Programme Review Report

Bachelor of Science in Plantation Management

Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Site Visit Date: 12th December 2022



Review Panel: Senior Prof. P. A. Weerasinghe (Chair)

Prof. A. M. M. Mustafa

Dr. T. Mathiventhan

The Quality Assurance Council

University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

University: Wayamba University of Sri Lanka

Faculty: Agriculture and Plantation Management

Program: BSc in Plantation Management (External Degree Programme)

Review Panel:

Name	Signature
Snr. Prof. P. A. Weerasinghe	
Prof. A. M. M. Mustafa	
Dr. T. Mathiventhan	

Date: 12th December ~~2023~~ 2022.

Contents

Section 1: Introduction……1
Section 2: Observations on Self Evaluation Report……4
Secion 3: A Brief Description of the Review Process……6
Section 4: Faculty approach to quality and standards……8
Section 5: Judgment on the Six Criteria of Programme Review……9
Section 6: Grading of overall performance……17
Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations……18
Section 8: Summary……20
Annexure: Site Visit Schedule……23

Section 1: Introduction

Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (WUSL) is a National University governed by the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Sri Lanka. It was established as the thirteenth state sector University in 1999 under the provisions stipulated in the Universities Act. No 16 of 1978. This University is housed in three main premises. The main administrative buildings and the four Faculties; the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Faculty of Business Studies and Finance and the Faculty of Technology are located in the Kuliyapitiya main premises, which spreads through 68 acres. The Faculty of Medicine is located in Labuyaya premises, which is a separated site near the Kuliyapitiya main premises. Two Faculties, viz, the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management and Faculty of Livestock, Fisheries and Nutrition are located in Makandura premises, located in 35 acres of land, 17 km away from Kuliyapitiya. Administrative functions of all the faculties are performed at the Kuliyapitiya main premises. Although some faculties are located away from the main administrative location, academic and administrative procedures of WUSL function smoothly through a well-established organizational structure and coordination system.

Mission of the University

WUSL's purpose remains: to develop highly qualified and responsible citizens who contribute to the improvement of society and sustainable development of the country.

Vision of the University

To be a leading higher education institute in Sri Lanka recognized for its outstanding academic programmes, innovative research, scholarship and outreach with the ultimate target of serving mankind.

Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management (FAPM)

Initially, the Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management (FAPM) located in Makandura andthe Faculty of Applied Sciences (FAS) located in Kuliyapitiya functioned under the Wayamba Campus of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. In 1999, the Wayamba Campus was accorded a fully-fledged university status under the WUSL. The FAPM was assigned to the WUSL by Government notification in the Extraordinary Gazette No. 1093/8 issued on Tuesday, 17th of August 1999.

Vision of FAPM

"To achieve excellence in agricultural education, research, technology and training for developing human resources to meet regional, national and global needs."

Mission of FAPM

"To develop innovative, skilled, trained manpower and their capabilities in Agriculture to fulfill national and global needs through undergraduate and postgraduate education, research and outreach programmes."

Departments in FAPM

There are five Departments attached to the FAPM, which contribute to both internal and external degree programme. In addition, there are centers and units assigned to the Faculty to facilitate the smooth functioning of the education process.

- Department of Agribusiness Management
- Department of Plantation Management
- Department of Horticulture and Landscape Gardening
- Department of Biotechnology
- Department of Biosystems Engineering (subsequent addition in 2017)

BSc (Plantation Management) External Degree Programme (PMEDP)

BSc in Plantation Management external degree programme is offered by the Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management (FAPM) of Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. The PMEDP was introduced to this higher education programme to accommodate mid-career employees to develop their careers with necessary academic exposure. This external degree programme was designed targeting middle-level managers, executives, and technical officers in the plantation and related sectors towards their corporate-level development. The three-year degree programme started in 2006 with only 17 students in the 1st intake. Currently, it is committed to distance education, through both in-person and module-based sessions. The degree programme consists of 54 modules and a capstone project with 120 credits that follow the SLQF framework, in which the medium of instruction is English.

Currently, there are three intakes of students enrolled with the PMEDP; the 15th, the 16th, and the 17th intakes taking place in the academic years 2019, 2020, and 2021, respectively. 180 students have registered for the 14th intake, although only 96 of them have graduated through the PMEDP. 267 students have registered at the 15th intake, and 217 of them are still continuing with the programme. 175 students have registered at the 16th intake, and they are all continuing with the PMEDP. Recently, the Faculty has enrolled 268 students as its 17th intake.

Section 2: Observations on Self Evaluation Report

A self-evaluation report (SER) was prepared for the review of B.Sc. programme in Plantation Management External Degree Programme (PMEDP) of the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka.

Almost all Faculty members participated in the preparation of the SER, which was done in accordance with the guidelines of the UGC "Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses", published by the University Grant Commission on July, 2014. The standards and criteria have been presented alongside the evidence as per the UGC Manual.

