

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF
AGRIBUSINESS MANAGEMENT**



**FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE AND
PLANTATION MANAGEMENT
WAYAMBA UNIVERSITY OF SL**

18th to 20th March 2009

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CONTENTS

	Page
1. Subject Review Process	2
2. Brief History of the University, Faculty and the Department	3
3. Aims and Learning Outcomes	4
3.1. Aims	4
3.2. Learning Outcomes	5
4. Findings of the Review Team	6
4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review	6
4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	7
4.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	8
4.4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative	8
4.5. Postgraduate Studies	9
4.6. Peer Observation	9
4.7. Skills Development	9
4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling	11
5. Conclusions	12
6. Recommendations	14
7. Annexes	16

1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Subject review process evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. It is focused on the student learning experience and on student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. However, the responsibility for quality and standards lies within the institution itself, since it alone has the power to control and to change the existing practices.

Review process was conducted according to the guidelines given in the quality assurance handbook for Sri Lankan universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The Department of Agribusiness Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka submitted a self evaluation report consisting of aims, learning outcomes and programme details; staff, students, and facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; student admission, progress and achievements; the extent and use of student feedback; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skills development; academic guidance and counselling; outreach activities, and areas for improvements . The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the self evaluation report.

The following eight aspects of education were reviewed at the subject level:

1. Curriculum design, content and review.
2. Teaching learning and assessment methods.
3. Quality of students including student progress and achievements.
4. Extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative.
5. Postgraduate studies.
6. Peer observations.
7. Skills development.
8. Academic guidance and counselling.

The review team visited the department from the 18th - 20th March, 2009. The agenda of the three day visit is attached (see annex 1).

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Subject review report submitted to the QAA by the Department
- Meetings were held with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of Department, academic staff, technical and supportive staff, senior assistant librarian, senior student counsellors, Director of Career Guidance, undergraduate students, technical staff of the faculty computer center, and the counsellors of the department.
- Observation of physical facilities of the department, class rooms, computer center of the faculty, and the agriculture resource center of the Department.
- Observation of teaching classes of undergraduates and their presentations.
- Reviewing of available documents at the department.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good / satisfactory / unsatisfactory, based on strengths, good practices and weaknesses in each. Considering the judgment of the eight aspects, an overall judgment was given as confidence / limited confidence / no confidence.

2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE DEPARTMENT

Vision of the University

Achieving excellence in higher education, research and technology and training for developing human resources to meet national and global needs

Mission of the University

Develop innovative, skilled, trained man power and their capabilities to fulfill national and global needs through undergraduate and post graduate education, research and outreach programs

The Affiliated University College of the North Western province, which consisted of two academic sections, i.e. “Home Science and Nutrition”, and “Agriculture” which were originally affiliated to the University of Kelaniya and University of Peradeniya, respectively later, they were merged to form the Wayamba Campus to set up two Faculties; namely the “Faculty of Agricultural Sciences” and the “Faculty of Applied Sciences”, each with three Departments of Study. The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences constituted the Departments of Plantation Management, Horticultural Sciences and Food Technology and Agricultural Engineering, while the Faculty of Applied Sciences consisted of the Departments of Mathematical Sciences, Industrial Management and Computer Studies, Nutrition and Community Resources Management. Consequently the Wayamba Campus was converted to a fully-fledged University in August 1999 with four Faculties, namely: (1) Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management; (2) Faculty of Applied Sciences (3) Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, and (4) Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition.

The Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management (FAPM) of the WUSL offers a four year full time degree. This programme is designed in a way to address high priority issues facing various agricultural and agribusiness sectors in the country and in the region at large. Since its inception, the FAPM has continued to play an important role in the overall development of agricultural technology and practice in the country, providing the nation with qualified agricultural experts and scientists.

Once the students complete the first two years of studies, which consists of a number of core courses offered by the four departments to reflect every aspect related to food and agriculture sector (see below), they are directed for specialization in four departments, namely: (1) Agribusiness Management, (2) Bio-technology, (3) Horticulture and Landscape Gardening, and (4) Plantation Management. These directed electives allow students to select a curriculum that is more closely in tune with their career goals.

The role of agribusiness in the general economy continues to grow. The agribusiness-based industries face growing shortages of employees trained in both management and agricultural sciences. Consequently, more than ever, today's needs and challenges of agribusiness are highly significant.

