PROGRAMME REVIEW REPORT

B.Sc (Special) in Agriculture

Faculty of Agriculture

Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

16th to 19th, December, 2019

Review Panel: **Prof. S.C. Jayamanne (Chair)**
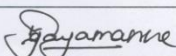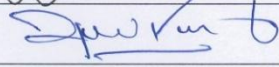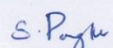**Prof. B.P.A. Jayaweera (member)**
Dr. PoongothaiSelvarajan (member)

Quality Assurance Council

University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

University: **Rajarata University of Sri Lanka**

Faculty: Faculty of Agriculture

Program: B. Sc. Special in Agriculture

Review Panel: Prof. S.C. Jayamanne (Chair)
                  Prof. B.P.A.Jayaweera (member)
                  Dr. Poongothai Selvarajan (member)

Name	Signature
Prof. S.C. Jayamanne	
Prof. B.P.A. Jayaweera	
Dr. Poongothai Selvarajan	

Date: 19th December 2019

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Section 1. Introduction to the programme

1.1 Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

The Rajarata University was established on 7th November, 1995 under Section 25 of the Universities Act no. 16 of 1978, by amalgamating University colleges in the Central, North Central and North Western Provinces. Currently the University has six Faculties, namely, the Faculty of Agriculture, the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Faculty of Management Studies, the Faculty of Medicine & Allied Sciences, the Faculty of Social Sciences & Humanities and the Faculty of Technology. The main administrative complex, the Faculties of Applied Sciences, Management Studies, Social Sciences and Humanities and Technology are located at Mihintale while the Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Medicine and Allied Sciences are located in Puliyankulama and Saliyapura, respectively.

1.2 Faculty of Agriculture

The Faculty of Agriculture was established in 2001 with the aim of developing sustainable agricultural systems particularly focused on the production environment of the dry zone of Sri Lanka, utilizing rural farm settings and natural resources effectively. The Faculty of Agriculture offers a Bachelor of Science Honours degree in Agriculture, which is of four years duration with an aim of achieving the above goal. Four academic Departments, namely, Agricultural Engineering and Soil Science (ES), Agricultural Systems (AS), Animal and Food Sciences (AF and Plant Sciences (PS) offer different courses for the BScHons in Agriculture, during the eight semesters of study. The core programme, which span the first five semesters, are compulsory for all students. Students can select the specialization modules during the 6th and 7th semesters based on their preference. Specialization modules that may be selected include those in Engineering, Agricultural Systems and Management, Animal Production Technology, Crop Science, Environmental Soil Management and Food and Postharvest Technology. The contribution of each Department to the Degree Programme is given below.

1.3 Departments

1.3.1 Department of Agricultural Engineering and Soil Science (AESS)

AESS offers twelve courses covering 23 credits in the core programme; they are related to Farm Machinery, Soil Science and Water Management. AESS has sophisticated laboratory facilities with modern analytical instruments, a well-equipped engineering workshop, engineering drawing room, an electronic and GIS laboratory. The Department has highly qualified staff with a wide range of professional skills and helps students to identify problems in the agricultural sector. The students can select Agriculture Engineering module or Environmental Soil Management module offered by the Department of AESS as a majoring module from the 6th semester.

1.3.2 Department of Agricultural Systems (DAS)

DAS offers twelve courses in the core programme, covering 22 credits relevant to agricultural economics, agricultural extension and agricultural systems. The students can select Agricultural Economics and Extension or Agricultural Systems and Management as majoring modules from the 6th semester from the Department of DAS.

1.3.3 Department of Plant Sciences (DPS)

DPS offers courses related to crop science and agricultural biology. DPS offers fourteen courses covering 32 credits for the core program. The students can elect Crop Science or Agricultural Biology as the majoring module from the 6th semester from this Department.

1.3.4 Department of Animal and Food Sciences (AFS)

AFS offers 11 course modules to the core program covering 19 credits. Those who wish to select majoring modules of Animal Production and Technology or Food and Post-Harvest Technology will have to join the AFS from the 6th semester.

All students receive an industrial training of one month's duration in the 7th Semester and conduct a guided, individual, research project during the 8th semester.

1.4 Infrastructure Facilities

The Faculty is located in Puliyankulama and is equipped with necessary infrastructure, furniture, and other equipment to provide support to both lecturers and students. Each staff member has his/her room with necessary facilities for studying, research, and meeting with students. The faculty has 4 lecture halls with 165 capacity and 4 small lecture halls with a capacity of equal or less than 50. Departments of the Faculty have laboratory facilities, conference rooms, production units etc required for the students majoring in these Departments. The Faculty also has ICT facilities, ELTD, Audio-Visual Center, Out-Reach center, Auditorium, Engineering workshop, Technology Incubation Centre and many more infrastructure facilities. The physical resources of the Faculty are commendable. All the students of the Faculty enjoy hostel facilities and the students are happy with accommodation facility they have. Medical centers for Western Medicine and Ayurveda medicine were available for students.

1.5 B.Sc. (Special) in Agriculture degree

The degree programme is focused to provide sound theoretical and practical knowledge in the discipline of Agriculture. It is dedicated to realize the vision of the faculty that is to be a dynamic, innovative and renowned center for excellence in Agriculture.

The curriculum of the B.Sc. in Agriculture (Special) degree has been designed to meet the requirement of SLQF Level 6. The study programme consists of 129 credits and it includes both an internship training programme and a research study. The programme covers four academic years of learning. An academic year consists of two semesters. All undergraduate students

enrolled in the Faculty of Agriculture are required to follow a core programme in the first five semesters of the study.

