skills among students, specific training is conducted on Life-skills (during 1<sup>st</sup> semester), team working skills & leadership development (from 1<sup>st</sup> semester), portfolio development (from 3<sup>rd</sup> semester), In-plant training (four weeks during long vacations) and communication and presentation skills (from 1<sup>st</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> semester) at various levels of the degree program. These trainings are assessed and every student is expected to perform at a satisfactory level to be eligible to obtain the degree.

The review team also noted that most of the recommendations of the IR held in 2003 and 2016 appropriate to the Faculty, and Subject Reviews of six departments held from 2005 to 2008 were implemented. As a result, the Faculty had initiated the quality enhancement system well ahead and developed a clear graduate profile with five broad ILOs for the core program in B.Sc. (Honours) in AgTech&Mgt, with a view to producing graduates who can fit readily into the world of work.

## **Section 5: Judgment on the eight criteria of Programme Review**

### **Criterion 1: Programme Management**

This criterion deals with the procedures, guidelines and mechanisms of program management. The organizational structure given in the organogram of the Faculty clearly specifies the effective management of the Faculty and is strongly supported by the structure, Strategic/Action Plan, governance and management procedures, ensuring the quality delivery of services. By-Laws relating to examinations and disciplinary procedures are clearly defined and well informed to the students during their enrollment. The Program Prospectus, Student's handbook, and Students Guide Book with all the essential information are provided to all new entrants during orientation.

#### **Strengths:**

- Has a strong organizational structure for effective management to execute curriculum revision, student support, research and outreach activities.
- Action Plan is up to date, well designed and monitored in alignment with the University's Corporate Plan, thus reflecting the Faculty's readiness to accommodate innovative initiatives for progressive development.
- Commitment to improving governance and management with decentralized mechanisms.
- Compliance with national and institutional AR, FR, SOPs, By-Laws of the University, Manual of Procedures, and circulars.
- Stakeholder consultation through a participatory approach through formal and informal mechanisms.
- Practice and adherence to the annual academic calendar and completion of the program on time.
- Maintenance of up to date website giving all the information including all the publications.
- Conduct of induction programs to familiarize students with the university environment and all information made available in the Faculty Prospectus, Student Guide Book, By-Laws, Student Charter, updated information on staff & graduate profile of the program.
- Existence of a secure system to maintain records of the students and staff, with provision to backup all files.

- Program operation is empowered with ICT and the Faculty database is linked with MIS.
- Clear and well-informed work norms, list of duties, and codes of practice for all categories in compliance with national/institutional guidelines.
- Performance appraisal system operates through annual increment reports, research awards, and awarding grants.
- Student engagement is facilitated through a Student Forum and many committees & student Societies/boards, giving chances to the student voices.
- Strong academic and research collaboration with national and international institutions through MoUs.
- By-Laws pertaining to examinations, student discipline and guidelines for student unions are available to both staff and students.
- Students with special needs are supported by the Disability Act of the University and Faculty which assists these students with special care.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Student events of the Faculty are not incorporated into the annual academic calendar to facilitate student involvement and to plan well ahead and execute events.
- Updated contact numbers of Counselors (who are familiar with mental illnesses) are not included in the Counselling Booklet in the docket of freshers, student guide book and the website (emergency section) and lack of a Centre for Counseling.
- There is no award for the Best Teacher.
- Gender balance is not maintained in selecting students to the Faculty Board and other committees.

### **Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources**

The Faculty's staff strength is remarkable with 92 % of the academic staff having postgraduate qualifications with 35 Professors (Senior/Professors/Associate) and 41 in the category of Senior Lecturer (Gr I & Gr II). Also, the Faculty has an adequate number of non-academic staff with the support of an adequate number of temporary academic and academic supporting staff.

All departments, including the massive building complex of the Department of Animal Science are well equipped with adequate facilities to improve skills of students. However, access for physically handicapped students to old buildings need to be addressed. The three research farms and MI sub campus provide adequate support to improve practical skills of undergraduates.

