

**Research Article**

Vol. 12, No. 1, Jun., 2026: 11-27

Title: Students' Feedback on Standards and Criteria Provided by Bangladesh Accreditation Council for Undergraduate Program of Agrotechnology Discipline in Khulna University**Authors:** Md Toufikur Rahman Nadim¹, Maria Hossain Akhi¹, Mohammad Bashir Ahmed^{2*} and Md. Matiul Islam²¹Former Undergraduate Students and ²Professor, Agrotechnology Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna 9208, Bangladesh***Corresponding Author:** Mohammad Bashir Ahmed Email: mbaatku@gmail.com**Article Info:****ABSTRACT****Received:**

May 07, 2026

Accepted:

June 18, 2026

Published:

June 30, 2026

Keywords:Higher education
quality, student
satisfaction, curriculum
evaluation, quality
assurance, program
assessment.

Accreditation is the formal recognition by an administrative body that an organization or program meets specific standards of quality. Accreditation in tertiary level education is a formal recognition process whereby an external auditing body evaluates and affirms that an educational institution or program meets predetermined standards of quality, ensuring that it provides a credible and effective learning environment. The current study was conducted in Agrotechnology Discipline, Khulna University, Khulna. A pretested interview schedule was used to collect data from randomly selected 120 respondents during August-September, 2023. The students of Agrotechnology Discipline were oriented to evaluate accreditation standards and criteria provided by Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) for giving their feedbacks. Out of 10 standards and 63 criteria, 9 standards and 47 criteria were considered for this study. The 'Research and Scholarly Activities' standard was excluded from the study because most students had limited involvement in such activities. The students expressed excellent level of satisfaction regarding standard 4: Curriculum (98.61%), followed by standard-3: institutional integrity and transparency (88.30%), and governance (87.42%). Student Admission & Support Services came in fourth (77.52%). However, the other standards though met a good level of satisfaction (<70.00%) but require further improvement. Among 47 criteria under 9 standards, students expressed very good to excellent level of satisfaction regarding 34 criteria while they expressed poor to good level of satisfaction regarding rest criteria and need improvement. The findings indicate that the Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University demonstrated strong compliance with BAC accreditation standards, although further improvements are needed in several areas.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3329/saja.v12i1.89860>**To cite this article:** Nadim, M. T. R., Akhi, M. H., Ahmed, M. B., & Islam, M. (2026). Students' Feedback on Standards and Criteria Provided by Bangladesh Accreditation Council for Undergraduate Program of Agrotechnology Discipline in Khulna University. *South Asian Journal of Agriculture*, 12(1), 11–27.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental human right. One of the primary duties of any nation, state, or community is to provide its population with appropriate learning and development opportunities and resources. Higher education is a valuable cultural and scientific resource that fosters social, technological, and economic transformation as well as personal growth. It encourages knowledge sharing, creativity, and research while giving students the tools they need to adapt to rapidly changing job markets (Choi, 2024). Quality assurance in higher education is crucial to provide students with efficient and superior educational programs and also serves as a foundation for upholding and improving academic standards. By promoting continuous improvement, quality assurance helps organizations adjust to changing student needs and emerging trends.

A university's Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) is a crucial component for guaranteeing the caliber of its training and educational programs. In 2014, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh initiated the Higher Education Quality Enhancement Project (HEQEP), which established a separate unit for quality assurance, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). Under the direct supervision of QAU, a significant number of both public and private universities have established IQACs to improve the academic excellence of the universities. Currently, the activities of IQACs, especially in public universities, are guided and supported from the budget of the universities provided by the government. At Khulna University (KU), IQAC was established in July, 2014 with a vision of achieving academic and administrative excellence through quality assurance best practices.

The government of Bangladesh passed the Bangladesh Accreditation Council Act in the Parliament in 2017 with the intention of raising the bar for higher education in the

nation's colleges, universities, and other accredited educational institutions. Acknowledging the constant changes in society necessitates fresh perspectives and ideas for dealing with the world's problems. Bangladesh will contribute to various global issues and challenges and be a part of the largest economy in the world, so having skilled labor is essential for the country's social, economic, and political development-all of which are correlated with high-quality education. The BAC is implementing the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF), an internationally benchmarked instrument, to fulfill these commitments by promoting quality assurance (QA) in higher education.