The SER writing process was facilitated by the Faculty Quality Assurance Cell, under the purview of the Dean of the Faculty; Prof. Jagath C. Edirisinghe, the director of the external degree programme; Prof. DC Abeysinghe, the coordinator of the IQAC; Dr. JMM Udugama, the coordinator and leader of the SER writing team, and Dr. WAS Lakmali, were the other key members of the SER writing committee. The corresponding working committees of academic staff members from the faculty created each criterion of the report. The team leaders for the respective criteria were: Criterion 1 - Governance and Management, Prof. DC Abeysinghe; Criterion 2 - Programme Design and Organization, Dr. B Ranaweera; Criterion 3 - Course Design and Development, Prof. HMIK Herath; Criterion 4 - Infrastructure and Learning Resources, Prof. WJSK Weerakkody; Criterion 5 - Learner Support and Progression, Dr. HAWS Gunathilake; Criterion 6 - Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards, Prof. KGMCPB Gajanayake.

The team members were tasked with reviewing the PMEDP in the light of standards stipulated in the University Grants Commission's Manual for External Degree Programmes. The authoring of the sections of the SER and the responsibility of gathering supporting documentation for each working group's set criteria were left with the respective group leaders of each criterion. SER was prepared with three sections: Section 1 (Introduction); Section 2 (Institutional Profile); and Section 3 (Compliance with the Criteria and Standards) based on the manual guidelines.

The introduction section gives an overview of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (WUSL) and the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management (FAPM). It further explains the B.Sc. in Plantation Management External Degree Programme (PMEDP) and its quality enhancement. The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) given in the SER were found to be relevant. The process of preparing the SER clearly described the processes and the

necessary components. The length of the report is fairly good, and it was prepared in accordance with the standards and formatting recommended in the manual.

Section two shows the profile of the institutions as given in the template of the UGC Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses. General information about the institution and PMEDP relevant to the administrative bodies-physical resources, staff and student support services, courses provided by the institution and PMEDP are mentioned in detail. Staff and student profiles, work plans, financial information, major learning possibilities, and collaboration information were also thoroughly discussed.

Our review team noted that Section 03 comprises the main section of the SER and that PMEDP is compliant with the criteria and standards based on the UGC Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses. All six criteria were adequately addressed at the beginning and continued to illustrate how well the WUSL and PMEDP adhere to the standards, via best practices. Each criterion followed the same structure. The documentary evidence, its structure, and their numbering were well organized, which enabled our review process to be easy and quick, even though the review team recognized in the section on criterion-based evaluation, that some sources of evidence for a given standard of best practice were not pertinent to the criteria listed in the review manual. It was also noted that not adequate sources have been provided to meet the weights of some criteria. The SER's annexures are added at the conclusion, but without the PMEDP organogram and the staff profile.

Section 3: A Brief Description of the Review Process

Process of preparation by the review team

During the pre-review meeting conducted by the Quality Assurance Council it was instructed to complete the desk evaluation of the study programme using the SER individually. After a thorough desk evaluation of the SER, individual desk review reports were submitted to the MIS of the QAC at the UGC.

Review team shared their responsibilities via MIS and e-mails and the Chair of the review panel interacted with the Director of External Degree Programme and the Faculty Quality Assurance Coordinator, to schedule the online stakeholder meeting sessions and the site visit date for facility observation. During this period review team had many e-communications on several aspects of the review process.

After completion of the desk evaluation, the faculty uploaded the documentary evidences to the document management system. However, some evidences were not provided under some criteria, though they had been listed in the SER while many irrelevant documents were uploaded. Some of these documents were not authorized, and the dates and headings of them were missing. Reviewers could not find most of the evidences pertinent to the past 3 years as required by the QAC. It was noticed that surveys had been concluded only very recently, which have not been analyzed and used for the improvement of the study programme.

Each criterion was evaluated/observed by two members of the review panel and the scores were assigned in consultation with the entire review team, taking into consideration; the stakeholder meetings, observations of infrastructure facilities and documents.

Stakeholder meetings

The review team organized all-stakeholder meetings via zoom conferencing facilities on 2nd and 3rd December 2022, according to the given agenda (Annexure 1). The first meeting was with the Vice Chancellor of the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, followed by meetings with the Dean of the Faculty, Director of External Degrees, and the Quality Assurance Staff. The team noted that the Quality Assurance Unit established at the faculty has given special focus in the process of programme review.

Discussions ensued at each meeting were satisfactory and the review team was able to gather many valuable information for a successful review. All meetings indicated that stakeholders such as academic staff, non-academic staff, students, alumni, board members and employers were satisfied with the degree programme and with the faculty in general.

Heads of Departments, SER writers and young academic staff were very keen to prove their quality of work. This session demonstrated their attitudes well and the sincerity of dedication towards quality assurance.

Site visit

The review team verified the content as per the SER on 12th December 2022, through physical observation during the scheduled site visit (Annexure 2). The review team had an opportunity to have another meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Director External Degrees, and the Academic Coordinator.

The review team observed an array of facilities (Annexure 3) used by the external degree students once they are on campus. The physical facilities of the faculty are commendable. All lecture halls, laboratories, computer facilities, and the tea garden were considered adequate for practical sessions and demonstrations. It is worth mentioning that most of the facilities have been improved with the generated funds of this degree programme.

The review team re-checked the documentary evidences, before the wrap-up session, to verify the evidences that are uploaded (in the web portal as the digital documents). These documentary evidences were also checked for the date of approval, approval process and so on.