1.6 Student Enrolment

The number of students in the Department during the past four years is given in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 Number of students following BSc in Agriculture

Faculty	Department /Unit	General/Study stream/Special*	Year 1 2015		Year 2 2016		Year 3 2017		Year 4 2018	
			M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Agriculture RUSL	All	Special	58	103	30	87	40	92	23	60
	Total		**161**		**117**		**132**		**83**	

The students are enrolled by the University Grants Commission and the annual intake of the students was 150. Since its inception in 2001, 15 batches have graduated from the B.Sc. in Agriculture (Special) Degree.

1.7 Academic, Academic Support and Non–Academic Staff

The staff of the Faculty of Agriculture consists of one Senior Professor, three Professors, 33 Senior Lecturers (including 21 PhD holders and 12 with post graduate qualifications), 11 reading for post graduate degrees, and five probationary Lecturers, one Computer Instructor and 30 Demonstrators. A Senior Assistant Librarian is also attached to the Faculty. The actual student staff ratio is 25: 1 (excluding those on study leave).

Further, the Faculty has three administrative grade officers (Assistant Registrar, Assistant Bursar and a Farm Manager), 13 clerical and allied grades, 11 technical officer and allied grades, 2 sub wardens and 27 support staff.

1.8 Response of the Faculty to Previous Programme/Subject Review

The Faculty has undergone subject reviews earlier as given in the table below

Department	Period of Site Visit
Department of Soil and Water Resources Management	22nd - 24th November 2005
Department of Plant Sciences	03rd - 05th April 2006
Department of Agricultural Systems	19th – 21st Feb 2007

Following the above reviews, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council of the Ministry of Higher Education has submitted a composite report to the Dean/Agriculture on 13th Feb. 2009, indicating 13 weaknesses that could be rectified within the faculty and 3 weaknesses that could be overcome with external support. They have also made recommendations to overcome weaknesses and improve quality, by providing recommendations in 30 bullet points.

The review team notes that the faculty has not submitted evidence to show that recommendations have been considered and remedial measures were taken.

Section 2. Observations on the Self Evaluation Report

The Self-Evaluation Report (SER) submitted by the Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University with regard to the B.Sc. Special Degree in Agriculture complies with the guidelines given in the Manual for Review of Undergraduate study programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions published by the University Grants Commission in 2015. The SER preparation process has been started at the Faculty Board in August 2018 by identifying eight members for each criterion and the Coordinator of the IQAC as the Chairman of the SER writing team. Another team of academics were appointed by the IQAC as supportive writers.

All the programme writers and supportive members were trained through one workshop held in the University premises and programme writers have undergone training at the workshop held by QAC for programme writers in Colombo.

The process of SER preparation given in Annex 4 of the SER included 11 discussion meetings, numbered as PR/1 – PR/11 but counts to 10 (PR/5 is missing). It was evident that first three meetings were dedicated for progress discussions while PR/4 onwards was for initial draft discussions of each criterion. However, it was noted that initial draft discussion on criterion 7 has not taken place. Monitoring and finalizing of SER was done under the supervision of the Dean, Prof. JayanthaAdhikari, Senior Prof. AruniWeerasinghe, Advisor to the Faculty IQAC, Dr. D.M.S. Duminda, Director, IQAU, RUSL and Dr. D.A.U.D. Devasinghe, Coordinator, IQAC, FoA.

The SWOT analysis included in the SER is limited to one page but the process followed in preparing it was not clearly mentioned. The process and dates of the SWOT analysis and participants have not been indicated in the SER preparation process (Annex 4).

The SER team has attempted to comprehensively describe the extent to which the study programme complies with the standards of the eight criteria in Chapter 3. Under each criterion, the serial number of the standard, claims of compliance with the standard, list of the documentary evidence to support each claim of compliance, and the codes of the evidence used have been listed. However, repetition of the same code for different documents and typographical errors were also observed.

It was evident that the lists of the documentary evidence to support each claim of compliance in many criteria / standards were supportive. However, across some criteria / standards, the lists of the documentary evidence were irrelevant or insufficient to support or address the relevant criteria/standard.

During the site visit, it was observed that all the staff attached to the Departments have participated with enthusiasm in program review. Specially, the participation of the Dean and Senior Professors in site visits and during entire visit is highly appreciated. The team also appreciates the support given to them in a positive manner to requests made by the Review Team for further information and documentation.

The Faculty provided a Corporate Plan and the Action plan of the Faculty. The degree programme was well aligned with the mission, goals and objectives of the Corporate Plan of the

University. The graduate profile was included in the SER and it is evident that the Student Centered Learning (SCL) and Outcome Based Education (OBE) approaches were adopted by the programme. The standards and quality of the programme was also aligned well with the SLQF.

The recommendations given in the previous Subject Review conducted in 2005-2007 and the actions taken to rectify the weaknesses indicated were not included in the SER. It is not evident in the SER whether the remedial measures have been implemented to rectify deficiencies identified at previous subject reviews as indicated in the composite report sent to the Faculty in 2009, and also obstacles encountered in implementation of previous recommendations and constraints were not described.

