

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL AND HORTICULTURAL SCIENCES

Date: 26.03.2023

Minutes of Third Board of Studies Meeting

Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology conducted the Third Board of Studies (BoS) meeting for the B. Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture Programme on **26.03.2023** from 02:00 to 05:00 p.m. The meeting will be held in physical mode at the Vice Chancellor Conference Hall, Second Floor, A Block, VFSTR. All the members are requested to make it convenient to attend the meeting.

Agenda of the BoS Meeting:

- 1. Formative assessment of B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture**
- 2. Introduction of Department Minor – Smart Farming**
- 3. Introduction of Ph.D. Programme in Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences**

The following members were present.

Sl. No.	Name	Designation of the Member	Position	Attended Through
1	Dr. T. Ramesh Babu	Dean, VIAT	Chairman	Offline
2	Dr. K. P. Vidhu	Joint Director (PHE) & Registrar (i/c), NIPHM, Hyderabad	Academia Expert	Offline
3	Dr. T. Prameela Devi	Principal Scientist, Plant Pathology, IARI, New Delhi	Academia Expert	Offline
4	Dr. K.P.C. Rao	Honorary Fellow (Retd.), ICRISAT, Hyderabad	Invitee from Research	Offline
5	Dr. Y. Ashoka Rani	Professor & Head (Retd.), Crop Physiology, ANGRAU	Invitee from Academia	Offline
6	Dr. T. Naresh	BoA, Assistant Professor, Entomology	Invitee	Offline
7	Dr. N. Narayan Rao	HoD, Applied Engineering	Member Secretory	Offline

Dr. N. Narayan Rao HoD, Applied Engineering, Member Secretary extended a warm welcome to all distinguished members of the Board of Studies (BoS), including internal faculty members and external experts from academic and research institutions.

Following the welcome, Prof. T. Ramesh Babu, Chairperson, BoS addressed the gathering. He acknowledged the continued support and commitment of the members and highlighted the university's forward-looking academic reforms and collaborative achievements. He also reiterated the importance of curriculum alignment with national educational frameworks and industry relevance, to ensure the quality and competency-based agricultural education. Furthermore, Prof. Ramesh Babu provided a comprehensive presentation showcasing the academic and institutional advancements of the department. The highlights of his presentation included as followed:

- i. The structuring of the academic year into three distinct semesters *i.e.*, odd semester (July–November), even semester (December–April) and summer semester (May–June), allowing flexibility and better academic planning.
- ii. Standardization of content delivery formats using the Lecture (L), Tutorial (T) and Practice (P) model, ensuring holistic and outcome-based learning experiences for students.
- iii. Adoption of unit-wise modular structure for course delivery; Unit 1: Fundamentals and broad perspectives and Unit 2: Advanced applications and practical components. This was aligned with structured timelines for formative assessments.
- iv. Introduction of an effective assessment framework based on formative (50%) and summative (50%) evaluations: Formative assessment included structured assignments, reviews, reports, MCQs and presentations and summative assessment comprised theory and practical end-semester examinations. The internal assessment for each module will be mapped to normalized grading components to maintain fairness and academic rigor. Relative grading policies will be reinforced across L+T, L+P and P/T-based courses, with defined thresholds for minimum performance to ensure quality and compliance with academic standards.
- v. Emphasis will be given on experiential learning, digital content development and problem-solving modules, encouraging students to engage with real-time agricultural challenges through modular questions and case studies.
- vi. Overview of faculty deployment models to support teaching and research: Contractual Assistant Professors (CAP): 16–18 hours/week, Teaching-cum-Research Assistants (TRA): 10–12 hours/week and Exclusive Research Assistants (ERA): 6–8 hours/week. These roles are designed to enhance faculty support and promote research-based instruction.

Prof. Ramesh Babu concluded his address by expressing the department's commitment to continual academic improvement and its readiness to integrate future-focused innovations and interdisciplinary approaches into the curriculum.

The following points were discussed in the BoS meeting and made resolutions after discussion.

- 1. Formative Assessment of B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture:** The Board deliberated on the structure and implementation of formative assessments for undergraduate courses in agriculture. The following decisions and guidelines were approved. Formative Assessment will contribute **50%** of the total course evaluation in which, each module (Module I & Module II) will include assessments such as Test-1 (Pre-announced + Unrevealed problems), CLA Assignments (Creative Learning Assignments), Test-2 (Reviews and Presentations), IEEE-format Report and Voice-over PPTs and MCQ-based online tests. Total internal marks of 120 will be suitably mapped down to **50 marks**. Minimum requirement for passing: **17.5 marks (35%)** in formative assessment and **25 marks (50%)** in summative assessment. For L+P and L+T courses, additional pass criteria are specified, including **a minimum of 50%** in final practical exams. The BoS appreciated the structured approach and endorsed its continuation to enhance student learning outcomes and engagement; and approved it.
- 2. Introduction of Department Minor – Smart Farming:** The Board discussed the introduction of a **Minor Specialization in Smart Farming**, intended for B.Tech. students, as an interdisciplinary offering from the Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology. The following course basket was approved for the same.

Semester	Course Title	Credits
4 th	Basics of Crop Production and Precision Farming	4
5 th	Hi-Tech Horticulture	4
6 th	Agribusiness Management	4
7 th	Soilless Farming (Hydroponics, Aeroponics, Aquaponics)	4
8th	Digital Agriculture or Mini Project	4

Total Credits: 20

The minor aims to provide foundational and practical exposure to modern, sustainable and data-driven agricultural techniques, aligning with current industry trends and technological advancements.

- 3. Introduction of Ph.D. Programme in Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences:** The Board of Studies (BoS) has discussed and approved the initiation of a Ph.D. programme under the Department of Agricultural and Horticultural Sciences, commencing from the academic year 2023–24. The programme will be offered in the disciplines of Agronomy, Soil Science, Plant Pathology, Genetics and Plant Breeding, Horticulture, Agricultural Extension, and Crop Physiology. The programme will have a minimum duration of three academic years (six semesters) and a maximum duration of seven academic years (fourteen semesters). The credit structure includes 12 credits for major courses, 6 for minor courses, 5 for supporting courses, 2 for seminars, and 75 for thesis research, totaling 100 credits.
- 4. Research Assistantships:** The research assistantship for Ph.D. scholars will be offered under three categories with specified workload and remuneration. Contractual Assistant Professor (CAP) involves 3–4 hours of work per day or 16–18 hours per week (five days), with a stipend of ₹40,000 to ₹44,000 per month. Teaching cum Research Assistantship (TRA) requires 1.5–2

hours of work per day or 10–12 hours per week (five days), with a monthly stipend of Rs. 32,000 to Rs. 36,000. Exclusive Research Assistantship (ERA) includes 1.5 hours of work per day, totaling 6 - 8 hours per week (five days), with a stipend ranging from Rs. 20,000 to Rs. 30,000 per month. Rs.20000 may be given as a contingency for each candidate per year.

The Board welcomed the initiative and emphasized the importance of high-quality doctoral training and research with industry collaboration and national/international networking. Based on the feedback from various stakeholders and the suggestions provided by the members, the Chairperson of the Board of Studies stated that the valuable inputs would be duly incorporated, and the revised proposal would be recommended to the Academic Council of VFSTR for approval.

There being no further points for discussion and the meeting was closed by 05.00 p.m. by reciprocating the closing remarks and extending vote of thanks to the Chairperson, External and Internal Members of BoS, Special Invitees and the faculty of Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology by Dr. N. Narayan Rao HoD, Applied Engineering.

Prof. T. Ramesh Babu
Dean, VIAT
Chairperson, BoS