Library facilities adequately support the degree program with the Faculty's own library and the main library, while the Career Guidance Unit supports improvement of career development skills of undergraduates, along with the support of the English Language Teaching Unit (ELTU) and

indoor and outdoor sports facilities. The facilities at the university health centre and canteens provide a conducive environment for the students to undertake the academic program effectively.

### **Strengths:**

- Academic staff involved in the program are highly qualified (70% holding PhDs) with a postgraduate qualification in a diverse range of specialties.
- The program is supported by a sufficient number of administrative and non-academic staff.
- The number of temporary staff is satisfactory and their service is enhanced through implementation of an induction program.
- Career development of students are assured and improvement of other skills are supported by units such as CGU, ELTU, along with a number of student societies
- The lecture rooms, laboratory facilities, and examination halls are very well designed to cater to large groups and are shared by different academic entities within the Faculty
- The student welfare facilities including hostels, canteen, common room, sports and facilities for other recreational activities are found to be adequate, taking into consideration the student intake
- The use of ICT is well supported by adequate services such as online learning platforms, Wi-Fi facilities, *etc.*
- The agricultural farms (Udaperadeniya, Dangolla, Meewathura), and the MI sub campus have adequate facilities to improve practical skills
- The Agribusiness Centre, Agricultural Biotechnology Centre, Agriculture Education Unit, and Community Development Unit provide adequate support to run the program effectively.

### **Weaknesses:**

- There is a delay in filling academic cadres (17 cadre positions are to be filled out of 132).
- A digital archive supported by a server, is not available for faculty library books.
- Though there were no complaints made by students, computer facilities appear to be inadequate to cater to approximately 300 students enrolled in the 3 degree programs.
- Support for students with physical disability is minimum especially in old buildings.

### **Criterion 3: Program Design and Development**

The B.Sc (Honours) in AgTech&Mgt reflects the UoP's vision, mission, goals and Faculty's mission. It was redesigned from an emphasis on agriculture, based on the SBS, to an emphasis on technology and management components, to cater to the need of the state and private sector of this country. The CDC is the biggest and oldest sub-committee of the Faculty, established in 1986, which has more than 40 members for recommending any changes in the curriculum to the FB and Senate and monitoring and implementation. After the introduction of the degree program in 2006, a minor revision was made to the existing curriculum in 2012 and is now in compliance with the SLQF. This curriculum is outcome based and blended learning is incorporated to impart knowledge, life skills and positive attitudes as a result of which almost all graduates are employed within 6 months of graduation. Students are engaged in a variety of learning activities that encourages them to be diverse, flexible and accessible not only in learning but also in securing jobs.

### **Strengths:**

- The B.Sc. (Hons) in AgTech&Mgt is designed and developed according to the Vision of the University and Mission of the Faculty and to address national needs.
- The Faculty has revised its B.Sc. (Hons) in AgTech&Mgt degree curriculum to ensure that the study program offered is in line with the SLQF requirements and the SBS.
- The degree program has a clear graduate profile and design appropriate for the teaching, learning and assessment plan in line with the program ILOs.
- Outcome Based Education methods are clearly reflected in teaching, learning and an assessment which are aligned with the course ILOs.
- The program has a compulsory In-plant Training Program, Industry based Internship Program and Rural Immersion Program at international level to enrich the curriculum.
- The program has a compulsory research project with a 6 credit value in line with SLQF requirements.
- Gender issues, cultural and social diversity are integrated into the course curriculum.
- Supplementary and complementary courses (short term training workshops, outbound training at national and international level) offered by the ABC, AgBC, AEU and various students societies.
- The Faculty has initiated a special ELTU that conducts two noncredit courses in English.
- Academic programs are adequately reviewed by the CDC.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Frequency of curriculum revision is not available.
- Mechanism on internalizing the review process – internal review, is not visible.

- External stakeholder participation at key stages of the degree program; analysis, planning, design, development and review, has not been fully ensured. Also, the program is not periodically monitored with industry experts and alumni.
- No fall back options are available for students.