Section 3. A Brief Description of the Review Process

The review process commenced with training of Programme Reviewers by the QAC at the UGC on 30.05.2019. A pre-review meeting was held on 4th July 2019 and the SERs of the respective degree programmes were distributed to the three selected reviewers for desk evaluation. The Review Team then conducted desk evaluations individually following the guidelines given in the "Manual for Review of Undergraduate Study Programmes of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions" published by the UGC in July 2015, based on the evidence given in the SER of the Rajarata University. The facts and findings of each reviewer was discussed at the pre-site visit meeting held on 02.08.2019 at PIM and the Review Team came to consensus regarding the given marks.

The agenda of the four-day visit was prepared and sent by the Dean/Agriculture, Rajarata University and with the agreement of the review team members, the schedule was finalized and submitted to D/QAC. The final site visit program schedule is attached in Annex I.

The Review Team visited the University during the period 16th to 19th December 2019, to physically verify the claims made in the SER. The Review Team met at the room assigned to them and planned the activities according to the schedule of the site visit prepared by the University. The review team evaluated the eight criteria based on:

- The presentation made by the Dean
- Information gathered at meetings held with staff and other parties as indicated in the program schedule (Annex II).
- Information gathered during the observation of physical facilities and other facilities available at the Faculty of Agriculture (Annex III).
- Reviewing all documentary evidence furnished by the Faculty.
- Observing teaching/Learning sessions and practical classes.
- Having discussions with SER writing team to get clarifications.
- Reviewing research publications and available documents.

The Review Team first met the Director/IQAU and the Coordinator/IQAC of Agriculture and discussed about the process of SER. Then the review team met the Dean/Faculty of Agriculture who made a detailed presentation on the current status and performance of the faculty. The team travelled to Mihintale to meet the Vice Chancellor and had a meeting with him followed by a meeting with the Director/Physical Education, all instructors, Medical Officer and CGU Director. Physical facilities of Sports Centre, CGU and Medical Centers were visited by the review team. Other meetings held during the site visit are given Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. Meetings held during the Site visit to Rajarata University

No.	Meeting	Venue	No. Staff Participated
1	Meeting with the Vice Chancellor	VC's Office	09
2	IQAU/Director, Coordinator/IQAC	Dean's Office	02
3	Dean's presentation	Board Room/Agriculture	35
4	Meeting with D/SDC	SDC	01
5	Meeting with D/CGU	CGU office	01
6	Meeting with D/Physical Education	Physical Education Centre	01
7	Meeting with HoD's	Board Room/Agriculture	04
8	Meeting with Academic staff	Board Room/Agriculture	28
9	Meeting with Temporary Academic staff	Board Room/Agriculture	34
10	Meeting with Senior Assistant Librarian	Library	03
11	Meeting with Proctor/Student Counsellors and Mentors.	Board Room/Agriculture	09
12	Meeting with Directors of Centers/Units	Board Room/Agriculture	04
13	Meeting with Administrative staff	Board Room/Agriculture	04
14	Meeting with Students	Board Room/Agriculture	48
15	Meeting with Research Committee	Board Room/Agriculture	07
16	Meeting with Technical Officers	Board Room/Agriculture	10
17	Meeting with Academic support/non-academics	Board Room/Agriculture	17
18	Meeting with Alumni	Board Room/Agriculture	14
19	Meeting with External Stakeholders	Board Room/Agriculture	12
20	Meeting with ELTU Staff	Board Room/Agriculture	05
21	Wrap up Meeting	Board Room/Agriculture	37

The Review Team discussed the relevant details regarding the degree programme at each of these meetings and the information received was valuable for reviewing and the meetings were highly satisfactory. It was noted that all staff members including Academic, Administrative& non-academics, Students, Alumni and Stakeholders are satisfied with the way the faculty is

conducting teaching/learning practice. However, the students expressed that their workload is high. Alumni was found to be strong and highly supportive and it was observed the faculty is not utilizing the support fully.

During the site visit the Review Team has visited various facilities and centers. The physical facilities observed during the site visit are given in Appendix II. The Review Team visited and observed all the facilities listed in the Appendix II and noted that the facilities are highly satisfactory and functioning well. During the meetings the team discussed the progress of each center/unit and the difficulties they face and observed the facilities. The attendance in the meetings and the site visits made by the Review Team are given in Appendices III and IV.

The Review Team observed teaching /learning sessions of second and third years and practical sessions conducted at the soil science and engineering laboratory. The facilities available at the class rooms and Laboratories are good and the Review Team was satisfied with the teaching/learning methods adopted.

The Review Team scrutinized the documents made available to them to verify the documentary evidences as given in SER. The evidences were organized in a user friendly manner facilitating the review process. After scrutinizing each criterion the team has called the leader of the Criterion and verified the evidences provided and requested for additional evidence required. All additional information requested by the Review Team in order to verify certain processes and practices were provided promptly by the coordinator and the SER writing team, when available.

The Review Team is highly satisfied with the arrangements made by the Dean/Agriculture to facilitate the conduct of the review visit and the hospitality extended to the Review Team during their stay by the Dean/Agriculture, the Coordinator of the SER and the SER writing team. All of them were pleasant and highly cooperative in the process.

The physical resources of the faculty are commendable and are fully utilized for the teaching/learning process. The Faculty has won an AHEAD Grant and could utilize it for further improvement of the faculty.

The wrap–up meeting was held on the 19th of December, in the presence of the Vice Chancellor and 37 academic staff members of the Faculty to conclude the review. During the meeting the reviewers conveyed their views, observations and findings to the members of the faculty. A very productive and positive discussion on improving the quality of the programme was carried out and after the site visit the key findings and the final report was submitted to the QAC of the UGC.

