

Minutes of the Meeting of

Fourth Board of Studies (BoS) Meeting of Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology, Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research (Deemed to be University)

29th May, 2023
(In Offline Mode)

The Fourth Board of Studies Meeting of the Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology (VIAT), VFSTR was conducted on 29.05.2023 between 2.00 PM to 5.00 PM in Offline Mode under the Chairmanship of Dr. T. Ramesh Babu, Dean, VIAT, VFSTR & Chairperson, Board of Studies.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu, Chairperson, Board of Studies, welcomed and introduced the External Members by depicting their respective academic and professional profiles.

Later the following Members of BoS discussed the listed agenda items threadbare.

BoS Members

1.	Dr. T. Ramesh Babu, Chairperson, BoS Dean, Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research
2.	Dr. K. P. C. Rao, External Member Honorary Fellow International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) Hyderabad
3.	Prof. T. V. Satyanarayana, External Member Former Dean of Agricultural Engineering and Registrar Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University presently Registrar, MNR Educational Institutions, Sangareddy, Hyderabad
4.	Dr. N. Narayan Rao, Internal Member HoD, Applied Engineering Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research
5.	Ms. P. Sai Raveli, Internal Member Assistant Professor, Agronomy Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research
6.	Dr. V. Dinesh Rahul, Internal Member Assistant Professor, Crop Physiology Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research
7.	Dr. M. Chandra Surya Rao, Internal Member Assistant Professor, Horticulture and BoA Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research

8.	Dr. Y. Vara Prasad, Internal Member Assistant Director, Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research
9.	Dr. T. Naresh, Member Secretary, BoS. Assistant Professor, Entomology Vignan Institute of Agriculture and Technology Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology and Research

Agenda

A. Agenda items for approval

1. Commencement of Ph.D. programme in the disciplines of Agronomy, Genetics and Plant Breeding, Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry and Plant Pathology from the academic year 2023-24 and Ph.D. academic regulations as per BSMA, ICAR
2. Commencement of Diploma in Agriculture from the academic year 2023-24

B. Agenda items for ratification:

3. Amendment of course content and credits of IT oriented courses
 - a) Python Programming - 22AB201
 - b) Statistical Methods with Data Visualization - 22AB202
 - c) Machine Learning - 22AB301
4. Amendment of course credits in the disciplines of
 - a. Agronomy-22AGRO202-Crop Production Technology - II
 - b. Genetic and Plant Breeding-22GPBR314-Principles of Seed Technology
5. Conversion of IT oriented courses from binary grade to gradial courses
 - a. Python Programming-22AB201
 - b. Statistical Methods with Data Visualization-22AB202
 - c. Machine Learning-22AB301
6. Conversion of R21 academic regulations to R22 academic regulations.

C. Additional agenda items

- (i). Model act for Higher Educational Institutions in India (Revised 2023 by Agricultural Education division ICAR).
- (ii) Notification of delinking of eligibility of ICAR accreditation with all India quota UG/PG/Ph. D Admission in ICAR-AU-System including SAUs, CAUs, DUs and CUs with Agriculture faculty

A. Agenda items for approval

Agenda Item 1:

1) Commencement of Ph.D. programme in the disciplines of Agronomy, Genetics and Plant Breeding, Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry and Plant Pathology from the academic year 2023-24 and Ph.D. academic regulations as per BSMA, ICAR

Dr. V. Dinesh Rahul, Assistant Professor, Crop Physiology and Member, BoR put forward a proposal to commence the Ph.D. program starting from the academic year 2023-24. Additionally, he outlined the academic guidelines that must be adhered to when offering the Ph.D. program in Agriculture in accordance with the BSMA of ICAR.

Dr. K.P.C. Rao, shared his view point regarding the course material for Soil Science 604, specifically focusing on Soil genesis and micromorphology as part of the Ph.D. program. He suggested the possibility of exempting students from registering for this particular course as it is a basic course.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu clarified the regulations set by BSMA (ICAR) that the aforementioned course is a core course and hence exemption from registration for this course subject is not possible..

Dr. N. Narayana Rao expressed doubt regarding the involvement of the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee in determining the list of courses to be registered by the scholar.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu and Prof. T.V. Satyanarayana stated that, according to the ICAR (BSMA) guidelines, registration of core courses is mandatory and the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee can suggest any other related course (s) pertaining to the planned research work of the student , if necessary.