The wrap-up meeting was conducted in the presence of the Dean of the Faculty, Director external degrees, and all academic staff. During this session the reviewers conveyed their key findings to the faculty members, things need to be improved, providing adequate time for them to make own observations and comments. A very productive discussion on improving the quality of the degree programme ensued where the faculty members gave their feedback on the key findings. The review team concluded, expressed its satisfaction for the arrangements and the hospitality afforded by the Dean of the Faculty, Director external degrees, Academic Coordinator, Coordinator and the members of the FQAC, and SER writing team.

Section 4: Faculty approach to quality and standards

Quality, standard and their overall management and continuity are important components of any Higher Education Institute in either Internal or External degree programmes. The FQAC was established in 2002 and revitalized in 2015 following the guidelines issued by the UGC. It coordinates the quality assurance activities within the Faculty by a committee. In addition, the FQAC liaises with the Center for Quality Assurance (CQA) of WUSL.

This external undergraduate degree programme – BSc in Plantation Management is on par with SLQF level 5. The courses are devised in a way to include core courses, optional courses, None-GPA courses and a Capstone project. This programme has been designed for three years and encompasses 120 credits. It was noted that 20 contact hours of both theory and practical are considered as 1C. But, 15 contact hours are considered as one credit for theory and 30 hours are considered as 1C for practical.

The FQAC adopts internal monitoring strategies and processes to evaluate, review, and improve the PMEDP design, development and approval. The practices, activities and developments of the PMEDP are discussed at the quality assurance coordinators' meeting as well as at the senate standing committee on quality assurance.

Further, the board of Study (BOS) of the PMEDP discusses academic and quality assurance matters at the Faculty Board. Based on its decisions, the programme is subjected to upgrade and improvement in teaching-learning strategies. In addition, as a new initiative, student mentoring programmes have been started to continuously monitor student progress and to maintain a good coordination between the student and staff.

The review team felt that the students' feedback analysis and reporting needs improvement. The peer review process has to be regularized in an effective operational mode. The academic staff members of the Faculty are well aware of the QA process, and therefore it is essential to create awareness among all the stakeholders. Improving course plan and lesson sequence shall be an important component in making the student aware more of the process of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) and teaching. It is very impressive that the Faculty has taken steps to establish a model tea garden and a model tea manufacturing unit to explore the processes in an effective manner. This could facilitate the SCL in an effective way. In the meantime, Faculty has limited supportive documentary evidence to prove their academic programme in terms of by-laws under various activities, assessing the quality of assessments, exam moderation and second marking. There is a need to improve them in the future.

Section 5: Judgment on the Six Criteria of Programme Review

Criterion 1: Governance and Management

The external degree of the BSc in "Plantation Management" fits with national policy framework. The operational setting of the BSc (Plantation Management) external degree is essentially in line with the FAPM and WUSL vision and mission statements.

The institutional commitment to open and distance learning (ODL) is reflected in things, actions, mindsets, and values that are present. The EDP-ODL programmes are effectively overseen by institutional management and administration, who ensure that they adhere to the institution's goals and mission. A well-organized hierarchical administrative structure with participation of all relevant parties oversees administrative, financial, academic, and examination aspects connected with the PMEDP. New students are notified of clearly specified procedures, such as by-laws, rules and regulations, the academic calendar, orientation, mentorship, and other services, throughout the enrollment process of this PMEDP.

The university has administrative policies, procedures, appropriately qualified personnel, efficient management and administrative capacity, physical facilities, financial stability, and resources adequate for the proper handling of the administrative unit and to conduct academic programme and administrative functions of the EDP. The National Institute of

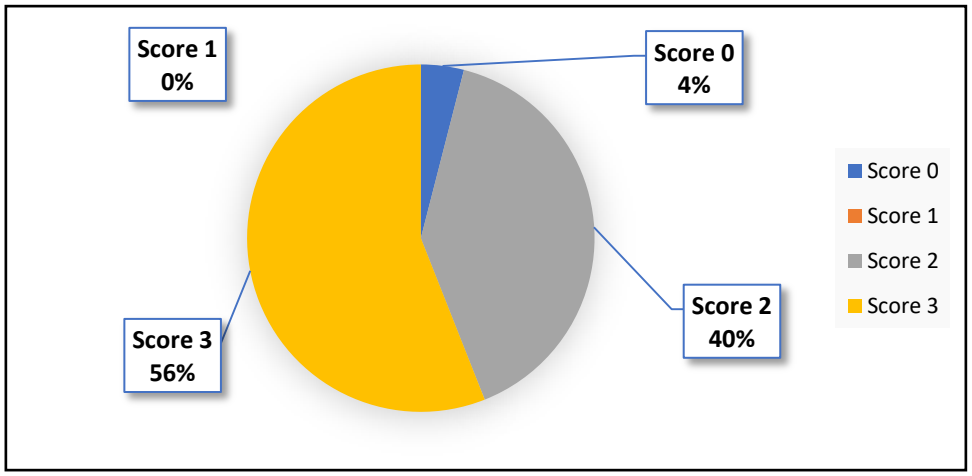


Figure 5.1: Scores Obtained for criterion 1 (Score 3- Good, Score 2- Adequate, Score 1- Barely adequate and Score 0-Inadequate)

Management (NIPM) collaborated with the PMEDP to carry out its operations.

Even though the PMEDP adheres to the best practices of the standards, it is understandable that the procedures of the standards do not always align with UGC policy documents and other relevant circulars. The above Pie-chart figure 5.1 clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 1 of Governance and Management.