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

The Review team observed that the overall approach of the Faculty on quality assurance and management is moving towards the expected standards. The University has an established IQAU and IQAC of the Faculty of Agriculture. However, it was noted that the Faculty IQAC needs to liaise more with the IQAU and engage in quality enhancement activities as a continuous process. IQAU has initiated getting student feedback and peer observation reports and conducted a workshop on OBE recently. The review team recommends further strengthening the process with involvement of the IQAC and continuing for the betterment of the students. The faculty has experienced and well qualified academic staff members to conduct a quality academic programme. All the academic staff have undergone the Certificate course in Teaching in Higher Education conducted through SDC. Strength of the academic staff should be used fully to strengthen the degree programme.

FoA has adopted SLQF guidelines in preparation of the curriculum and award of the degree is aligned with SLQF. However, the credit requirement for the degree and non-GPA compulsory courses exceeds SLQF norms of notional hours for the programme. The Faculty has conducted curriculum revisions at regular intervals of 4-5 years and a Curriculum Development policy document has been approved by the university in 2019. The new curriculum incorporates a Graduate profile, ILOs, and KSAM mapping. OBE and SCL have also been incorporated into the study programme, but the review team observes that OBE/SCL needs to be further strengthened and that ILOs should be aligned with PLOs.

The faculty offers independent research study and an internship in industries to students in the fourth year as a part of teaching and learning strategy exposing them to the world of work. The review team feels that the duration of the internship needs to be further extended.

Section 5.Judgement on the eight Criteria of programme Review

Criterion 1: Programme Management

Strengths:

- The Faculty adopts good practices as adhering to the Universities Act, By-Laws and the Management Guide in making decisions on academic, examinations and other staff and student matters.
- The Faculty conducts regular Faculty Board meetings in order to update and maintain smooth academic and administrative practices.
- In every circumstance, notices are being given to the students especially the Academic calendars, Semester timetables and examination timetables to maintain a student friendly learning environment at the faculty.
- Annual Internal and External Audit records have been maintained regularly.
- Student Charter in three languages, Prospectus and Student Handbook are available in the Faculty website.
- LMS is in operation and the staff and students are actively engaged in academic activities through the LMS.
- Though there is limited space for Faculty library, services are very innovative and excellent. The enthusiastic efforts taken by the Senior Assistant Librarian towards the academic learning are really appreciable.
- Work Load for each category of staff is being practiced by the faculty based on the standards given by the QAC.
- Student counsellors and mentors are appointed for the faculty to deal with the student matters. Especially, the appointments of a Senior Student Counsellor and batch mentors for the faculty is appreciated.
- Sufficient facilities were given to the students at the hostel and there is a provision for accommodating students with temporary or permanent disability on the ground floor.
- Prospectuses are available for the period of 2007-2011 and 2014-2018.

Weaknesses:

- ToRs exist for different *ad hoc* committees but are lacking for standing committees.
- Comprehensive mentoring reports are not available.
- Most of the Policy documents have received Senate approval only recently, although they may have been in practice.
- There is no exit point in the existing curriculum
- Insufficient evidence for inclusion of feedback and comments from the industry stakeholders' during the current curriculum revision process.
- No information on IQAC displayed in the Faculty web-site.
- No Student Hand Books available except Student Hand Book- 2019.

- The practice of HoDs meeting with the Dean has been introduced only recently, in early 2019.
- Standard practices of department meetingscould be strengthened
- Faculty Action plan has been started recently.
- In total four curriculum revisions have taken place, but there was no evidence available to show that the recommendations made by those reviews are used for continuous improvement of the programme
- Incomplete evidence of the support by faculty for the cultural activities of students for each culture.
- There is insufficientinformation in the Student Handbook on code of conduct and Anti-Ragging and SGBV.

Criterion 2: Human and Physical Resources

Strengths:

- Qualified and energetic academic staff with a positive mindset is available to conduct the academic programme.
- All academic members have completed Induction training provided through Staff Development Centre.
- Library facilities are available at Faculty level and provide a good service.
- The faculty offers English Courses at pre-orientation, non-credited, and as complementary sessions
- Organizing many social and multi-cultural events to promote harmony and cohesion among the students.
- Recently prepared HR Policy (2019) is available.

Weaknesses:

- No mechanism to obtain stakeholder feedback in a systematic way for implementation of OBE-SCL.

Criterion 3: Programme Design and Development

Strengths

- New Curriculum Development policy document has been approved by the University (2019)
- Curriculum revision has been undertaken in regular intervals of 4-5 years

- Curriculum has been developed by getting views of internal and external experts, and alumni
- The graduate profile has been identified for the new curriculum
- Services of a consultant has been taken and new Curriculum Development (CD) was done by taking the report as a base
- Training on CD has been given to staff from time to time
- KSAM mapping is available
- Student feedback on teaching is initiated.
- More senior staff are involved in CRC, QAC, CGU, SDC, UBL at university level and hold key positions
- All academic staff members have completed Staff Development certificate course
- Inter disciplinary and supplementary courseshave been introduced to curriculum to promote generic skills
- Degree awarding criteria are aligned to SLQF and the degree name has been changed

Weaknesses

- Faculty policy on Curriculum development is not documented and used in process of CD.
- Minutes of the CDC/CRC are not specific, informative and conclusive
- Programme ILOs/course ILOs have not been listed in prospectus 2014-2018, nor was there awareness among students regarding ILOs
- There was lack of awareness among students regarding Graduate Attributes and Generic Graduate Attributes (GGAs).
- No evidence on follow-up actions taken by CDC/CRC/FB based on the comments of employers.
- Course /programme matrix, level outcomes, constructive alignment of ILOs are not well documented.
- Programme specifications are lacking.
- Student hand book does not include complete information required by students
- SCL and OBE components are not specified in all courses and communicated to students.
- Inadequate evidence for the incorporation of comments from Industry/Employers at the stakeholders meeting in course development
- No fall-back option.
- No evidence on follow up actions based on module evaluation, student satisfaction survey and actions taken were not communicated to students.
- The selection criteria for Faculty awards and Dean's list are not sufficiently widely disseminated.