The main objectives of the BNQF are to provide the national definition for higher education qualifications, formulate national policy in developing human capital and graduate mobility, etc. According to the Accreditation Act 2017, Accreditation Council will be responsible for assessing and accrediting the higher institutions in terms of their performance associated with the educational processes and outcomes, governance, transparency, curriculum, teaching-learning, availability of on-campus facilities and resources, research, faculty, monitoring, student service, and continual quality improvement. Along with accrediting institutions, based on following 10 prescribed qualifications standards with numbers of various criteria, BAC also assesses the academic program of the institutions through following standards

- i. **Governance:** Establish a systematic governance structure aligned entirely with the institution's mission, vision, and objectives.
- ii. **Leadership, Responsibility & Autonomy:** Leverage strong leadership and institutional autonomy to drive innovation and adapt to changing educational demands.
- iii. **Institutional Integrity & Transparency:** Maintain strict

- operational integrity and transparency to build and uphold stakeholder trust.
- iv. **Curriculum:** Design an outcome-based curriculum mapped to official qualifications frameworks and program goals.
 - v. **Teaching, Learning & Assessment:** Deploy structured teaching methods and fair, transparent assessments to evaluate student progress accurately.
 - vi. **Student Admission & Support Services:** Standardize clear admission policies and robust student support systems to maximize academic success.
 - vii. **Faculty & Professional Staff:** Ensure optimal teacher-student ratios, qualified educators, and equitable salary structures to safeguard educational quality.
 - viii. **Facilities & Resources:** Deliver adequate physical facilities and learning resources tailored to specific program requirements.
 - ix. **Research & Scholarly Activities:** Foster impactful research through dedicated funding and targeted policies addressing industry and community needs.
 - x. **Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement:** Empower a functional IQAC (Institutional Quality Assurance Cell) to systematically monitor, review, and continuously upgrade academic quality.

Under the Bangladesh Accreditation Council Act 2017, higher education institutions and their programs must meet all prescribed standards and criteria to receive a Certificate of Accreditation, valid for five years, following a positive external audit. Accreditation is a formal, independent verification that a program or institution meets established quality standards and is competent to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks. Accreditation is a review process to determine if educational programs meet defined standards of quality.

The BAC has the authority to revoke accreditation for non-compliance and allows institutions to appeal adverse decisions. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are responsible for maintaining comprehensive documentation to present during BAC's expert visits. Although establishing the BAC took many years post-independence, its effective operation is expected to boost public confidence in higher education, gain international recognition, attract foreign students, and enhance graduate competitiveness to support the country's economic growth.

Objectives of the Study

- i. To describe the selected characteristics of the students of Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University.
- ii. To analyze the feedbacks from students regarding the BAC provided quality criteria.
- iii. To assess the feedbacks from students regarding the BAC suggested quality standards.

MATHODOLOGY

Locale of the Study: The locale of the study was the Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University, as it offers a dynamic academic program that integrates agricultural sciences with modern technological approaches, making it a relevant setting to evaluate the applicability and effectiveness of accreditation standards and criteria in a multidisciplinary context.

Population and Sampling Procedure: All undergraduate students of the Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University were considered the population of the study. Approximately 40 students are enrolled in each academic year, from which a random sample of 30 students (75%) was selected from each year (1st to 4th year). Consequently, the total sample size for the study was 120 students. The distribution of

the sampled respondents is presented in Table 1.

Research Tool: To collect the necessary information, a structured survey questionnaire was developed, carefully aligned with the objectives of the study. The questionnaire included items designed to capture key personal characteristics of the respondents as well as their levels of

satisfaction regarding the quality standards and criteria defined by the BAC. A pre-test of the questionnaire was conducted in the second week of August 2023 by interviewing five students from the Agrotechnology Discipline. Based on the feedback from the pre-test, appropriate revisions and refinements were made to improve the clarity and effectiveness of the instrument.