#### **Criterion 4: Course/Module Design and Development**

The program is offered in consistence with the Faculty's mission and shared values for student's attainment of the ILOs prescribed in the courses identified. A mechanism of obtaining approval from Departments, CDC, FB and final approval from the Senate is being practiced for the courses outlined in the program as per the Curriculum Development policy. The course curriculum provides interaction between the aims and objectives, ILOs, course content, diverse teaching methods, varying assessment methods and information on further reading. Differently abled students are provided with facilities based on the University's Differently Abled Students' Act. Clear course specifications are given for all courses and are being easily accessed by students.

#### **Strengths:**

- The program was adequately aligned with the SLQF guidelines, although the program was implemented before establishment of SLQF guidelines
- QAC guidelines on development of course content and distribution of credit weightages are adequately addressed.
- Student centered teaching strategies have been satisfactorily addressed in designing and developing of courses.
- ILOs, contents, teaching, and assessment strategies are clear and accessible to all students.
- Courses are offered considering the volume of learning, ensuring that students graduate within the intended period of time.
- Student feedback on content, appropriateness, and effectiveness of teaching is obtained for each course.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- In-plant training is given a zero credit value. Hence, students might not take it seriously.

#### **Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning**

The Teaching and Learning process of the BSc (Honours) AgroTech. & Mgt. is student-centered in adherence with OBE. Different teaching methods are in practice and blended learning enhanced greater significance of student learning. Student feedback and peer observations are used to assess

student's need and to choose different teaching methods. The Faculty has taken all initiatives to address student's needs through providing multiple learning opportunities using diverse teaching techniques that engaged students actively in the learning process. This has ensured that students get adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, which is shown in their impressive success rate in gaining employment within 6 months of graduation. Teaching and learning strategies and assessment are very closely aligned with learning outcomes, as a result of which students were able to reinforce one another. Quality teaching is ensured by obtaining feedback of students which has empowered students and helped them to be proactive to overcome difficulties. Gender inequality is noted in filling the cadres of academic and non-academic positions. Website data summarizes that 63% academic and 69% non-academic staff are males. However, data on graduates who have passed out during the past five years (table 3) and students studying at present (table 1) highlight that 62% of them are females. Therefore, it is reasonable to give hope for the gender which is higher in number in future appointments.

### **Strengths:**

- T& L processes are based on the mission of the Faculty, goals, values and curriculum requirements.
- Course specification and time-table are available prior to commencement of the program.  
- Time table Committee is functioning.
- Blended learning is practiced, maximizing student engagement with the curriculum.
- Highly qualified staff and their research, scholarship and professional performance are used to enhance the teaching.
- Personal and professional development of students is maximized through engaging them as partners in teaching.
- A feedback mechanism is used to improve teaching.
- Students are encouraged to take personal responsibility for their learning through appropriate teaching and learning methods.
- Self-directed learning is encouraged through web-based resources, e-books, journals, and other publications.
- Students are engaged in research activities of staff members and encouraged to present their findings at the Undergraduate Students Symposium, at which awards are given.
- Teachers have no discrimination in gender, ethnicity, religion and culture.
- Junior staff members are assisted by peers in delivering lectures, practical classes, and research presentations.
- Dean, Heads, and committees, especially the CDC, monitor implementation of the teaching learning framework

- Workloads are shared among the teachers, especially where a team of teachers are engaged in delivering lectures of a course.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Recognition of teaching excellence is not practiced although the best researcher is awarded.
- Gender inequality is evident in permanent positions and need to be addressed.

### **Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression**

The Faculty extended immense support for SCL and OBE and has provided satisfactory learning support services, especially a very encouraging and supportive learning environment towards a successful and good quality higher education. Students, at the first instance, are given an unprecedented homely experience towards their skills development, group practical exposures and engagement with the farming community at MI and these have influenced them to continue their studies happily. Acts, By-Laws, policies and strategies developed and implemented through monitoring by the CDC, FQAC and other faculty sub committees and societies enabled students to develop their skills and attributes through extra-curricular activities. There is a mechanism using student learning outcomes, to systematically assess faculty and staff involvement, to improve the effectiveness of these services. Students are provided with very good provisions for tutoring, mentoring, counselling, and are promoted to engage in high quality research which in turn had an impact for securing patents globally.