Discussions took place regarding the involvement of faculty members or scientists from partnering institutions in the Student Advisory Committee, where they would assume the role of temporary faculty members at the university. This would be done in accordance with the procedures of VFSTR. Dr. T. Ramesh Babu clarified that a faculty member or scientist from a partnering institution can be designated as a Co-Chairperson and temporary faculty Member of VFSTR, if necessary, during the scholar's research period, but not on a full-time basis. The scholars may be assigned to retired Professors or Scientists recruited as Distinguished or Eminent Professors of VFSTR who are between the ages of 60 and 65 [@].

Dr. N. Narayana Rao proposed the utilization of Assistant Professors who hold a Ph.D. qualification in the respective disciplines, following the model employed by the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs), in the delivery of the Ph.D. program.

Prof. T.V. Satyanarayana and Dr.T. Ramesh Babu highlighted the criteria outlined in the BSMA (ICAR) guidelines for guiding Ph.D. scholars. They further stated that an Assistant Professor with a Ph.D. qualification and a minimum of three years of experience in teaching or research meets the essential eligibility criteria for guiding the scholars.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu responded to the query posed by Dr. N. Narayana Rao regarding the selection procedure for candidates in the doctoral program. He explained that the criteria for

admission to the Ph.D. program involve a written examination in the relevant discipline, followed by a technical interview.

Dr. K.P.C. Rao shared his perspective on research proposals in line with the ICAR guidelines. According to the ICAR system, research proposals should include a synopsis with a suitable title that clearly outlines the objectives, focusing on addressing the societal needs which are of utmost importance.

During the discussions among the members of the Board of Studies (BoS), Dr. T. Ramesh Babu elucidated the evaluation criteria for Ph.D. thesis in accordance with the BSMA. As per the process, a list of eight experts (within India) in the relevant field of thesis is to be submitted to the Dean of Postgraduate Studies (PGS) (Dean R & D in VFSTR) through the Head of the Department (HoD). The final decision on selecting the external experts any two within India will be made by the Honorable Vice Chancellor.

Resolution: Approved

@Regarding the faculty members/scientists from partnering institutions to serve as temporary faculty member in the Student Advisory Committee of the University, will be deliberated with the Dean (R&D), Dean PCF and Registrar of VFSTR to frame the guidelines.

2) Commencement of Diploma in Agriculture from the academic year 2023-24

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu shared his perspective on the proposal to introduce a Diploma in Agriculture at VFSTR. The proposal received a positive response from the members of the Board of Studies as they sought a suitable course for rural individuals who may not have the means to pursue higher education after the 10th grade. This course has the potential to be equivalent to an intermediate level, enabling students to pursue further education in science degrees and also B.Sc. (Hons.) degree in Agriculture. Additionally, it aims to generate a skilled workforce to contribute to the agricultural sector.

Resolution: Approved

B. Agenda items for ratification:

3: Amendment of course content and credits of IT oriented courses

Dr. T. Naresh highlighted the need for the ratification of amendment of course content of IT courses (22AB201-Python Programming, 22AB202 - Statistical Methods with Data Visualization, and 22AB301-Machine Learning) in the context of domain subject agriculture. It was observed that the current course content shared by the concerned Department of CSE, VFSTR is not directly related to the domain subject of agriculture. As a part of the redesigning process, with the consent of Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, VFSTR, the course contents (3+1) of these three subjects were sent to Dr. Konga Upender and Dr. Kumkam Dubey, Senior Research Fellows from ICAR – Central Institute of Agricultural Engineering, Bhopal, the revised course content in 1+1 format (as against 3+1) of all three courses received from these experts has been considered and included in the curricula.

Resolution : Ratified

4: Amendment of course credits in the disciplines of Agronomy and Genetic & Plant Breeding

Dr. T. Naresh proposed amendments to the credit structure in two disciplines viz., Agronomy and Genetics and plant Breeding. In Agronomy, the suggested amendment pertains to the course 22AGRO202-Crop Production Technology-II. In Genetics and Plant Breeding, the proposed amendment concerns to the course 22GPBR314 -Principles of Seed Technology.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu explained the rationale behind the need to amend the credits of these courses. He mentioned that, in R21 regulations, as per the ANGRAU catalogue the credit load of 185 credits was considered though ICAR suggested a maximum of 183 credits only for four year B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture curricula. Additionally, with the inclusion of 3 IT-related courses each of 3+1, the total credits increased to 197 (185+12). However, considering the R22 regulations, which specify registration of maximum of 25 credits per semester and also conversion of credits of IT oriented courses from 12 to 6 (proposed agenda item 3 for ratification), this amendment was made.