Table 1. Distribution of Population and Sampled Respondents (Students)

Year	Population (No. of students)	Sampled respondents
4 th year	38	30
3 rd year	44	30
2 nd year	41	30
1 st year	42	30
Total	165	120

Method and Time of Data Collection:

Data were collected from the sampled students of the Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University using a distributed questionnaire. The researchers personally administered the data collection during August-September 2023. The entire process was completed over four days, dedicating one day to each academic year.

Selection and Measurement of Issues under Study

Selection of Issues under Study: The central focus of the study was to gather "Students' Feedback" on the accreditation standards and criteria relevant to students, as prescribed by the BAC for the academic program of the Agrotechnology Discipline of Khulna University. In addition, seven selected personal characteristics-age, gender, year of study, family income, family size, and perceived educational quality-were also analyzed to provide

deeper insights into the respondents' backgrounds.

Measurement of Issues under Study: The students' feedback on the accreditation standards and criteria prescribed by BAC for the academic program was assessed based on their level of satisfaction, following the approach recommended by Adhikary et al. (2014) and Anon. (2016). A five-point rating scale was used to measure satisfaction levels, categorized as poor, fair, good, very good, and excellent, with corresponding scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. This rating scale was applied to each criterion under the ten standards. Each student was asked to indicate their level of satisfaction for every criterion. The overall level of satisfaction was then calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Level of Satisfaction (LOS)}(\%) = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^5 n_i s_i}{5 * \sum_{i=1}^5 n_i} \times 100$$

The Top Part ($\sum_{i=1}^5 n_i s_i$): This finds the total score. It multiplies the number of people in each category by the category's point value, then adds them all together.
(For example: If 10 people gave a score of 5, that's 50 points).

The Bottom Part ($5 * \sum_{i=1}^5 n_i$): This finds the maximum possible score. It counts the total number of people who took the survey ($\sum n_i$) and multiplies that number by 5 (the highest possible score anyone could give).

(Adopted from Anon., 2016)

The satisfaction score can range from 120 to 600, with 120 representing the lowest level of satisfaction and 600 indicating the highest level, based on the criteria set under various standards prescribed by BAC. The selected characteristics were measured following standard units (Table 2).

Statistical Analysis: After data collection, the data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel 2021. Descriptive statistics was employed to interpret the data, including calculating the number, percentage, mean,

and standard deviation. Additionally, the minimum, maximum, and range were determined, and a rank order was applied to assess the relative standings based on the criteria.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Selected Characteristics of the Respondents

An individual is characterized by a multitude of interconnected and constituent attributes that play a crucial role in the formation of their behavior and personality.

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents based on Selected Characteristics

Characteristics (measuring unit)	Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
			Number	%		
Age (year)	Teenage	Upto 19	22	18.33	18-24	20.68 $\pm$ 1.35
	Very Young	20-22	87	72.50		
	Young	>22	11	9.17		
Gender	Male	1	63	52.50		
	Female	2	57	47.50		
Study Year	1 st year		30	25		
	2 nd year		30	25		
	3 rd year		30	25		
	4 th year		30	25		
Family Income ("000" BDT)	Low	<1.13	0	00.00	2.2-20	5.29 $\pm$ 2.97
	Lower Middle	1.14 - 4.44	51	42.50		
	Upper Middle	4.45 – 13.72	63	52.50		
HEIS (2022)	High	>13.73	6	5.00		
Family Size	Small	<4	72	60.00	2-8	4.40 $\pm$ 1.10
	Medium	5-6	44	36.67		
	Large	>7	4	3.33		
Educational Quality (GPA)	A (plus)	4.00	4	3.33	2.75-4	3.63 $\pm$ 0.28
	A (regular)	3.75-3.99	46	38.33		
	A (minus)	3.50-3.74	37	30.83		
	B (plus)	3.25-3.49	20	16.67		
	B (regular)	3.00-3.24	10	8.33		
	B (minus)	2.75-2.99	3	2.50		

Majority (72.5%) of the respondents were very young aged (20-22) compared to teenage (18.33%) and young aged (9.17%). The teenage category is included here to understand the diversity of the age groups in a university. Among 120 respondents, majority 63 (52.50%) were male students while the rest 57 (47.50%) of them were female (Table 2). The students responded equally (25%) from first, second, third and

fourth year (Table 2). Annual family income of the respondents ranged from 2.2 - 20 lakh BDT with mean and standard deviation of 5.29 lakh and 2.97, respectively. Majority (52.50%) of the respondents belonged to upper middle-income family compared to lower middle-income family (42.50%) and high-income family (5.00%) categories (Table 2). The family size of the respondents ranges from

2-8 people with the mean and standard deviation of 4.40 and 1.10, respectively. Majority (60.00%) of the respondents belonged to small sized family compared to medium size (36.67%) and large size family (3.33%).