With this focus, the Dept. of Agribusiness Management (DABM) of the FAPM offers a number of subjects related to agricultural economics and business management since the first year of the degree programme. The core program is designed more specifically to provide students with an understanding of the basic functions of business and the application of theory and practice to the sector. Gradually, the students are directed towards advanced theory and applications that are related to the discipline during the period of specialization.

The selection criteria for specialization in the DABM depend highly on the aggregate Grade Point Average (GPA) of the student until his/her 2nd year 2nd semester. While the students with GPA more than 2.00 are preferred, and further, a special attention is given to the students who got good grades for the subjects that are offered by the DABM in the core programme. Over the years, the DABM was able to get the best students in the batch for specialization, and the trend continues.

From the 3rd year onwards, the students who are majoring in Agribusiness Management get an exposure in various subjects related to agricultural economics (e.g. production economics, managerial economics), agricultural marketing, management (e.g. agribusiness, marketing, project), accounting and finance and international trade etc. As a supplement to traditional classroom sessions, several field trips are taken to production, processing and distribution centers to gain valuable exposure and experience necessary for job competency.

In the 3rd year, students are directed to work on a Research Project related to agribusiness. This work is presented annually in the “*Agriculture Research Symposium*” (AGRES) of the FAPM and full papers are published as a proceeding. By now, the FAPM has successfully held 8th AGRES since the year 2000, and in each AGRES the outcome of researches conducted by ABM students were presented in “ABM Technical Sessions”.

The 4th year students undergo an In-Plant Training (IPT) of six months in an agriculture related firm of their interest and subject to the approval of Head of the Department. The exposure at such entity empowers undergraduates with decision making skills. Their work during the training period is evaluated using a number of methods and procedures, and IPT coordinators and external and internal supervisors are appointed for this purpose. This work is also presented in the annual “*In-Plant Training Symposium*” (IPTS) of the DABM and the “Extended Abstracts” of students work are published. In 2008, the DABM held its 3rd IPTS in a grand scale.

Also, with the idea of disseminating the academic, research and other professional activities of the students and staff members of the DABM as well as others in the FAPM, the DABM publishes a newsletter titled: “*ABM Newsletter*” bi-annually. In addition, the DABM establishes a “*Center of Agribusiness Studies*” (CABS) as a resource center for undergraduates who specialize in Agribusiness. With all these activities at place, the DABM strives to prepare with its students for exciting and satisfying careers in the dynamic and increasingly global agribusiness sector.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. Aims

- Provide effective teaching, cutting-edge research and outreach / extension activities while recognizing effective integration of these functions that is essential for enhancing the quality of the degree programme.
- Focus on training students to think, to use logic and reason and to organize their thoughts in order to solve problems rather than simply memorizing and reciting the subject matter.
- Develop knowledgeable, skilled and well employable graduates in most business organizations with delivery of subject areas such as economics, management, marketing, statistics, finance and accounting, information technology and related areas.

- Ensure the flexibility and adjust programmes to address the changing scenarios in agribusiness sector in a timely and useful manner.
- Train undergraduates to work according to a deadline/ given time period and to improve the life-skills of students including the presentation and communicative skills.
- Enhance the professional orientation of undergraduates via having links with professional bodies in the fields of business management and other relevant fields so as to meet the necessary requirement of the industry.

3.2 Learning Outcomes

On the successful completion of the course modules offered by the Department of Agribusiness Management, the students would be able to:

- Acquire the skills and knowledge needed to perform successfully in managerial-level positions in agribusiness firms of varying sizes and areas of enterprise.
- Blend business management practices necessary in today's agricultural industry with an understanding on interaction between technology, human activity and agriculture for students to develop.
- Deliver knowledge and hands on experience necessary to make practical application of the ideas and concepts gained in the classroom, research and training exposure.
- Handle and solve problems and a wide variety of issues pertaining to the field of agribusiness management and to address complex issues using tools and decision-making models learnt.
- Recognize their own abilities and to think independently with published, nominated for and won student theses and dissertations at the national and international levels.
- Work according to strict deadlines and the ability to present their ideas to the external audiences.

Programme Details

Table 3.1 shows the expected number of credits to be covered in the four year B.Sc. (Agriculture) degree program of the FAPM and number of credits offered in each semester by the DABM.