Criterion 4: Course/ Module Design and Development

Strengths:

- Curriculum revision has been undertaken with participation of external and internal experts
- SCL concepts have been attempted much in teaching and learning, and supported self-directed learning
- SLQF and SBS have been considered in course design
- Feedback on courses and LMS has been initiated
- Graduate profile has been developed for the new curriculum
- Prospectus are in place and made available to students
- Variety of assessments are in place for self-directed learning
- Some courses use variety of media and software/ICT application in delivery
- SDC programmes are provided to newly appointed staff to fill the training need
- Faculty and the university provide appropriate resources for design and delivery of programme
- Faculty has newly established IQAC and allocated resources
- Faculty gets the service of internal and external examiners in assessment and second marking has been initiated

Weaknesses:

- Representation from industry and alumni in curriculum revision process is not adequate
- Course ILOs are not mapped against L&T methods and assessment
- Course specifications are not informative enough and also not communicated to students at the beginning of each semester
- Awareness of students on OBE is not sufficient
- End users were unaware of the availability of student handbooks in 2017 or 2018 and how to use them.
- Credit requirement for the degree is high (129) and non-GPA compulsory courses exceed SLQF norms of notional hours for the programme
- Students take more than 4 years to complete the degree programme
- Blended learning is limited to certain courses
- Curriculum planning documents and course proposal forms/ course approval policy are not approved by CDC, FB and Senate
- No attention is paid to differently-abled students in course design, delivery and assessment
- Internal monitoring strategies to evaluate and improve courses by IQAC need further improvements

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Criterion 5: Teaching and Learning

Strengths:

- Faculty has vision and mission and L & T strategies are based on the institution's mission
- Faculty has Action plan aligned with university corporate/strategic plan
- Peer review of teaching has been initiated
- Infrastructure and support for differently abled students are being introduced at relevant places.
- Faculty has incorporated self-directed learning strategies
- Faculty follows learning and teaching strategies which are not gender biased
- Group and collaborative learning has been incorporated by different departments
- Faculty has adopted research culture and supported student and staff publications and initiated online journals
- Faculty promotes the use of physical resources appropriately
- Faculty has initiated to monitor work load and work norms

Weaknesses:

- Peer review process needs further improvements in reporting actions based on peer reviews to relevant committees
- Focus on blended learning has room for improvement
- Insufficient evidence on use of appropriate tools to collect data and feedback in coordinated mechanism on L&T,leading to improvement of effectiveness of delivery
- Minutes of *ad hoc* committees and reports not submitted to FB for information and approval

Criterion 6: Learning Environment, Student Support and Progression

Strengths:

- Student-friendly administrative, academic and technical support system available.
- Induction programme is conducted for all incoming students.
- The good library services and ICT-led tools to facilitate students
- Use of library and information resources is integrated into learning process.
- Active academic/social interaction between the Faculty and students.
- Students are encouraged through co-curricular activities such as sports and aesthetic program.
- Students are provided with good soft skills, library training and ICT training
- Learning experience is enhanced through internships and field visits.
- The faculty networks with the alumni to assist students in preparing for their professional future

- Employability surveys were conducted

Weaknesses:

- Insufficient evidence of monitoring outcomes being used for improvement of the programme
- Insufficient evidence on follow up on the progression of students by the faculty and feed back
- The faculty has no appropriate infrastructure, delivery strategies and academic support services to meet the needs of differently abled students

Criterion 7: Student Assessment and Awards

Strengths:

- The faculty adopts and follows plenty of formative assessment methods to enhance the required theoretical and practical skills of students.
- The Review Team observed that the LMS is being operated in student learning and assessment processes except for the final examination.
- The practice of awarding the students in different specializations at the convocation is admirable.
- Scrutiny boards are in practice.

Weaknesses:

- Though Course Specification and Assessment strategies are on par with the SLQF and SBS, the faculty has taken the initiatives very recently.
- Insufficient guidance for students in the Prospectus on choosing the specialization.
- The process of getting the feedback from Moderators and Second Examiners have been initiated recently and requires further strengthening.
- Credits allocated for Industrial Training is not sufficient
- Information of teaching hours and the notional hours are not included in the Lesson Plans
- Examination manual was not found in the website as stated in the SER.
- Considering the special requests of students in examinations, only the records are available for 2019.

Criterion 8: Innovative and Healthy Practices

Strengths:

- The LMS is used by both students and staff for efficient delivery of lessons and assessments.
- Faculty has adopted mechanisms for fostering research and applied for several patents.
- Undergraduate research projects and internship programme are in place as a part of the teaching and learning strategy
- The students' participation at regional and national level in quiz competition and sports are higher.
- The Faculty has promoted various co-curricular activities such as social, cultural and aesthetic pursuits, community and industry-related activities for students and staff

Weaknesses:

- Adoption of Open Educational Resources (OER) and Personal Development Learning is poor and needs strengthening.
- No credit transfer system.
- Reward system needs to be formalized and implemented to encourage academics for achieving excellence in research activities.
- The time allocated for internship programme is not adequate.
- No strong evidence on collaboration with various international, national, governmental and non-governmental agencies sufficient.
- No University approved policy and guidelines for fall back option.