Among 120 respondents, 114 students (95.00%) achieved A+ (GPA) and rest 6 students (5.00%) achieved A (GPA: 4-4.99) in Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination. In Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) Examination, most 115 students achieved A+ (GPA 5) and rest 6 students (5.00%) achieved A (GPA 4-4.99). The last year's YGPA of the respondents ranges from 2.75-4 with mean and standard deviation of 3.63 and 0.27, respectively. Based on TGPA grading system and grading scale the respondents are categorized into following 10 groups

shown in Table 2. The findings indicate that highest proportion (38.33%) of the respondents possessed A (regular) grade followed by A (minus; 30.83%), B (plus; 16.67%), B (regular) (8.33%), A (plus) (3.33%) and B (minus) (2.50%) in last year term final examinations. The findings also indicate that majority of the students (69.16%) achieved a very good GPA (3.50 to 3.99, i.e. Grade A (minus) to A (regular).

Perception of the Students against the BAC Defined Quality Standards and Criteria

1. Governance: Governance system must work in a manner that ensures better management of the program towards the achievement of mission and objectives of the HEI/PoE in a way that effectively benefits the stakeholders.

Table 3. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'governance' based on LOS*

Criteria	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)*	
1) Vision, mission and objective	482	80.33	3 rd
2) Well-communicated strategic plan	482	80.33	3 rd
3) Congenial and friendly administrative setup	513	85.50	2 nd
4) Strictly maintains the academic calendar	600	100.00	1 st
5) Documented class size policy and maintains standard class size	470	78.33	4 th
6) Maintaining IT based student database/portfolio	600	100.00	1 st
Mean	524.50	87.42	

*LOS= Level of Satisfaction

A number of 6 criteria were included according to BAC prescription for studying governance. Among the 6 criteria under governance all of the respondents remarked that the PoE maintained the highest level of satisfaction in the standard governance regarding criteria 4 and 6, followed by 3, 1 and 2 whereas the PoE showed relatively less level of satisfaction in case of criterion 5. From the findings, it could be concluded that the PoE maintained an excellent level of satisfaction in the standard governance in case of all criteria (Table 3).

Ahmed et al. (2017) studied student views over governance and found that the students expressed their satisfaction (80.46%) with 'The entity provides comprehensive guidelines to the students in advance by means of a brochure/handbook', followed by 'Disciplinary rules and regulations are explicitly defined and well circulated' (78.28%) and Codes of conduct for the students and employees are well communicated (78.04%). On the other hand, they express their dissatisfaction (59.54%) regarding the 'Website is updated properly' followed by 'The entity has adequate infrastructures to satisfy its mission and

objectives' (60.00%) and 'Students' opinion regarding academic and extra-academic matters are addressed properly' (62.41%).

Table 4. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Governance'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-6	0	0	24-28	26.23 $\pm$ 0.63
Fair	6-12	0	0		
Good	12-18	0	0		
Very Good	18-24	2	1.67		
Excellent	24-30	118	98.33		

Data presented in Table 4 estimated that the governance maintained by the PoE was excellent as perceived by most of the students (98.33%) under study.

2. Leadership, Responsibility and Autonomy: To be responsive to the emerging changes and needs of the stakeholders, the HEI/PoE must have effective institutional leadership with defined responsibilities and sufficient autonomy.

Table 5. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Leadership, Responsibility and Autonomy' based on LOS

Category	Index	
	Score	LOS (%)
Maintains a set of values to foster social responsibility	375	62.50

One criterion was included according to BAC prescription for studying Leadership, Responsibility and Autonomy. A good level of satisfaction (62.50%) was maintained in this standard (Table 5). Sarker et al. (2016) studied program

mission, objectives and strategic plans of Department of Mathematics, BUET and mentioned a set of values as social responsibility. His Findings show that the PoE has an established leadership, responsibility and autonomy.