Table 3.1 – Number of credits offered by the FAPM and DABM:

Academic Year / Semester	FAPM	DABM	DABM AS A % OF FAPM
CORE MODULE			
Year 1 – Semester 1	24	8	33.3
Year 1 – Semester 2	23	8	34.7
Year 2 – Semester 1	24	4	16.6

Year 2 – Semester 2	24	8	33.3
<i>Sub Total</i>	95	28	29.5
<i>SPECIALIZATION</i>			
Year 3 – Semester 1	25	13	52.0
Year 3 – Semester 2	12	9	75.0
Year 4 – Semester 1	27*	22*	81.5
Year 4 – Semester 2	10**	10**	100.0
<i>Sub Total</i>	74	54	73.0
Total	169	82	48.5

* - 12 credits for 6 month Research Project

** - 10 credits for 6 month In-Plant Training Program

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

The faculty offers a four year degree in B.Sc. Agriculture for students admitted to it by the UGC. The first two years of the four years consist of the common programme of the faculty. Students are admitted to the specialization streams offered by four departments from the beginning of the first semester of the third year based on their choices and GPA. It was observed that 30% of the curricula offered by the faculty in the common programme are contributed by the Department of Agribusiness. Students read 46 subjects including two foundation English courses offered in the first year and two English-academic writing courses offered in the second year during the four year period to complete the degree. In order to award the degree, students are required to complete 169 credits excluding 135 hours of learning in English courses. Most of the courses are four credits in which 45 hours (3 credits) consist of classroom teaching and 60 hours (1 credit) for practical work.

The degree programme is designed in a way to impart knowledge in theory and practice of agribusiness management combining courses from agriculture, management, economics, mathematics and statistics, and IT. Generally, contents of subjects are adequate. Courses like research paper written by students with close supervision of senior academic members and the implant training at an organization are good practices of the department.

The entire programme is conducted in English medium. All students are given a basic knowledge in English by the ELTU of the university. IT related skills are provided through the faculty and department's IT centers.

However, the team has noted that the contents of certain courses are repeated. As an example, same economic principles are taught in economics, managerial economics and agricultural production economics. Another example is during the four year period, mathematics and statistics are offered in four semesters leading to heavy emphasis on quantitative analysis with little or no focus on qualitative aspects. Certain subjects such as management, HRM, marketing and accounting and finance are taught without giving much emphasis on agriculture. Additionally, the entire programme suffers from the fundamental courses such as sociology, culture, history, and psychology of farmers, and transfer of technologies.

The team has noted that the number of credits, 169, is very high compared to international standards. Students feel that they do not have time to involve in extra curricula activities due to the heavy work load.

Though the department has recognized the overall learning outcomes of the degree programme, learning outcomes of subjects have not been developed relating to them. Though students are aware of the learning outcomes of individual subjects they do not have an understanding about the overall learning outcomes. Therefore, the team suggests the following recommendation to be carried out by the department in relation to the curriculum design in future.

In relation to the curriculum design, content and review the judgment of the team is SATISFACTORY.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

The department has qualified and experienced academic staff including 3 PhD holders with research exposure. The department is well equipped with teaching and learning facilities. The staff-student ratio approximates, 1:8. The senior members of the department are provided with personal computers. Staff computer unit has 15 computers and student computer unit has 100 computers for students' use. All the computers are networked with internet and printing facilities. Software availability is also satisfactory. White or blackboards, multimedia, OHP are available in the department. Faculty library is rich with about 17,000 collection of books. Though the nonacademic staff consists of 2 members they support the administration of the department. All these make teaching and learning environment effectively conducive.

Medium of teaching is English. The ELTU provides a compulsory English course for the first year students. However it does not carry credit values. The unit conducts extra classes for weaker students. At the beginning or during the orientation period, Faculty handbook is distributed among the students. At the beginning of each semester, course outline is distributed. Department website, ABM notice board and student staff course consultative meetings are used to communicate students with other information. The primary mode of teaching is giving lectures, and multimedia, OHP, white board are used in teaching. Tutorial classes, individual and group assignments, presentations, field visits, guest lectures, etc., help students for self learning.