Section 6. Grading of overall performance

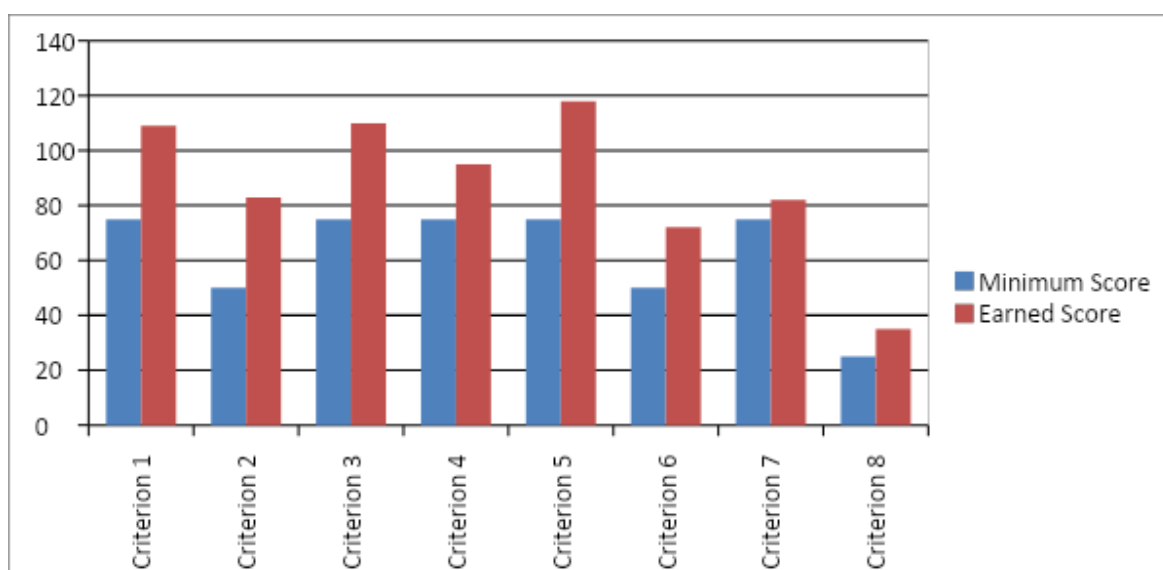| N o	Criterion	Weighted minimum score*	Actual criterion-wise score
1	Programme Management	75	109
2	Human and Physical Resources	50	83
3	Programme Design and Development	75	110
4	Course /Module Design and Development	75	95
5	Teaching and Learning	75	118
6	Learning, Environment, Student Support and Progression	50	72
7	Student Assessment and Awards	75	82
8	Innovative and Healthy practices	25	35
	Total on a thousand scale	7053	
	Percentage score	70.5 %	

Figure 1. Scores earned by the programme in eight criteria against minimum score

Grade: B (Good)

The study program under review has attained a good level of quality expected of a program of study and we propose further improvement in the highlighted areas to achieve excellence.

Section 7. Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations:

- The faculty has staff strength of 44, and about half the number are PhD holders.
- All the staff in the faculty has the commitment and dedication and their team work towards the achievement of faculty goal is very much appreciated.
- In the University, the senior academics of the Faculty of Agriculture (FoA) hold the chairs in most of the committees.
- There are enough hostel facilities to accommodate all students of the FoA, which is very commendable.
- Appointment of student counsellors and mentors for the Faculty to deal with the student matters. The appointment of a Senior Student Counsellor for the Faculty together with batch mentors is especially appreciated.
- There is provision in the hostels for accommodating students with temporary or permanent disability on the ground floor, so that they don't have to use staircases.
- Separate Library with all facilities, Division of ELTD, Assistant Bursar and the Examination unit for faculty are highly commendable for decentralization.
- The Symposia regularly conducted by the faculty for over 10 years is also a commendable activity by the faculty to enhance the research culture at the faculty.
- The Faculty maintains a good rapport with the alumni and they contribute 60% of scholarships for needy students.

Recommendations:

- It is strongly recommended that the IQAC activities and the information should be stated in the website and it should be linked with the staff profile.
- There are active industrial stakeholders to support the faculty. The faculty should take action to invite them to participate in the curriculum revision/ development and utilize their expertise and also sign MoUs for academic development.
- It is also strongly recommended to make research collaborations with international institutions for academic and research activities.
- The existing programme doesn't have a fall-back option and the faculty should incorporate this mechanism in the forthcoming curriculum revision to enable the students who do not complete the programme successfully to exit at a lower level based on their level of attainment.
- The review team strongly recommends to increase time allocated for internship at the final year 2nd semester to enhance the practical knowledge.
- Similarly, since there are many agriculture faculties in state universities, the Faculty of Agriculture of RUSL may consider credit transfer system for certain courses with other universities**.**