Both the semesters of final year constitute “Student Ready” program wherein student will not be exposed to class room teaching. The student will be attached to a farmer in a village for 2 ½ months followed by Industrial attachment and ELP (Experiential Learning programme). The entire final year credit load of 40 credits shall be registered as 20 credits each during 7th and 8th semesters.

Hence, the maximum credit load of 183 credits proposed by ICAR was considered as against the existing 185 credits and modified the course 22AGRO202 to 1+1 as against 2+1 and modified course 22GPBR314 to 1+1 as against 1+2. Therefore, the total credit load of 189 credits (183 as specified by ICAR + 6 IT related courses) is being followed in both R21 and R22 regulations. Registration of credits per semester is as follows

Semester	Number of Credits
I	24
II	25
III	25
IV	25
V	25
VI	25
VII	20*
VIII	20*
Total	189

*Student Ready Program (No class room teaching)

Dr. K.P.C. Rao and Prof. T. Satyanarayana agreed to the amendment of course credits in the disciplines of Agronomy and Genetics and Plant Breeding, taking into account the clause of the maximum credit load to register per semester shall not exceed 25.

Resolution : Ratified.

Agenda Item 5: Conversion of IT oriented courses from binary grade to gradial courses

Dr. T. Naresh proposed this change, indicating that the IT courses were initially introduced as binary grade (non-gradial) courses in the B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture curricula under the R-21 academic regulation. He expressed concern that if these courses remained binary graded, students might lose interest despite their high significance. The purpose of introducing these courses, which aim to expose students to technology within the agricultural domain, may be defeated without a gradial grading system. The members of the Board of Studies provided insights into the proposal, taking into account the potential benefits of IT courses for smart farming applications and agreed to the proposal.

Resolution: Ratified.

Agenda Item 6: Conversion of R21 academic regulations to R22 academic regulations

Dr. T. Naresh provided information regarding the implementation of the R22 regulations for the students in the academic year 2021-22. He explained that the examination pattern for these students followed the guidelines outlined in the R22 regulations from 2nd year onwards, which included formative and summative assessments. The first year results were also computed following R22 regulations.

Resolution: Ratified

C. Additional agenda items**(i) : Model Act for Higher educational institutions in India (Revised 2023) by Agricultural Education Division, ICAR.**

The Model Act of ICAR focuses on the guidelines for Higher Agricultural educational institutions in India offering B. Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture programs. It outlines various aspects such as admission capacity, land requirements, faculty qualifications, faculty requirement and the specifications for instructional farms. Prof. T.V. Satyanarayana emphasized the benefits of this model act and expressed his appreciation for its thoughtful formulation.

(ii) :Notification of delinking of eligibility of ICAR accreditation with all India quota UG/PG/Ph.D. Admission in ICAR-AU-System including SAUs, CAUs, DUs and CUs with Agriculture faculty.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu highlighted the recent notification issued by ICAR, which states the delinking of eligibility criteria for ICAR accreditation with the all India quota UG/PG/Ph.D. admissions in the ICAR-AU system, including SAUs, CAUs, DUs, and CUs with Agriculture faculty. He shared his opinion on the notification, emphasizing its positive impact and the significant advantages it brings to students pursuing B.Sc. (Hons.) Agriculture. The delinking ensures that these students will not face any obstacles in gaining admissions into UG, PG and Ph.D. programs.

Prof. T.V. Satyanarayana commended the decision to delink the eligibility of ICAR accreditation, as it provides students with the opportunity to seek admissions into ICAR/SAUs/CAUs/DUs/CUs for postgraduate programs. He expressed appreciation for this move, acknowledging the benefits it brings to aspiring students.

Dr. T. Ramesh Babu, Chairperson of BoS indicated that these two agenda items (i and ii), the revised Model Act-2023 of ICAR and Notification of ICAR delinking of eligibility criteria for ICAR accreditation with the all India quota UG/PG/Ph.D. admissions in the ICAR-AU system, including SAUs, CAUs, DUs, and CUs with Agriculture faculty, are noted for **information and implementation accordingly**.

Expressing gratitude to all the members of the BoS, Dr. T. Ramesh Babu, Chairperson, BoS, concluded by assuring that the suggestions provided by the BoS members will be appropriately incorporated into the regulations of the Ph.D. Agriculture program at VFSTR.

Dr. T. Naresh, Member Secretary extended a formal vote of thanks.

Prof. T. Ramesh Babu
Dean, VIAT
VFSTR, Vadlamudi