Most of the staff members are involved in research activities, and the experience and the knowledge gained by such are used to fortify the teaching outcomes. However, the review team observed that still the teaching is being carried out in the framework of teacher centered approach. Further, a considerable hours of lectures are being covered by the temporary staff. This may be due to limitation of qualified staff. Hence, it is recommended to increase the involvement of senior staff in the teaching exercises of the temporary staff. Effectiveness of the teaching can be further improved by adding more examples from practical agriculture (eg. marketing subject should be fortified with agric marketing examples). In fact, this will bring more agriculture flavour to the curriculum. In order to improve the learning (to avoid rote learning) it is better to provide handouts as teaching materials. The teaching aids should be used according to the subject and situation.

Students are evaluated by number of ways, i.e., final written examination, continuous assessments, reports and presentations. Final exam papers are moderated internally and

second marking is also done internally. Minimum of 80% attendance must be registered by a student in order to be eligible for sitting the relevant paper. A student who does not record 80% attendance will be considered as a referred candidate.

A full paper is published based on the findings of the research project. Further a Power Point presentation is done by the student in front of an evaluation panel including outside evaluators. Abstract is published with the collaboration of the supervisor. A dissertation is not produced on the research project. However a dissertation is developed on the experience gained at the in-plant training. Assessment criteria for the whole programme are very clear and explicit.

In relation to the teaching, learning and assessment methods the judgment of the team is GOOD.

4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Students are directly selected and assigned by the UGC based on the z-scores. Though the majority of the students are Sinhala, there are other ethnic groups of students such as, Tamils and Muslims in the degree programme. This leads to social harmony and improve the students' English communicative ability. It is evident that during the discussions held with the students as well as the teaching sessions observed by the review team, the students were found to be quite confident and demonstrated good communicative skills in English.

The department is keeping continuous attention on students' progress and achievements towards the main learning objectives of the department and the degree programme. The final results of the last four years indicate a high proportion of students obtaining awards with zero level failures. However, there are no first classes recorded due to strict assessment and grading policy. All of the graduates of the department are able to secure employment opportunities both in the private and public sector organizations within a short period after their graduation. After the In-plant Training, most of the companies were used to absorb students into their permanent cadres, as management trainees or for further training. Accordingly, the rate of employability of students is very satisfactory.

In relation to the quality of students, student progress and achievements the judgment of the team is GOOD.

4.4 Extent and use of Student Feedback

The department collects both quantitative and qualitative feedback from students regarding the teaching, content of teaching, teaching methods, assessments and quality of teaching. Quantitative information is gathered through a structured questionnaire and qualitative information through informal discussions with students. The Assistant Registrar of the faculty distributes questionnaires for students at the end of each course, collect them, and handover to the head of the department for processing and analysis of information. After the analysis the head of department informs each academic member about their strengths and weaknesses. The academic members act accordingly and they regard this process as a valid tool which identifies their strengths and weaknesses. In fact, the outcome improves their teaching and learning environment. The mechanism established at the faculty and department level for gathering, processing and taking rectifying action is good. At the same time it is worthwhile

to introduce a method post-evaluation in order to ensure the improvements made after a reasonable time spell.

In relation to the extent and use of student feedback the judgment of the team is GOOD.

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

At present the department does not offer a postgraduate programme. However, the department intends to start an MSc course on Entrepreneurship and Business in Sep. 2009. The preliminary preparatory work is being undertaken to obtain the approval of the Senate and the UGC. As the Faculty is located in an environment where many institutes, and private companies are operating, a significant demand for such a postgraduate programme can be expected. Even though a postgraduate programme is yet to come, senior staff members are already involved in postgraduate training and supervision for other higher educational institutes, especially at PGIA (Peradeniya), SLITT (Malambe), etc. It has to be mentioned that the department is in its initial stage of development concentrating on undergraduate work, and also with limited qualified staff, the effort taken to develop a postgraduate programme is appreciated.

In relation to the postgraduate studies the judgment of the team is SATISFACTION.

4.6. Peer Observations

The peer observation is done by internal arrangement as junior by junior, and Junior by senior. A structured format is being used (eg. *check list for peer observation of teachers*) to evaluate each teacher. It was observed that the outcome of the evaluation is being discussed with the respective teacher, especially by the head of the department. The documents are kept in an order, so that any reference can be made. The procedure applied in the context of peer evaluation can be regarded as an effort towards improving the quality of teaching. It is also worthwhile to investigate the improvements taken on the aspects highlighted (weaknesses/limitations) in the evaluation after reasonable time spell (eg. if eye contact is weak, inform it to the teacher, and after a some time observe the improvement). Moreover, the delivery of the knowledge input can be improved by association of senior member to junior for each cause capsule. This can be done by sharing few lectures or a part of the curriculum of a course capsule by a senior member. This is especially important to establish confidence of teaching of temporary members.