Table 6. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Leadership, Responsibility and Autonomy'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	1	0	0.00	3-5	3.49 $\pm$ 0.70
Fair	2	0	0.00		
Good	3	108	90.00		
Very Good	4	9	7.50		
Excellent	5	3	2.50		

Data presented in Table 6 indicated that Leadership, Responsibility and Autonomy maintained by the PoE is at good level of satisfaction as perceived by the students under study.

3. Institutional Integrity and Transparency: The HEI/PoE must act responsively to meet the needs of the stakeholders and manage the academic program maintaining institutional integrity with transparency and accountability.

Table 7. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Institutional Integrity and Transparency' based on LOS

Category	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1. Maintains well- defined and well-communicated code of conduct	488	81.33	4 th
2. The admission process ensures transparency and fairness	600	100.00	1 st
3. Regularly publishes and provides student-handbook on different aspects	503	83.83	3 rd
4. Has a well-designed, lucrative, interactive and informative website	579	96.50	2 nd
5. Has well-defined and well-communicated policy and procedure to address student grievances and complaints on issues like abusive behavior, bullying, cybercrime. etc., with fairness and transparency avoiding discrimination	479	79.83	5 th
Total	529.80	88.30	

Among the 5 criteria under Institutional Integrity and Transparency, all (100%) of the respondents remarked that the PoE maintained the highest level of satisfaction in the standard regarding criterion 2 followed by 4, 3, 1 whereas the students showed relatively less level of satisfaction in case of criterion 5 (Table 7). Chishty et al. (2017) studied Institutional Integrity and Transparency found that around 77.00% students of Fisheries and Marine Resource

Technology Discipline have given their negative consents (strongly disagree and disagree) to the existing facilities. The disagreement has mostly arisen from the criteria of adequate, up-to-date and ICT mediated reference materials in library; internet facilities; adequate, well space and well-equipped class room and laboratories; and adequate indoor and outdoor healthcare facilities.

Table 8. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Institutional Integrity and Transparency'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-5	0	0.00	19-24	22.08 $\pm$ 0.99
Fair	5-10	0	0.00		
Good	10-15	0	0.00		
Very Good	15-20	9	7.50		
Excellent	20-25	111	92.50		

The Institutional Integrity and Transparency maintained by the PoE was at excellent level of satisfaction as perceived by most (92.50%) of the students under study (Table 8).

4. Curriculum: Curriculum must be outcome-based and consistent with the qualifications framework (QF) of Bangladesh for higher education. It should be comprehensive enough to guide the

faculty and students towards systematic attainment of learning outcomes and fulfillment of mission and objectives of the PoE.

Table 9. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Curriculum' based on LOS

Category	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1. Curriculum aims at producing graduates focusing on graduate profile/attributes	600	100.00	1 st
2. Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are defined within the scope of mission and objectives of the PoE and aligned with graduate profile/attributes	577	96.17	5 th
3. Program learning outcomes (PLOs) are SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-bound)	591	98.50	2 nd
4. Curriculum of the program is designed in compliance with the higher education in terms of graduating credits and credit value	583	97.17	3 rd
5. Program learning outcomes and courses are aligned to make the content of the curriculum appropriate and adequate	600	100.00	1 st
6. In case of Bachelor degree program curriculum of the program includes minimum 25% of total credits for general education courses with clearly defined course learning outcomes (CLOs) and mapped with PLOs	600	100.00	1 st
7. Maintains documented course file with course plan specifying pre-requisite course(s)	600	100.00	1 st
8. Provisions of internship/project/dissertation/field work/work integrated learning opportunities are included in the curriculum	582	97.00	4 th
Total	591.63	98.60	

A number of 8 criteria were included according to BAC prescription for studying curriculum. Among the 8 criteria under curriculum, all of the respondents remarked that the PoE maintained the highest level of satisfaction regarding criteria 1, 5, 6 and 7, followed by criteria 3, 4 and 8. Where criterion 2 showed relatively less satisfaction index among the 8 criteria. From the findings it might be concluded that the PoE showed highest level of satisfaction regarding the development of a very good OBE-based curriculum (Table 9). Adhikary et al. (2014) studied curriculum considering 6 issues/criteria among which excellent level of satisfaction (84.92%) was expressed by the students regarding the inclusion of research methodology course in undergraduate program while lowest score but a good level of satisfaction

regarding curriculum makes the students competent to identify and solve the field problem. Jahan et al. (2025) documented that the undergraduate OBE curriculum of Agrotechnology Discipline was well-structured and the curriculum was developed following the guidelines of UGC and BAC. However, they pinpointed windows for further improvement of the curriculum.