- The amenities in the lecture halls are poor and the faculty should take immediate action to enhance the light, ventilation and monitor the space in order to create a healthy learning environment for students.
- The programmes conducted by the SDC have not been stated in the website. Further, it is strongly recommended to organize regular CPD programmes by the SDC for all categories of staff to enhance their professional skills.
- SDC should conduct annual needs analysis for all staff categories and branches/Units and prioritize CPD programmes to match the faculty action plan
- The composition of the Faculty Research Committee (FRC) should be restructured and it is recommended that the Chairperson of the FRC should be a Senior Academic with adequate research experience to evaluate the eligibility of staff for research allowance and monitor their progress (The Dean or a Head Should not be the Chairperson).
- Faculty sub-committees need to be formalized, meet regularly, minutes maintained and recommendations are made to FB for approval.
- Batch mentors need to identify regular monitoring days for mentoring i.e.: 2-3 times per semester.
- Committee for discussing student grievances (Student-Staff Liaison Committee) with representatives from each batch should be formalized and meet 1-2 times per semester, and recommendations/suggestions to be made FB.
- Student portfolio/e-portfolio to be maintained by students indicating their academic and extracurricular performance for the verification at mentoring session.
- Formal training should be given to all academics to become mentors and student counsellors
- All the feedback forms to be updated, summaries are made available to relevant parties and remedial actions to be reported to stakeholders.
- Descriptive and informative programme specifications and course specification for each semester to be made and made available to students at the beginning of semester.
- Detailed syllabus preferably with hourly breakdown and ILOs for lessons, model questions for assessment to be made available to students
- There are research institutes in Agriculture sector ready to accommodate students for their undergraduate research. The faculty should take action to send the students outside to uplift their knowledge towards the national development.
- The faculty has worked towards commencing a postgraduate programme in Agriculture since there is a huge demand for it. The review panel strongly recommends expediting the process and starting it by the early part of 2020.
- Create greater awareness of the availability of the suggestion box, which is meant to help both the students and the administration.
- A medical doctor visits to the faculty once in a week for two hours and there are two nursing officers (Male and Female). It is not adequate and appropriate to cater to all students and staff. It is recommended to assign one doctor on full time basis (getting the release from the hospital) to serve at the faculty.

- It is recommended that the Gender Equity and Equality Cell in collaboration with SDC should arrange programmes for staff and students to prevent SGBV at the faculty and the University.

Section 8. Summary

The review of the BSc (Special) in Agriculture offered by the Faculty of Agriculture of the Rajarata University was successfully completed, with the site visit held from $16^{th} - 19^{th}$ December 2019. Strengths and weaknesses with regard to the quality of the study program was measured in relation to the eight review criteria specified in the PR Manual of the QAAC at this visit. The SER was prepared by a team appointed by the Faculty Board, and the team had adopted a participatory and inclusive approach in compiling the SER. It was noted that some documentary evidence of good practices was available for a satisfactory period. On the other hand, some evidence was not available for the expected three years, but appears to have been initiated more recently. A few conceptual errors and typographical errors were also noted in the SER. The Faculty was well prepared for the site-visit of the program review. The dedication of the Dean of the Faculty for the program review was commendable. Director-IQAU, Coordinator-IQAC, Heads of the four Departments, SER writers and all academic and administrative staff members extended their fullest cooperation during the site visit.

The degree programme was reviewed in accordance with the guidelines prescribed in the PR Manual and judgment on study programmes was reached based on the assessment of evidence provided against the prescribed best practices and extent of achievements in respective standards defined under the eight review criteria. Documentary evidence as well as the evidence observed by visiting the facilities, discussions with different categories of staff and students were used in arriving at judgment. The review team observed that the degree program is implementing several good practices as described in the Review Manual of the University Grant Commission, Sri Lanka to maintain its quality.

Human and physical resources and facilities available are excellent to conduct the degree program efficiently and effectively. Faculty has its own library. However, the lecture halls need to be converted into less crowded, smart classrooms to enhance the Teaching/Learning process. The classroom sessions observed by the team are interactive and participative.

There are well qualified, experienced senior professors and Professors competent in designing, development and delivery of academic programmes in the Faculty. The young, energetic and enthusiastic senior and probationary academic staff members can be guided by the seniors so that the faculty can upgrade the quality of staff. Further local and foreign trainings are suggested for the staff especially on OBE/SCL teaching methods.

IQAU, CGU SDC and UBL are led by senior academics and are functioning well. SDC could introduce more CPD programmes to increase quality of the staff both academic and administrative. IQAC of the Faculty of Agriculture was established very recently and needs to undertake all the activities leading to quality assurance of the degree programme with the assistance of IQAU. Internal quality assurance policy framework, strategies and an activity plan to support QA activities of the Faculty needs to be established and strengthened.

The degree program offered by the FoA has shown compliance with best practices prescribed and achieved adequate or good scores for most of the standards listed under eight quality criteria. Based on the overall performance score of 70.5%, a Grade of "B" is awarded for the BSc (Special) in Agriculture degree programmes, which is interpreted as "Satisfactory level of accomplishment of quality expected of a program of study; requires improvement in several aspects".

The review team acknowledges the cooperation and support extended by the Vice Chancellor, Dean of the Faculty, Heads of Departments, Heads of the Centers and Units, Director of IQAU, Coordinator of IQAC and all academic and non-academic staff members and students of the degree program during the entire process of the program review. We sincerely hope that our comments will help in improving the quality of the Special degree programme of Agriculture in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Rajarata.