In relation to the peer observation the judgment of the team is GOOD.

4.7. Skills Development

The skill development component of the undergraduates is addressed through different efforts. The research paper development during the 3rd year 2nd semester and the 4th year 1st semester facilitates to enhance skills on creative thinking, conceptual thinking, and also to provide an opportunity to think independently towards a final outcome, a research paper. During this period, the students acquire skills to; develop a proposal, plan a research activity, execute a research, analyse, and write a scientific research article. The scientific writing course conducted by the faculty provides a significant contribution to improve the above mentioned skills. Next, the annual symposium (AGRES) makes a platform to present the findings of the research results. This will provide a valid opportunity to enhance presentation

skills using multimedia, communicative skills, answering skills in a scientific forum. Further, this forum grants an opportunity to interact with intellectuals from different institutes, which improve interpersonal, and communicative skills. Finally, the published document, *the Proceedings of Agricultural Research Symposium* will fortify a reorganisation of the undergraduate as a researcher to the scientific community. In addition, the best presenter receives an award at the symposium. This too, reorganizes the different skills acquired by the candidate. In other words, candidates are encouraged to improve necessary skills to reorganize the performances. The highlights of the symposium will be illustrated in the *ABM News letter*. This effort will also demonstrate a recognition, and dissemination of such information to the intellectuals.

The In-plant training component executed during the 4th year 2nd semester of the programme mainly provides an external exposure to the undergraduates. As the students are sent to other institutes, agencies, and private companies, this training enhances the skills on ability to work in practical conditions, work in groups, problem solving, and gain experience on organizational culture. Moreover, this nature of arrangement will improve the inter-institutional links which bring benefits to both parties. In fact, the link seems very important in finding employments for the graduates, depending on individual abilities. This too, encourages the candidates to improve personal skills and sell themselves in the job market. At the end of the in-plant training, the candidates have to produce a report on the experience obtained at the workplace, and moreover, to present it at the *In-Plant Training Symposium* (IPTS). This platform too, gives an opportunity to improve the skills explained under AGRES. The instructions given to write the executive abstract for IPTS can be regarded as a valid instrument which directs the students towards the event signifying skills indicators in the evaluation process.

The presentation skills, writing skills and cognitive skills are continuously being improved during the formal academic programme through assignments, short presentations, practical sessions, etc. The Centre for Agribusiness Studies (CABS) makes provision to acquire a range of skills through organizing workshops and seminars. In fact, the specialization students of the department could use the facilities available at the centre for their academic work purposes.

The well developed computer centre which is underutilized at present is a valuable assert. This, in fact, opens for the undergraduates to acquire computer soft skills. The time constraint is the prominent reason. The student could not find adequate time to spend in the computer unit. The language and communicative skills are improved through designing and execution of English programmes at the English Language Teaching Unit. The programmes on foundation English and academic writing provide basic language skills at the beginning of the undergraduate cycle. Categorization of students according to their existing abilities, and conducting classes accordingly are valid strategies employed. However, poor attendance of the students has to be highlighted although a well equipped language laboratory is operating. The English unit has executed a certificate course on Business English recently, but only 12 students completed the programme and obtained the certificates. As the benefits to the investment cannot be justified, at present this certificate course is not offered. The main reason is the limited time encountered by the undergraduates to follow the programme. Hence, inadequate time plays a major role as a barrier to acquire necessary skills.

The library mainly renders service to two faculties located at *Makandura*. It seemed that facilities are adequate (total volume of texts, number of copies, no. of journals, space, etc.) to

improve the reading skills of the undergraduates. However, the review team revealed that time is limited to use the reference materials available at the library.

Though the evaluation of external degree programme falls outside the purview of the review, it was observed that the interaction with the experienced personnel (in external degree programme) in agriculture sector, the undergraduates receive a guideline to shape-up their personalities with necessary skills. In fact, the students get some exposure to the future demand, and as a result, develop positive attitudes to acquire skills.