5. Teaching-Learning & Assessment: Teaching learning practices must be systematic, innovative, practice oriented and motivating to support the attainment of learning outcomes, promoting sense of responsibility and ethical practices. The PoE must follow fair, valid and reliable assessment methods for tracing students' progress.

Table 10. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Curriculum'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-8	0	0.00	37-40	39.44 $\pm$ 0.73
Fair	8-16	0	0.00		
Good	16-24	0	0.00		
Very Good	24-32	0	0.00		
Excellent	32-40	120	100.00		

The Curriculum developed by the PoE was excellent as perceived by all of the students under study (Table 10).

Table 11. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Teaching-Learning & Assessment' based on LOS

Criteria	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1) Teaching-learning and assessment practices involve practical evidences and to initiate critical thinking and to apply acquired knowledge in the real-life situations	473	78.83	2 nd
2) Student learning time (SLT), teaching-learning and assessment activities are in accordance with the credit value of that course	472	78.67	3 rd
3) Course teachers strictly maintain class schedule, keep records of attendance, records of missed classes and make up classes (if any)	468	78.00	5 th
4) Course plan/outlines are available to the students to make them well informed about the CLOs, topics to be discussed, teaching learning and assessment strategy and rubrics that will be used to assess performance/attainment of learning outcomes	467	77.83	6 th
5) Students get timely feedback on the performance in all formative/continuous assessments	470	78.33	4 th
6) Maintains a clearly defined progression rules, which ensure that the students will move to the next higher level	422	70.33	7 th
7) Course learning outcomes, teaching-learning activities and assessment methods are properly aligned	480	80.00	1 st
8) Maintains provisions of tutorial classes for each course for better understanding of course content	349	58.17	8 th
Total	450.13	75.02	

Among the 8 criteria under Teaching-Learning & Assessment, majority of the respondents remarked that the PoE maintained very good level of satisfaction in the standard regarding criterion 7, followed by 1, 2, 5, 3 and 4, whereas the PoE maintained fair level of satisfaction regarding criterion 8, which really needs improvement (Table 11). Adhikary et al. (2014) studied that Teaching-learning and

learning assessment considering 16 issues/criteria among which Very good level of satisfaction (73.26%) was expressed by the students regarding "The content of examinations was representative of the course material" while the lowest score (49.95%) was assessed regarding "The students are provided feedback on each assessment before the next one" which fulfilled a good level of satisfaction.

Table 12. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Teaching-Learning & Assessment'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-8	0	0.00	27-33	30.01 $\pm$ 1.17
Fair	8-16	0	0.00		
Good	16-24	0	0.00		
Very Good	24-32	119	99.17		
Excellent	32-40	1	0.83		

Data presented in Table 12 indicate that the PoE provided very good level of satisfaction regarding the standard Teaching-Learning & Assessment as perceived by the students under study.

6. Student Admission & Support Services:

The HEI/PoE must set appropriate entry requirements and select the right candidates for a particular program under a fair and transparent admission policy. Students must have

adequate and appropriate supports for better attainment of learning outcomes, exploring potentials, molding personality and preparing them for the real-life situation with sense of responsibility and integrity.