### **Strengths:**

- Adoption of student friendly academic, administrative, and technical support systems.
- Outcome of the need analysis survey strengthening an inclusive educational environment in enabling student development and achievement.
- The Student handbook, which is distributed at the orientation programme for newcomers, contains comprehensive required information for a new student.
- LMS (Agrie-Hub) is incorporated into the delivery of the study program.
- The Faculty established CGU offers more comprehensive career development programs.
- The Faculty includes compulsory non-credit soft skill development courses in the study program.
- The Faculty continuously conducts teacher evaluation through feedback and students' satisfaction surveys.
- Ongoing discussions with poor/ weakly performing students to improve their learning performances.
- Gender harassments are not evident in the Faculty.

## **Weaknesses:**

- The Agriculture library does not fully use ICT-led tools to facilitate student learning.
- No specific Wi-Fi areas in the Department premises and lecture halls.
- No fall back options are available for students.
- Lack of evidence on privacy policy in mass media engagement of the Faculty.
- Alumni have no formal method to encourage and assist undergraduate students in preparing for their professional future.

## **Criterion 7: Student Assessment and Awards**

The Faculty has clear assessment procedures for each component of the program as per the SLQF and the LMS is used in the assessment process. Its assessment practices are fair, valid, reliable and feasible with regular monitoring and student feedback is used for further improvement. The student handbook and student guidebook given at the orientation program have all the information and directions about assessment strategies, processes, methods and schedule of assessments and criteria for assessment and this information is also available online. Confidentiality is maintained at its highest level with the support of effective mechanisms and all these processes are completed to enable the graduates to pass out in 4 years' time. Students are encouraged with many awards for best performance.

## **Strengths:**

- Students are assessed using clear examination By-Laws, regulation, and rules which are given in the Student Handbook and are transparent to all students.
- The study program assessment strategies are aligned with ILOs.
- The study program releases the results without delay, in accordance with the UGC regulation and incorporates the views of the internal scrutiny panel and external moderation.
- The Faculty ensures that the degree awarded under this program complies with the SLQF, SBS and various other standards such as SLS and ISO 9001.
- Periodic amendments of the assessment methods and marking procedures are clear.
- The Faculty ensures timely release of the results.

## **Weaknesses:**

- No second marking mechanism exists in the program which is essential for maintaining transparency and accuracy of the final examination paper marking.

## **Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices**

The University has policies and strategies for promoting innovative healthy practices and their utilization is assessed frequently. The Faculty has many innovative and healthy practices that enhances quality of training, learning experiences, community interactions, and industrial exposure and has excelled in research by engaging highly qualified competent staff. The Agri-e Hub is utilized to its maximum and ICT is used by all staff and students, incorporating diverse teaching methods. The Faculty has contributed immensely to regional and national development and has also contributed globally through sharing their expertise. There are active MoUs and MoAs and collaborations with many institutions abroad for serving as visiting scholars.

### **Strengths:**

- Establishment of an ICT based platform to facilitate multimode delivery of learning through Agrie-Hub
- Conducive environment for facilitating research and innovation
- Provision for dissemination of research findings of undergraduates and rewarding them
- Establishment of rewarding system for excellence of research
- High number of local and foreign collaborations promoting student and staff exchange
- Establishment of numerous income generation activities
- Use of Open Educational Resources (OER) as supplementary teaching and learning

### **Weaknesses:**

- Unavailability of a credit-transfer mechanism that allows students to transfer credits to and from other Institutions
- Time spent on Industrial Training is inadequate
- Insufficient engagement of outside experts into the program

### Section 6: Grading of overall performance

No	Criterion	Weighted minimum score*	Actual criterion-wise score
1	Programme Management	75	<b>148</b>
2	Human and Physical Resources	50	<b>97</b>
3	Programme Design and Development	75	<b>144</b>
4	Course/Module Design and Development	75	<b>150</b>
5	Teaching and Learning	75	<b>147</b>
6	Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression	50	<b>96</b>
7	Student Assessment and Awards	75	<b>144</b>
8	Innovative and Healthy Practices	25	<b>42</b>
	Total score (out of 1000)		<b>968</b>
	Total score (out of 100)		<b>96.81</b>
	<b>Grade</b>		<b>A</b>