Despite the above physical and human resources available to acquire skills necessary to mould an agriculture graduate, it is very unfortunate to state that still *farm* component is missing in the overall framework of the Faculty. This, in fact, is one of the important elements in an agricultural training institute. The skills achieved by undertaking field practical exercises in crop production, livestock, farm equipment will greatly contribute to the subjects such as, farm and project planning, estimation of cost of production, farm accounting, record keeping, *etc.* which are included in the curriculum of this department. As a whole agriculture graduate should receive adequate skills in related disciplines for their future performances. Therefore, a farm is urgently warranted to develop the practical skills of the undergraduates.

In many instances the subject review team observed that students are compelled to refrain from gaining skills from available physical and human resources, due to time limitation. This problem is basically tied to the requirement of significantly higher number of credits (169) by the undergraduates.

In relation to the skills development the judgment of the team is GOOD.

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

The academic guidance is provided by allocating 5-6 students per staff member. This, in fact, a policy of the faculty, and the staff members serve as academic counsellors. However, some students are not well aware of this arrangement, hence as a result, the contacts are not much significant. Therefore, it is important to launch a strong awareness programme, and implement a monitoring system. Such efforts will facilitate to understand the effectiveness and the weaknesses of the programme. In addition to the above the department has made a special arrangement to offer counselling service to the students during the 3rd and the 4th years once they are confined to specialization programme by allocation of 3-4 students per staff member. This arrangement will facilitate students to undertake the academic activities comfortably in the purview of the department.

The framework of the university student counselling service includes a senior student counsellor to the faculty and two student counsellors. This service seems to advise students on the problems such as financial, food, hostel, *etc.* The counsellors have got short-term training on the subject, therefore, it is expected to perform an effective service. However, the team observed that the Quality Assurance cell at the University level is not functioning well. Hence, a measure has to be taken to reactivate its functions.

The Career Guidance Unit of the University has appointed a faculty coordinator to execute its programmes. In this framework, the career guidance activities are planned with the collaboration of external agencies. The review team observed that there are 26 such activities for the year 2009. Accordingly the faculty has requested 11 programmes to its students. The career guidance programmes focus on the development of personal skills, talent improvements, career pathways, career discipline, and personality improvements, *etc.* More

importantly, the unit makes immense effort to improve the employability of the students by organizing job fairs, making links with employers to find vacancies and informing the details to the job seekers. Most of the programmes are executed during the week-ends to receive higher number of participants. However, participation and practice of knowledge, and skills gained by such programmes (talents, dance, music, group work, etc.) are greatly constrained by time limitation. In this environment extra-curricular activities cannot be expected. In fact, students are much confined to examination mentality and spend a rigid pattern of life. This, in fact, is a deviation from a creative university culture.

In relation to the academic guidance and counseling the judgment of the team is GOOD.

Based on the observations made during the visit by the Review Team and as per the facts discussed above the judgments given to those eight aspects under review are as follows:

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment Given
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student Feedback	Good
Postgraduate Studies	Satisfactory
Peer Observation	Good
Skills Development	Good
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Good

5. CONCLUSIONS

The strengths/ good practices and weakness identified by the Review Team in each of the eight aspects of evaluation of this review are as below.

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths / Good Practices.

- Execution of research paper development, and In-plant training components can be regarded as prominent features of the academic programme.

Weaknesses:

- Considerably higher number of credits (169) for the programme, high credit volume (4 credits) in some courses, duplication of course content, and omissions of important courses are limitations.

The judgment assigned to this aspect is "Satisfactory"

2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Strengths / Good practices

- Employing of good assessment methods, and publication of research outcomes in a recognized style (AGRES) are, in fact, good practices.

Weaknesses:

- Limited distribution of handouts, use of temporary staff, and limited agriculture flavour in certain subjects are general weaknesses found in the programme.

The judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"

3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement

Strengths / Good Practices

- The department maintains high calibre of academic advancement and as a result, the passed-out graduates find immediate employment.

Weaknesses:

- Not found

The judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"

4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Strengths/ Good Practices

- The procedure applied in the framework of student feedback, and further recording the outcomes are in acceptable form.

Weaknesses:

- Post-evaluation of the improvements made after a period of time is yet to come.

The judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"

5. Postgraduate Studies

Strengths/Good Practices:

- Effort made to start a postgraduate course in 2009 is appreciated.