Criterion 2: Programme Design and Organization

The BSc in Plantation Management external degree programme reflect institution's mission, goal and objectives and particularly, its national and market needs. The institute has established policies needed for the design and developments the study programme.

The first curriculum revision was in 2014, after its inception in 2006 and the second was in 2019. However, details of the first curriculum revision were not available in documentary evidence. The curriculum of the study programme has not been revised regular enough. At the time of recent revision of the curriculum, no survey of learning needs of the target group was accomplished. Also, the minutes of planning and development of the curriculum were not found in documentary evidence. The concerns raised by stakeholders that the external graduates passed out from the BSc Plantation Management degree lacks communication skills, interpersonal skills, managerial skills, etc., have been addressed in the recent curriculum revision by introducing courses such has Professional & Life Skills for Managers I and II and Career Planning and Development.

The curriculum has clearly designed the graduate profile and programme learning outcomes, except the objectives of the degree programme. Programme level learning outcomes were not aligned with teaching, learning and assessments to ensure that all graduates possess the full complement of the graduate profile. Since the objectives of the study programme are not developed, it is not in alignment with the subject benchmark statement (SBS). The SBS has only been aligned with the compulsory and optional courses and not aligned with the generic skills, assessment strategies, and attitudes. The curriculum has deviated from the Sri Lanka qualification framework (SLQF) by allowing higher numbers of credits with higher number of notional hours, surpassing the numbers prescribed in the SLQF as the minimum standards for SLQ level 5. The faculty has not taken any structured mechanism to review the programme after 3-4 years of its first offer, or at the mid-life to assess the effectiveness of the programme in achieving its objectives.

The faculty provides an awareness of the study programme by conducting an orientation programme at the time of the registration and an academic calendar has also been given to the students at the beginning of each academic year.

The faculty has adequate resources to carry out the study programme, particularly the practical component of the programme, within the faculty premises. The study programme is financially sustainable. It is commendable that the faculty has invested the generated income to improve the learning infrastructure, human resources and related matters affecting the feasibility and sustainability of the programme. The below Pie-chart figure 5.2 clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 2

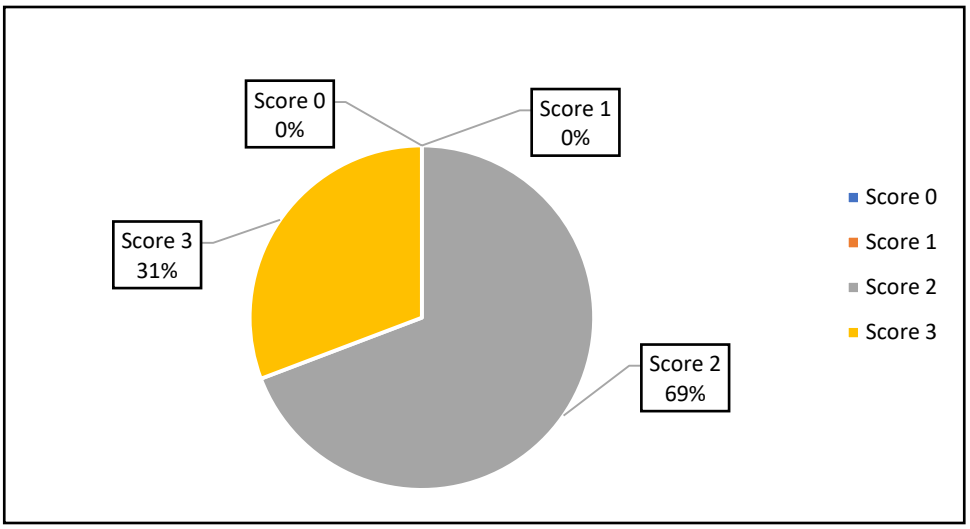


Figure 5.2: Scores Obtained for criterion 2 (Score 3- Good, Score 2- Adequate*, Score 1- Barely adequate and* Score 0-Inadequate)

Criterion 3: Course Design and Development

The faculty integrates learner support strategies like distribution of printed instruction packages, prospectus, and Learning Management Systems. The University provides adequate training to academic staff in the designing and delivery of programme via Staff Development Centre (SDC). It is also suggested to offer training on open and distance learning methods to its academic staff, for effective delivery of the external degree programme. During the stakeholder meeting it was revealed that the academic, support and non-academic staff are not receiving adequate and appropriate trainings. This has to be rectified by the SDC.

The lesson plans for each course and the intended learning outcomes for each course have been prepared. However, delivery methods and the assessment strategies have not been

identified in the lesson plans. In their absence in the lesson plans, it is difficult to judge that the courses are designed based on learner-centred principles and further, it is difficult to judge whether the students are achieving stated learning outcomes. Realization of learning strategies for the development of self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, interpersonal communication and teamwork were not able to judge due to, not providing of assessment strategies and the lack of evidence for such assignments. Courses are not designed taking into account feedback from subject experts, subject editors reports, employer survey reports, etc. Linkages with national and international institutions for course designing, development and delivery are minimum.

There was evidence that the course materials are timely distributed among students. However, it was not evident whether those developed course materials were pilot tested before releasing to students. Evaluation mechanism was not in place to evaluate instructional packages at the end of each course and at its mid-life for its content, user friendliness, appropriateness and effectiveness of teaching, measurement of learning outcomes of leaners and to assure that they meet programme standards. It is considered worthwhile to obtain copyright license for the course materials prepared for the students. In the meantime, it was noted that relevant copyright procedures have been followed when reproducing diagrams, photographs etc. in the preparation of course materials.