## Section 7: Commendations and recommendations

### Commendations

1. The Faculty has a clear and comprehensive structure in operation and nine Faculty sub-committees are functioning to address issues of major concern. Ensuring quality is prioritized in every aspect of the program except enrollment as it is done by the UGC.
2. The Faculty has highly qualified competent academic staff and almost 45% have obtained their doctoral degrees from leading foreign Universities that has enhanced teaching, research and dissemination of knowledge. Academic staff engagement in various institutions exemplify significant contribution to the country's agriculture and related development.
3. The Faculty is unique in having a pioneering Agricultural Extension Department that emphasizes the importance of extension education in agricultural development in this country and it has 3 arms viz. Biotechnology center, Teacher Education Centre, and Agribusiness center to facilitate quality education.
4. Very good academic, career and psychosocial counseling programs are in existence and the support of trained students through "Robarosiasociety" which was started in 2017.
5. Exposure of students to foreign universities is highly impressive. Admitting foreign students into the program, interaction of foreign students through the "Study Abroad" program, visiting staff appointments to many foreign Universities, inviting visiting professionals to the Faculty, number of collaborative research with foreign scholars and signing MoUs and MoAs with leading foreign Universities add strength to the programme and assures its international quality assurance in higher education.
6. The Faculty organizes an undergraduate research symposium to allow students to present their findings and rewarding the best students, is a good initiative.
7. Orientation program for temporary academic staff would be a good initiative in order to effectively use the support of temporary staff in the academic program.
8. The "Farm family" concept through community engagement is a good practice and supports the outcome-based education approach of the program.
9. Releasing examination results within the stipulated time according to the UGC circular and completion of the degree program in 4 years as per the calendar of dates are commendable.
10. Facilities available at the university medical center including 2 ambulance provisions are noteworthy for providing 24-hour service to the university community and the Center is

- highly supportive to staff and students involved in many extra-curricular and outreach activities within the program.
11. The activities conducted at the Staff Development Center are commendable despite the lack of a special allocation from the Faculty.
  12. The Faculty has a reporting mechanism in the ragging and harassment portal on the web and its contents in 3 languages is highly impressive.
  13. Life skills, leadership and managerial aspects are incorporated into the program effectively and graduates produced are comparable and competitive to the job market, and employability within 6 months of graduation with 94% of the graduates being employed is evident.
  14. FQAC is placed in the organogram as per the undated circular of UGC and given adequate facilities to operate under a dynamic coordinator. The issues discussed at the FQAC meetings are presented at the Faculty Board.
  15. Student engagement in quality assurance is found in many of the committees and societies. FQAC consists of members representing academic, administrative and non-academic sections including representatives from the student union as well as the student forum.
  16. The program, which commenced in 2006, was developed incorporating outcome -based education as well as student-centered learning.
  17. The arrangement of practical classes in laboratories is highly commendable with rotating student groups repeating practical sessions, to accommodate a large number of students in a batch and limited number of temporary staff and resources/specimens.
  18. Agri-e Hub portal is well utilized for teaching, learning, assessment, research and dissemination through a strong website and internet support to students and staff. Students have easy access to computers and knowledge enhancement through virtual interaction ensures quality blended learning.
  19. Adequate facilities at the sub-campus at Mahailuppallama enables students to reside, experience and expose themselves to farm based training and community engagement through well designed assignments with the farming communities, well organized industrial training and experiential learning programs embedded into the program, signifies its uniqueness and quality of the program.
  20. Staff research is coordinated through the Faculty Research Committee and volumes of high quality research publications, significant number of books written by the staff in various disciplines incorporating their research findings, editing proceedings of the standard publishing agency, holding number of patents, recipients of CVCD and Presidential awards, receiving grants through high rated research proposals from many local and foreign institutions and significant international collaborations through a number of MoUs and MoAs are commendable.