Weaknesses:

- Not found (as there is no programme to evaluate)

The judgment assigned to this aspect is "Satisfactory"

6. Peer Observation

Strengths / Good Practices

- The instruments used in peer evaluation, as junior by junior and junior by senior are effective.

Weaknesses:

- A method has to be developed to identify the improvements or progress made after the evaluation.

*The judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"*

7. Skills Development

Strengths / Good Practices

- The opportunities provided to acquire necessary skills through research paper development, In-plant training, computer programmes, language programmes, library, etc. are on the positive side.

*The judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"*

Weaknesses:

- Time is seriously limited to acquire skills, even though physical and human resources are available. Moreover, failure to establish a farm so far, is a real barrier to acquire skills in practical agriculture.

8. Academic Guidance and Counseling

Strengths / Good Practices

- Appointment of student counsellors for the faculty, and programme planning activities of the Career Guidance Unit can be regarded as positive actions.

Weaknesses:

- The functions of academic counsellors and the contacts made with the students have to be improved.

*The judgment assigned to this aspect is "**Good**"*

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are useful to undertake in order to improve the academic programme of the Department of Agribusiness Management.

1. Reduce the number of credits from 169 to 120 to be par with the international norms and the norms of other state universities. This can be achieved by reducing credit volume from 4 to 3 credits, avoiding repetitions and duplications of certain subjects, and also removing unnecessary subjects such as computer hardware.
2. Revise curricula in every three years to fit into the needs of the future while introducing new subjects. Improvements should be introduction of the course outlines and teaching plans by incorporating an introduction about each course, and details of references and their relationships to each topic taught.
3. Learning outcomes of individual subjects should be developed relating to the overall learning outcomes of the degree programme.

4. Introduce new subjects such as technology transfer and management in agriculture and fundamental courses such as sociology, culture, history, and psychology with a focus on agriculture during the first year.
5. Provide handouts, and increase the involvement of senior staff in the delivery of lectures by the temporary staff.
6. The skill development component has to be fortified by establishing a farm. In fact, this is a must.
7. The academic counsellors' service can be further improved by strengthening student-staff interaction.
8. The students spend a rigid life pattern without much involvement in extra-curricular activities. Time-bound academic work has to be reduced, giving them time for such activities, and relaxation.

7. ANNEXES

Annex 1. AGENDA FOR THE REVIEW VISIT

Day 1

- 08.30-09.00 Private Meeting of Review Panel with QAA Council Representatives
09.00-09.30 Discuss the Agenda for the Visit
09.30-10.30 Meeting(s) with the Vice Chancellor/Chairman, Internal QA Unit/Dean Head of the Dept/Head, Faculty QA Cell etc. (*Working Tea*)
10.30-11.30 Department presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
11.30-12.30 Discussion
12.30-13.30 *Lunch*
13.30-14.30 Observing Department Facilities
14.30-15.30 Observing Other Facilities (Library, Computer Centre, Farms etc.)
15.30-16.30 Meeting with Department Academic Staff
16.30-17.30 Meeting with undergraduate Students
17.30-18.30 Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 2

- 09.00-09.30 Observing Teaching – Lecture
09.30-10.00 Observing Teaching – Lecture
10.00-11.00 Observing Documents (*Working Tea*)
11.00-12.00 Meeting with Technical Staff and Other Non-Academic Staff
12.00-12.30 Meeting with Postgraduate Students
12.30-13.30 *Lunch*
13.30-14.00 Observing Teaching – Lecture
14.00-14.30 Observing Teaching – Lecture
14.30-15.00 Observing Students’ – Presentations
15.00-15.30 Observing Teaching – Practical Class
15.30-16.30 Meeting with Special Degree Students
16.30-17.00 Meeting of Reviewers

Day 3

- 09.00-09.30 Observing Teaching – Practical Class
09.30-10.00 Observing Teaching – Practical Class
10.00-10.30 Meetings Student Councillors/Academic Advisors/Personal Tutors
10.30-11.00 Reviewers Private Discussion
11.00-12.00 Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting
12.00-13.30 *Lunch*
13.00-17.00 Report Writing

NOTE: Based on the above, you are kindly requested to prepare an agenda for the visit which could be finalized with the Review Panel on Day 1 of the visit