Policy and procedures are not adopted for recognition and exception of prior learning. Therefore, it is recommended to introduce credit transfer system in the programme by-laws. The below Pie-chart figure 5.3 clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 3 of Course Design and Development.

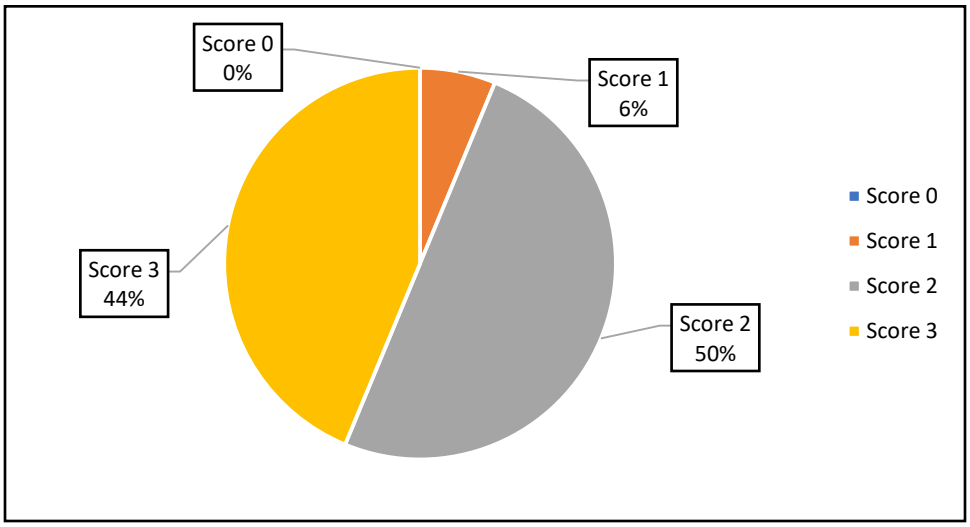


Figure 5.3: Scores Obtained for criterion 3 (Score 3- Good, score 2- Adequate, Score 1- Barely adequate and Score 0-Inadequate)

Criterion 4: Infrastructure and Learning Resources

FAPM has adequate and qualified human resources according to its needs in the specific disciplines to design, develop and delivery of PMEDP, and to carryout research and outreach activities. Policies and procedures are available for recruitment and responsibility allocation for visiting or contract staff. The staff performance is managed through work norms and appraised through awards and promotions. Their training needs are identified and met to improve staff performance. The Staff Development Centre of FAPM ensures that the academic staff adequately oriented, trained and motivated. The effectiveness of these training programmes is evaluated periodically. The staff: learner ratio is adequately maintained and all facilities for physical and distance teaching and learning are provided for effectiveness of the PMEDP.

FAPM has adequate infrastructure facilities. At the same time well-structured procurement processes and adequate financial allocations are available timely for procurement, repair, maintenance, and upkeep of infrastructure and learning resources. The institute has established a mechanism for regular monitoring and periodic evaluation of quality, adequacy and accessibility of infrastructure facilities provided for distant learners.

The following Pie-chart clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 4 of Infrastructure and Learning Resources. The below Pie-chart figure 5.4 clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 4 of Infrastructure and Learning Resources.

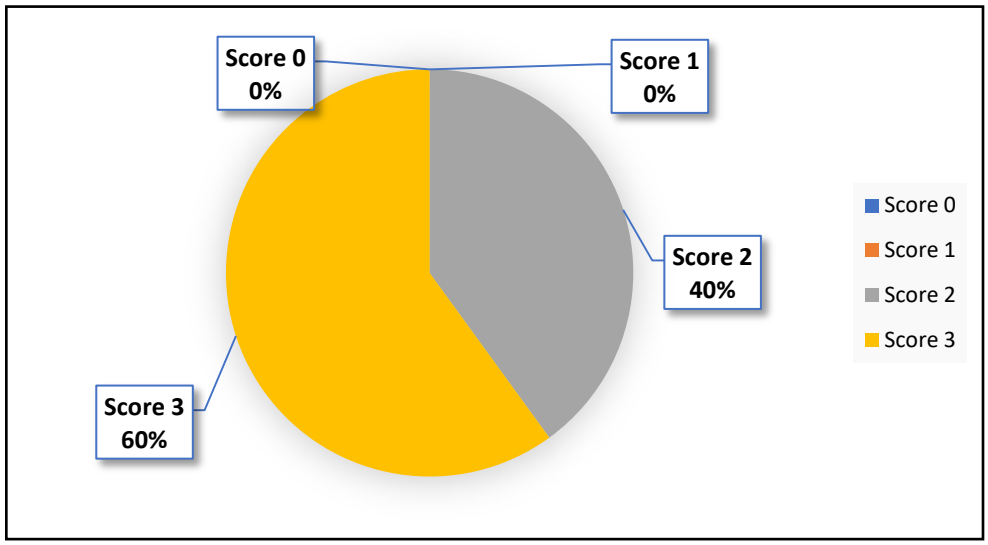


Figure 5.4: Scores Obtained for criterion 4 (Score 3- Good, score 2- Adequate, Score 1- Barely adequate and Score 0-Inadequate)

Criterion 5: Learner Support and Progression

FAPM is maintaining permanent records for admission matters, financial procedures, academic programme and examination related matters. It is noted that the learner support system is maintained in a reasonable manner, but it still needs to be improved for the expected outcome of the programme. Study material are distributed on time and it is also noted that they were effectively distributed to the students during COVID pandemic, by means of posts. Communication by the Faculty with students are effectively carried out via e-mail, WhatsApp and LMS. The teaching staff are well trained and are using different teaching tools but this would be diversified.