21. Students are encouraged to carry out research in the final year under highly qualified supervisors, as well as given chances to be included in the research team of research projects of staff members. The research findings are used towards the development in the regional, national and global context. Obtaining 3 patents and medals for undergraduate research are highly commendable.
22. Documents such as milestones of the Faculty, Hantana Blossoms, two volumes of Decades of Research of the FoA, updated Prospectus, Student Handbook, Student Guidebook, Counseling Guidebook are highly informative and most of them are accessible on the website.
23. The Faculty has a significant number (18) of various societies/unions in which students are engaged. The societies provide opportunities for students to propose, plan and execute activities beneficial to the students as well as the community. Informal staff-student interaction is highly practiced in participating in these society activities and ample chances are given to expose their innovative talents towards strengthening their soft skills.
24. It is commendable that the Faculty generates a significant amount of funds and partially utilizes it for infrastructure development to provide facilities for the students.

## **Recommendations**

1. Need to undergo curriculum development as soon as possible and to include regular curriculum revision (*i.e.* every 5 years) in the curriculum policy. Internalization of the Quality Assurance process could be further strengthened by introducing internal review of the program between the external reviews, since the Faculty has a strong FQAC and the University has trained program reviewers.
2. Establish a Faculty “Action Plan Monitoring Committee” preferably under FQAC in order to monitor progress of implementing action plans and report to the Faculty board.
3. Consider a mechanism at FQAC to internalize the quality assurance process by having Internal Program Review in between the two external program reviews enabling the Faculty members to participate in the process to monitor the progress and to take action to expedite the task agreed.
4. Implementing a credit transfer policy as per the SLQF guidelines and to match with international standards (*i.e.* ECTS).
5. Introduce a fallback option for students who cannot complete the degree due to various reasons.

6. Conduct frequent meetings with alumni and outside stakeholders in order to understand current changes, societal needs *etc.* and get their assistance in training students to improve their skills.
7. Industrial training to be given academic credits and implemented through a common body to focus on the purpose of industrial training. Also, the time period should be reasonably extended at least up to 3 months.
8. Introducing second marking and formalizing verification of marks after releasing results so that, within a given time period, students can apply if there is any concern.
9. To include the Faculty extra-curricular week into the calendar of dates so that, the students will be aware of the time given to them well in advance to plan, organize and execute as a team without changing it haphazardly.
10. To have a university policy to give space for student recreational and sports activities, reserving one afternoon session free from academic activities in the timetable every week/month, allowing students from different faculties to interact.
11. Encourage use of library facilities among staff and students such as library visits, use of inter university loan scheme, *etc.*
12. Requirement of a digital archive with support of a separate server would be highly advantageous. Electronic databases in libraries need to be improved.
13. Revisiting the housing policy of the University (*i.e.* Giving a staff quarters for a specific period – 5 years, reserving some houses for priority needs, *etc.*) when allocating staff quarters as non-academic staff are not happy with the existing guidelines when allocating houses.
14. Rotation of non-academic staff within the Faculty, if possible, to enable them to get exposed to different type of work.
15. Getting support of non-academic staff for programs to prevent ragging within the University.
16. The Faculty board minutes are not given to students. After removing confidential sections, students should be given a copy of the minutes.
17. Gender balance in committees needs to be considered especially when inviting students to the Faculty Board.
18. Some measures to support special needy students especially with physical disability, to access lecture halls and laboratories in older buildings and the medical center. It is proposed to move the OPD section to the ground floor and digitize the health centre activities for better service. Establishing a society on health concerns interlinked with the Health Centre, is suggested, and would be a preferred choice.