Annex I. Program schedule for site visit

PROGRAMME REVIEW
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, RAJARATA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA
SCHEDULE FOR SITE VISIT

Day 1 (16th December 2019)

Time	Activity	Participants
8.30 am – 8.45 am	Meeting with the Director – IQAU and Coordinator IQAC	Director – IQAU and Coordinator IQAC
8.45 am – 10.30 am	Presentation about the Faculty and respective study programs by the Dean of the Faculty *Working Tea*	Dean / Director-IQAU/Coordinator IQAC/ All HODs of the Faculty/ SER Team
10.30 am – 10.45 am	Traveling to Mihintale	
10.45 am – 11.15 am	Meeting with the Vice Chancellor	Vice Chancellor/ Dean, Director – IQAU/ Coordinator – IQAC, Chair – SER Preparation
11.15 am – 12.15 am	Meeting on support for student welfare and observing physical facilities at Mihintale	Director/Physical Education, University Medical Officer
12.15 am – 12.30pm	Travelling to Puliyankulama	
12.30 pm – 1.30 pm	*Lunch*	
1.30 am – 2.00 pm	Meeting with academic staff in permanent cadre (excluding HOD)	Teaching panel of respective programs (excluding HODs) Senate representatives
2.00 pm - 2.30 pm	Meeting with temporary academic staff	Temporary Lecturers/Temporary Demonstrators, Tutors
2. 30 pm – 5.00 pm	Document Observation *Working Tea*	Review Team/ SER writers

Day 2 (17th December 2019)

Time	Activity	Participants
8.30 am – 10.30 am	Observing, Physical facilities (Block 2)	Review Team/ Facilitators
10.30 am – 11.00 am	Observing teaching sessions and facilities *Tea*	Review Team

11.00 am – 11.30 am	Meeting with Senior Assistant Librarian[Library Visit]	Senior Assistant Librarian/ Library Staff
11.30 am -12.00 noon	Meeting with Deputy Proctor/ Counsellors/ Batch Mentors	Deputy Proctor/ Counsellors/ Batch Mentors
12.00 noon -12.45 pm	Meeting with Directors of Centres / Units / Cells	Director SDC/CGU/ Faculty Career Guidance Coordinator/ CGU staff
12.45 pm - 1.30 pm	*Lunch*	
1.30 pm – 4.00 pm	Observing Documentation *Working Tea*	Review Team/ SER writers
4.00 pm – 5.00 pm	Open hour for any stakeholder to meet review panel	Review Team

Day 3 (18th December 2019)

Time	Activity	Participants
8.30 am – 9.30 am	Meeting with Students	Group of students (30) representative of gender, ethnicity, all levels of study programs
9.30 am – 10.00 am	Meeting with Administrative Staff	AR/AB/ Farm Manager
10.00 am – 10.30 am	Meeting on research activities *Working Tea*	Chairman / Research committee, members of research committee
10.30 am -11.00 am	Meeting with Technical Officers	All Technical officers
11.00 am -11.30 pm	Meeting with a cross section of academic support staff and non-academic staff	Representative group of academic support staff and non-academic staff (10)
11.30 am -12.00 noon	Meeting with alumni	Alumni members (15)
12.00 noon – 12.30 pm	Meeting with external stakeholders	Group of external stakeholders (about 10 employers, industry, private sector, representatives with link to or involvement with the Faculty)
12:30 pm -1:30 pm	*Lunch*	
1.30 pm – 5:00 pm	Observing Documentation	Review Team/ SER writers

Day 4 (19th December 2019)

Time	Activity	Participants
8.30 am – 9.00 am	English Teaching Unit	Members of English teaching unit

9.00 am – 10.30 am	Observing, Physical facilities (Block 1 and 3)	Review team/ Facilitators
10.30 am – 12.30 pm	Observing Documentation **Working Tea**	Review Team/ SER writers
12:30 pm - 1:30 pm	*Lunch*	
1.30 pm – 2.00 pm	Private meeting of reviewers and report writing **Working Tea**	Review Team
2.00 pm – 3.00 pm	Closing meeting for debriefing	Vice Chancellor/Dean/Director – IQAU/ HODs/ Coordinator – FQAC/Chair & the SER – Team

Annex II. Physical Facilities of the Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University

Facility	Capacity
Lecture Halls	165 x 04, 50 x 02, 35 X 02
Auditorium	500
DSLT	50
Computor Centre	45
ELTU	08
Conference rooms (AS/AFS, PS and AESS)	30 each
Laboratories	
Plant Science lab	48
Entomology lab	16
Tissue culture lab	05
Soil Laboratory	48
GIS Laboratory	20
Electronic Laboratory	
Analytical Service Laboratory	
Animal Science Laboratory	20
Food Science Laboratory	40
Microbiology Laboratory	10
Sensory Laboratory	08
Meat Science Laboratory	30
Agricultural Systems Laboratory	15
Farming units	
Instrument Room	12 Students
Mushroom production Unit	5000 bags
Medicinal Garden	475 m^2
Mini Orchard	400 m^2
Export Agriculture Unit	576 m^2

Net House 1	85 m^2
Net House 2	80 m^2
Poly-tunnel	50 m^2
Dairy Science Unit	30
Conference Room	30 Students
Engineering Workshop	15
Drawing Room	50
Technology Incubation Centre	8
Metrological Station	
Audio Visual Center	15 Students
Our – Reach Center	20 Famers

Animal Composition of Faculty Farm

Type of Animals	Males		Females				Total
	Stud bulls	Bull Calves	Milking Cows	Dry Cows	Heifers	Heifers Calves	
Cattle	1	3	4	1	5	1	15
Buffaloes	4	5	1	9	8	3	30

	Males	Females	Total
Goats	1	13	14
Sheep	2	14	16
Layers			250
Broilers			0
Ducks			13
Turkey			4
Quills			16
Bantam			17
Country Fowl			2
Guinea Fowl			26
Rabbits			2