Assessments are done mainly by one type. Therefore, it is suggested to use different types of assessment methods/tools that needs to be incorporated. Evidences were lacking to show the subsequent improvements based on the students' feedback. Reflective practices using the students' feedback were not seen, students' feedbacks and the relevant process were still in a primary stage and therefore, it should be improved further. No reports were produced for the selection of module writers and editors' appointment, course-coordinators' reports, annual field visit schedules and reports (photographs of the field visits were available), master file for each course module, records of programme revision and post examination feedback reports. This programme is mainly focussing for the weekends with two prominent groups such as Saturday group and Sunday group. The Sunday group has no provision for accessing the Library on Sunday due to its closure. Therefore, the Faculty needs to find alternative mechanisms to

access the library sources for Sunday group also. The below Pie-chart figure 5.5 clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 5 of Learner Support and Progression.

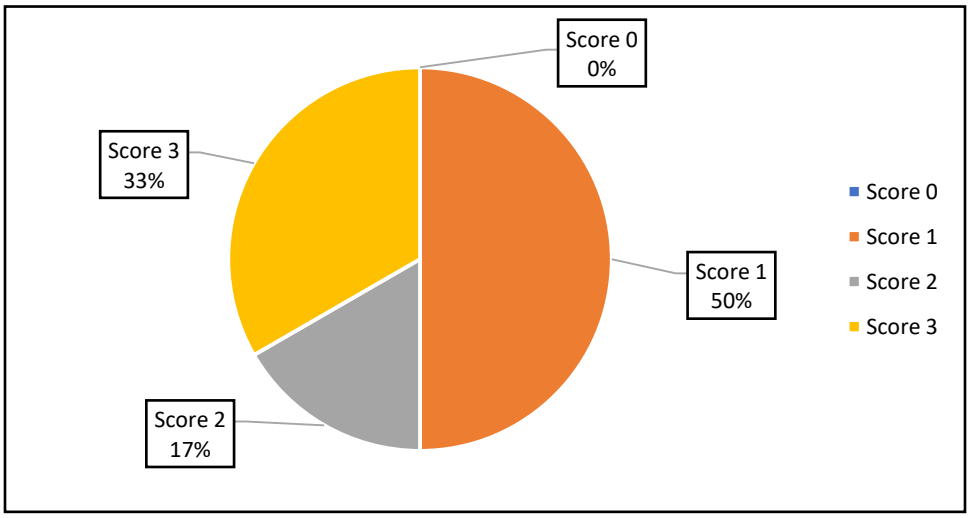


Figure 5.5: Scores Obtained for criterion 5 (Score 3- Good, score 2- Adequate, Score 1- Barely adequate and Score 0-Inadequate)

Criterion 6: Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards

FAPM distributes the necessary documents during the orientation programme, which include "Examination rules and regulations" and other related materials. University website is updated in a timely manner to keep the students informed of plagiarism and reproduction of open-source materials. Assessment standards are aligned with practices in the national university system.

There is lack of evidence noted to support the following: manual of examination procedure, examination by-laws (programmes and examinations), examiners' profile, moderators and second examiners' reports, selection and appointment of examiners, manual of procedure for exams, evidence related to Handbook, course schedules and interaction with learners regarding the course information.

Therefore, it is suggested to establish by-laws for examinations, assessments and rewarding systems. Even though it was discussed during the site visit, evidences were not produced, which is considered lacking. All these documents and related activities could further facilitate in the

improvement of quality of the external degree programme. The below Pie-chart figure 5.6 clearly explains the scores for the standards in Criterion 6 of Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards.