19. The older classrooms are insufficient to accommodate a large number of students and available free space for a student within the classroom is inadequate. The distance between the students and the lecturer could be considered as close as possible while constructing the smart lecture rooms.
20. Senate approval must be obtained for the appointment of all examiners, including the external examiners, with recommendation of the Faculty board.
21. Two Faculties, Faculty of Veterinary Sciences and Faculty of Agriculture, both have separate farms for training students and one farm could have been utilized by adopting appropriate mechanisms within the university for providing better training to the students with efficient utilization of the resources and funding. Since the program is unique in emphasizing agro- technology, advanced technologies like automation could be introduced in the day-to-day work of the farm such as feeding, milking, *etc.*
22. It is good if some training in the procurement process, financial management, *etc.* for academics specially Heads of the Departments are conducted through the Staff Development Center.
23. The facilities available at the sub-campus at Mahailuppallam where the first semester of the program begins, are highly satisfactory. The practical sessions blended with hands on training are conducted by adequate qualified staff members and community engagement receives much appreciation and create interest among students at the beginning. However, the entrance of the road which awaits renovation, would impress the students and parents the best.
24. Psycho-social counseling, though satisfactory, could be given further strengthened, especially to identify students with mental illnesses, poor performers, those suffering due to ragging and especially those who are silent, without exposing themselves to anyone. The initiative already taken to establish a Centre for Counseling at university level is appreciated. The Counseling Guidebook needs to be updated with the existing Counselor's contact numbers which needs to be incorporated both in the Student Guide book and the emergency access in the University website.
25. When increasing the intake of students, consider grouping students based on their desire/willingness to either carry out research or be trained further on extension or even to get involved in a startup business in agro-based industries, rather than taking all into research during the final year. For students involved in research, their specialization period could be increased, starting from third year onwards to cater to the need of competent researchers in the Department of Agriculture and other institutions.
26. A fall back option, could be incorporated into the program. The stakeholder discussion clearly expressed this and there are possibilities to look into this.



## Section 8: Summary

After announcing the program review for the degree programs in Agriculture by the QAC, UGC in 2019 University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, Faculty of Agriculture, UoP was invited to review the Bachelor of Science Honours in Agricultural Technology and Management Degree Program. The UGC in agreement with the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka entrusted the task of external review to a team of 3 members selected based on their expertise. In this process, as per the QAC protocol, the evaluators had individually engaged in a desk review and then discussed at a workshop at the UGC about their scoring as per the SER submitted by the Faculty. The site visit was scheduled to be held in November 2019. However, due to the non-academic strike in the universities, the site visit was postponed to 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

The review team observed that the Self Evaluation Report (SER) was compiled based on the guidelines given in the program manual. The whole process was systematically done, and the key role played by the Dean, HoDs, Coordinator of FQAC, FB, are commendable. FQAC established 8 sub-committees for the 8 criteria and a group of senior staff members, non-academic staff, and in some criteria students also participated under the leadership of Dean. Conveners were identified for each sub-committee. These sub-committees met regularly. The FB appointed a SER writing team consisting of senior staff members.

The SER writing team participated in a SER writing workshop conducted by UoP-IQAU. The team discussed with the conveners of the sub-Committees and assessed the progress of evidence collection. Awareness programs were conducted by the FQAC with the support of IQAU on the quality assurance process and quality cultures separately for students, non-academic and academic staff members and experienced senior members were also invited to share their experiences in the program review process. Two of the SER writing team participated in the “Workshop on SER preparation” at UGC followed by a two-day meeting between SER writers and a senior staff member, who is familiar with the QA process and served as reviewer for many PR programs of other Universities. The FQAC organized a follow-up meeting with its members, conveners of sub-committees and the SER writing team to review the draft SER, which was discussed at two FB meetings at which feedback was obtained. The report was updated, presented again to the FB, comments discussed, and Dean and the SER Writing team addressed the issues raised. The finalized SER document was presented and approved at a special FB meeting. The SER preparatory process was supervised by the Dean and coordinated by the team leader of the SER writing-team. Participation of SAR, AB, staff of the Dean's office, departmental representatives, and the students are much appreciated, ensuring the internalization of the QA process with wider participation and involvement.

The Review team observed that the FoA of UoP is following many good practices as described in the Program Review manual of the UGC, Sri Lanka to maintain its higher quality. The Faculty has a well-developed action plan that reflects its preparedness towards acquiring new trends in Agricultural Technology and Management and is aligned with the strategic plan of the UoP. The Faculty has a comprehensive and dynamic structure as depicted in its organogram, that enables a healthy and cordial environment among the staff and students. The administrative structure is aligned with the Faculty's Strategic and Action plans. The Faculty has clear broad

ILOs of the core programmes defined under 5 major focal points that match its mission and shared values.