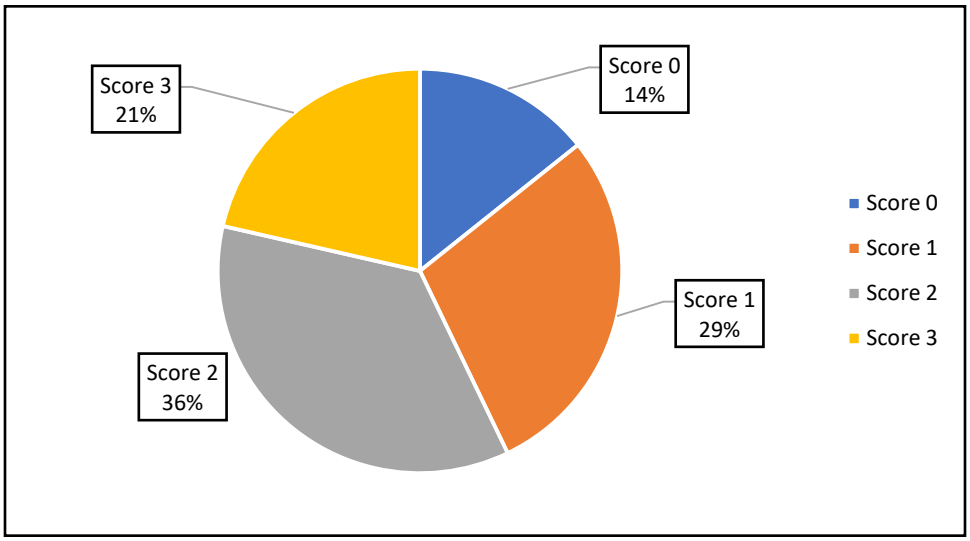


Figure 5.6: Scores Obtained for criterion 6 (Score 3- Good, score 2- Adequate, Score 1- Barely adequate, and Score 0-Inadequate)

Section 6: Grading of overall performance

Table 6.1: Assessment Criteria and Score

No.	Criteria	Weightage on a thousand scale	weighted Minimum score	Actual criterion-wise score
1	Governance and Management	150	60	124
2	Programme Design and Organization	100	40	77
3	Course Design and Development	250	100	198
4	Infrastructure and Learning Resources	150	60	130
5	Learner Support and Progression	200	80	122
6	Evaluation, Learner Assessment and Awards	150	60	82
	Total score (out of 1000)			**733**
	Total score (out of 100)			**73.3**

Grade: B

All six criteria were determined to have greater results than the predicted minimum scores. Additionally, the total programme score is higher than 70%, thus the degree programme's overall performance would be **graded as B**, signifying a good level of attainment of quality required of a programme of study.

Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations

Commendations

1. The Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management (FAPM) offers a Bachelor of Science in Plantation Management External Degree Programme (PMEDP) aiming senior, middle-level, executives, and technical officers in the plantation industry and associated sectors, in order to develop the respective businesses at a top management perspective.
2. It is commendable the presence of an efficient and qualified staff, in a good working environment, all of whom cooperate to align with agreed schedules of programmes within given time frames.
3. The prospectus / student handbook contains a detailed enough description of the degree programme. The lecturers interact and communicate with the students extremely effectively, using the Learning Management System (LMS) and other social media.
4. The PMED programme is financially sustainable and generated income has been productively utilized for the development of infrastructure, human resources and other related matters effecting the feasibility and sustainability of the programme.
5. The faculty has adequate resources to carry out the study programme within the faculty premises, particularly the practical component of the programme.
6. The faculty has in place policies essential for necessary design and development of the programme.
7. Learner support strategies like distribution of instruction packages, prospectus and use of the LMS have been sufficiently integrated.
8. The University provides appropriate adequate training to academic staff in the designing and delivery of the programme.
9. The faculty has developed a model tea garden and a tea-processing unit, which gives an in-situ experience to students for effective SCL.
10. IT facilities are reasonably good to run the programme, the use of which have been optimized during the COVID pandemic.

Recommendations

1. A management committee of PMEDP based on the UGC circular 932, is necessary for more successful delivery of this external degree programme.
2. There should be a unique IQAC for the PMEDP, based on the Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses offered by UGC, to maintain the Quality of the Programme at the highest attainable level.

3. To further improve the study programme, the peer observation and student feedback processes need to be strengthened, with a focus on the quantitative components which should be analyzed and used constructively (Reflective practices).
4. It is a very good practice to maintain the documentation of all the procedures.
5. Curriculum revision should be planned at regular intervals.
6. The study programme objectives are to be developed and be aligned with subject benchmark statements (SBS).
7. The study programme should be aligned not only with the compulsory and optional courses, but with other components of the SBS.
8. Programme learning outcomes and Intended learning outcomes of the course should be mapped.
9. The lesson plans should be more detailed with delivery methods and assessment strategies, enabling judgement that the courses are designed based on learner-centred principles and that the students are achieving stated intended learning outcomes.
10. In the next curriculum revision, credit load and notional hours need to be reduced. It is also important to provide evidence of 'external validation' on curriculum revision, following the accepted procedures.
11. It is advised to follow the standard mode of allocating contact hours both for theory (15 hours = 1C) and practical (30 hours = 1C); minimum of 90 credits for a 3-year programme; and minimum of 120 credits for a 4-year programme.
12. Arrangement should be made to open the library on Sundays in order to allow access for the Sunday-batch of students.
13. It is recommended to provide all necessary evidence at the next round of programme review, because most of the expected and relevant documents were not available in the present round. Therefore, a systematic approach to maintain documentation evidence should be made mandatory.
14. There are NO English courses, incorporated in the curriculum. As the UGC is going to implement the UTEL system, it is recommended to include the English (as a second language) in the curriculum.
15. Provide more staff training on open and distance learning approaches.
16. Deliver adequate and appropriate trainings for academic support and non-academic staff.

Section 8: Summary

The Quality Assurance Cell of the University Grand Commission was called to review the Bachelor of Science in Plantation Management External Degree Programme by the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. A Bachelor of Science in Plantation Management External Degree Programme (PMEDP) is offered by the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management (FAPM)

Accordingly, the review work of PMEDP of the FAPM at the Wayamba University of Sri Lanka was entrusted to a team of three academics, who were chosen for their subject-matter expertise, by the UGC. In keeping with the TOR, the review team had completed; a personal online desk evaluation, an online peer evaluation, an online stakeholder meeting on 2nd and 3rd of December 2022, and a physical site visit on 12th of December 2022.