The Faculty has highly qualified competent staff and a well-established CDC for designing and delivery of academic programs, while the FQAC supports and monitors these processes. The Staff Development Centre conducts many programs to upgrade the quality of staff and the IQAU, FQAC, and SDC work together in identifying the needs for training programs which are conducted by the SDC. It has a very strong research output through collaborative research with active MoUs and MoAs connecting leading institutions in the international arena. Students are trained under the supervision of highly qualified competent staff in research and are given opportunities to present their findings at a faculty organized annual Undergraduate Research Conference where the best students are rewarded. This has motivated undergraduates to secure 3 patents from their research including one at international level.

The review team observed classroom sessions where lecturers attempted to make those face-to-face sessions more interactive and participative. It was noted that the staff motivated students in a healthy interaction at lectures and practical sessions. The study environment in the Faculty, within the lecture halls and laboratories are satisfactory and the space requirements for individual students need to be considered in the old classrooms when the number of enrolments increases. New buildings are adequately spaced for student mobility especially for differently able students, and there are provisions for a good learning atmosphere.

Blended learning is done through the well-established Agri e-Hub, and staff and students effectively use this portal for teaching, learning, assessment and research and also facilitated the staff and students in their informal interaction. The 3 powerful outreach arms namely the Agribusiness centre, Agricultural Biotechnology centre, and Agriculture Education Centre significantly established linkages between the Faculty & the private sector organizations, strengthened research, capacity building & generated marketable products and empowered public-private partnerships, respectively. These centers are unique models facilitating agricultural technology education from laboratory to the field by educating, training and carrying out research. The Faculty conducts an annual conference that provides ample opportunities to the staff as well as postgraduate and undergraduate students, to present their best research findings.

Counselling with respect to academic, career and psychosocial aspects is being done by qualified trained staff members. The Computer Unit must be expanded as the intake of the students are increasing. The first -year program at the sub-campus at MI provides a stress free environment at the beginning of the program and facilitates hands on training, as well as practical knowledge. Both at MI as well as at Peradeniya, life skills are provided by giving adequate support services. The library has a well-equipped branch library at Peradeniya shared with Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture (PGIA). Infrastructure facilities at MI are well developed to cater to the undergraduate as well as postgraduate students. Updated e-resource provisions are available at both branch libraries.

The Faculty is the first and one of the best HEIs in the university system in Sri Lanka that introduced the course-unit system, OBE-SCL, distribution-based grading and curriculum monitoring, IL activities, supplementary as well as compulsory courses, Teacher/course

evaluations and pre-semester course planning. Student feedback and peer observations have been used for the preferred changes in the curriculum over the years. It maintains SLQF guidelines for curriculum modification.

Ample opportunities are given to students to interact with the community outside the university through student research forums, exhibitions, securing patents, and career fairs conducted by ABC and outreach activities conducted by the departments. The Faculty can conduct a tracer study to identify areas to be improved and enhance and sustain the employability of graduates.

Finally, the review team appreciates the Faculty for its pioneering professional development through outcome-based education to sustain its quality standards, which is reflected by securing very good scores.

The study programme has secured the minimum scores required for all eight-review criteria prescribed by the Programme Review Manual and has achieved an overall score of **96.8%**. This indicates that the B.Sc. (Honours) in AgroTech. and Mgt. degree program closely matches the standards prescribed in the Program Review Manual and out of 156 standards, 146 earned maximum score. Therefore, the review team is highly satisfied and recommends the award of **Grade “A”** for the Bachelor of Science Honours in Agricultural Technology and Management degree program of the Faculty of Agriculture of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka.

## **Annexures**

1. Program schedule of site visit during 1-5 March 2020 - (Annexure 1)
2. Attendances of all meetings during site visit -(Annexure 11)
3. Samples of photographs taken as evidence during site visit -(Annexure 111)