The review team noted that the self-evaluation report (SER) had been put together in accordance with the UGC Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses. A group was selected to work on the SER under the direction of the Director/PMEDP and the Faculty Dean. The SER writing team was coordinated and led by the head of the external degree programme and the FQAC coordinator. Each criterion for the report was developed by the respective working committees, which consisted of academic staff members of the faculty. The Faculty Quality Assurance Cell assisted in the SER writing process. The review team's task was made easy as the SER was well-prepared and was in accordance with the UGC's requirements. Even though there some documentary evidences were lack each criterion under some standards.

The review team observed that PMEDP was maintaining its quality by adhering to many of the recommended practices outlined in the UGC Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses.

The PMEDP maintains a healthy and friendly environment and an administrative structure that is fully aligned with the faculty's action and strategic plans. The University has succinct administrative policies, procedures, efficient decision-making and administrative capacity, performance appraisal, financial stability, and total quality management, all of which helped to increase the efficiency of the practice of good governance and management. However, there are some shortcomings. Notably, the procedures relevant to the management committee and the IQAC for PMEDP based on UGC Circular 932 should be considered necessary in order to deliver this external degree programme more successfully.

The programme design clearly illustrates the PMEDP's purpose. It is adoptable and easily understood by learners and other stakeholders. Appropriate resources are available to carry out the Programme without hindrance. The PMEDP curriculum has not been regularly altered based on need assessments. Further, the programme-level learning outcomes were not connected with teaching, learning, and assessments to guarantee that all graduates possessed the full complement of graduate profile. It is also not entirely consistent with the subject benchmarks and SLQF academic standards.

Learner support measures such as the provision of printed instruction packages, prospectus, and learning management systems are integrated by the faculty. The Staff Development Center (SDC) of the institution provides proper training to academic staff in programme design and delivery. It is suggested that academic staff receive further training in open and distance learning approaches in order to effectively provide for the external degree Programme. During the stakeholder meeting it was revealed that academic-support and non-academic workers do not receive adequate training. The SDC should look into this.

PMEDP course development and design conform to a variety of best practices. Lesson plans and course-specific intended learning outcomes have been produced for each course. PMEDP guarantees that the university provides staff training for programme design and delivery. PMEDP has also given learners with materials such as instructional packages, prospectus, and LMS services. However, the delivery methods and assessment strategies, are not specified in the course plans. Due to lack of assessment methodologies and evidence for such assignments, it was hard to appraise achievements in; self-directed learning, collaborative learning, creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, interpersonal communication, and cooperation. Courses are not designed/improved based on feedback from subject experts, reports from subject editors, or employer survey results.

The Faculty has a well-developed infrastructure, as well as teaching and learning facilities. The review team was impressed by how interactive and interesting the classroom activities were. ICT labs have adequate computer equipment. Further, both students and workers have access to the university's well-equipped library, which is also connected to the internet. However, it is essential to practice procedure documentation independently for the PMEDP.

PMEDP keeps accurate student records and open lines of communication with students individually. The Faculty has highly skilled professionals capable of developing, implementing, and delivering academic Programme, and the academics are doing an excellent job. Even though the Staff Development Center (SDC) organizes several Programme to sustain and increase staff caliber, Faculty must make an extra effort to further improve teacher caliber by

pushing them to pursue training at other local universities or abroad. However, it would be beneficial to boost learner support advancement in terms of effective assessment tools that incorporate learner inputs.

The WUSL has ensured that procedures, rules, and regulations relevant to evaluation, learner assessment, and awards are informed through the prospectus, website, and LMS, even though there are no procedures followed to ensure that the assessments are fair and transparent.

Finally, the Review Team highly appreciates the way in which quality standards are maintained by the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management at Wayamba University of Sri Lanka, which is reflected in their overall grade, to uplift the undergraduate education programme in the areas of plantation and management and be able to provide quality graduates to the industry.

The BSc (Plantation Management) External Degree Programme (PMEDP) of the Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation Management, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka has scored, above minimum required in all six criteria prescribed by the UGC Manual for Quality Assurance of External Degree Programmes and Extension Courses. It has achieved an **overall score of 73.3%, and therefore, is recommended to award a/the Grade of "B".**

Annexure: Site Visit Schedule

12th December 2022

Time	Description	Location
09.00 to 09.20 am	Arrival and Initial Discussion	Dean's office
09.20 to 10.30am	Visiting facilities	- Faculty Building - Lecture halls - Laboratories - Faculty IT lab - Faculty Quality Assurance Cell - EDP Printing unit
10.30 to 11.00 am	Tea	
11.00 to 12.00 noon	Visiting facilities	- ICT Centre - Staff Development Centre - Library - Career guidance unit - Self & Peer learning Centre - Examination halls - Tea Field - Garden - Engineering workshop - Ground - Common Support Unit - Canteen - Medical center - English Unit
12.00 to 01.00 pm	Documentary Evidence and Discussion	Board Room
01.00 to 01.45 pm	Lunch	
01.45 to 02.15 pm	Private meeting of the review team	Board Room
02.15 to 03.00 pm	Wrap-up session	Board Room
03.00 pm	Tea	
End of day -		