Table 13. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Student Admission & Support Services' based on LOS

Criteria	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1) Maintains a clearly defined and well-communicated admission policy	597	99.50	1 st
2) Maintains a separate administrative setup with a clearly defined and well-communicated comprehensive policy for the international students	472	78.67	7 th
3) A well-structured student affairs department/office at the HEI and policy with clear objectives is functional	480	80.00	4 th
4) Organizes orientation session(s) for the freshers to acquaint them with the PoE, academic program, facilities, career requirements, career prospects and career pathways	474	79.00	6 th
5) Formalized the practice of academic guidance and counseling on course content, good conduct and integrity including cheating, plagiarism, cybercrime/cyber law, etc., on a regular basis	478	79.67	5 th
6) A well-organized alumni association of the PoE is functional	420	70.00	8 th
7) Ensures and facilitates the participation of students in co-curricular activities and community services	485	80.83	3 rd
8) Organizes career counseling and guidance sessions for the graduating students	496	82.67	2 nd
9) Student progress and achievement monitoring system is comprehensive enough to identify the students who are showing poor progress	285	47.50	9 th
Total	465.22	77.54	

Among the 10 criteria under the standard Student Admission & Support Services, the KU authority/PoE followed the highest

level of standard regarding criterion 1, followed by 8, 7, 3, 5, 4, 2 and 6, whereas it was very less in case of criterion 9. From the findings it could be concluded that the

PoE maintained standard regarding student admission and support services with few exceptions (Table 13). Adhikary et al. (2014) studied Student support, counseling and development considering 8 issues/criteria among which, very good level of satisfaction (61.05%) was expressed by the students regarding "Students academic progress documentation system" while the lowest score (35.52%) was assessed regarding "students can register their course using University website" which marks a fair level of satisfaction. Ahmed et al. (2017)

studied Students' views regarding the students' support services considering 6 issues/criteria among which, 76.21% satisfaction level was expressed by the students' regarding there is an organized and supportive alumni association followed by the entity provides co-curricular and extracurricular exposures to the students (75.98%) while dissatisfied concerning There are opportunities to be involved with community services (59.54%) followed by financial grants are available to the students in case of hardship (62.99%).

Table 14. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Student Admission & Support Services'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-9	0	0.00	32-38	34.89 $\pm$ 1.11
Fair	9-18	0	0.00		
Good	18-27	0	0.00		
Very Good	27-36	114	95.00		
Excellent	36-45	6	5.00		

Data presented in Table 14 estimated that the Student Admission & Support Services maintained by the PoE was very good as perceived by the students under study.

7. Faculty and Professional Staff: The HEI/PoE must have a policy to ensure the availability of adequate qualified faculty

and professional staff with reasonable teacher student ratio.

Table 15. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Faculty and Professional Staff' based on LOS

Criteria	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1) Maintains suitably qualified, professionally skilled and experienced faculty	316	52.67	3 rd
2) Evaluate performances of faculty and professional staff at three levels- (i) Head of the PoE, (ii) Students, and (iii) Self-evaluation.	441	73.50	1 st
3) Maintains provision to appoint the recognized and competent practitioners in the related field as guest speaker/faculty/adjunct faculty	346	57.67	2 nd
Total	367.67	61.28	

Among the 3 criteria under the standard Faculty and Professional Staff the PoE has obtained a very good LOS regarding the criterion 2. evaluating the performance of

faculty and professional staff by the respondents shows that criteria 3 and 1 has obtained a good LOS requiring more improvement (Table 15). Hossain et al. (2016) studied Faculty and Professional

Staff based on 11 criteria. Majority faculty members (72.00%) opined that policy and practices are good enough for staff recruitment and 39.00% of them agreed that academics have opportunity to take part in different professional training programs while the non-academic staffs have very limited opportunity in participating professional training program for skill development. Majority of the

academics (61.00%) opined that the entity conducts seminars and workshops to share knowledge and experience among the faculty members; however, 39.00% of them opined that Discipline do not have policy regarding provision for mentoring/continuous guidance of incumbent academic staff.

Table 16. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Faculty and Professional Staff'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-3	0	0.00	7-12	9.19 $\pm$ 1.39
Fair	3-6	0	0.00		
Good	6-9	85	70.83		
Very Good	9-12	35	29.17		
Excellent	12-15	0	0.00		

The Faculty and Professional Staff maintained by the PoE was good but require more improvement as perceived by the students under study (Table 16).

8. Facilities & Resources: The HEI/PoE must ensure availability and access to the appropriate and adequate facilities & resources necessary for effective teaching learning and research depending on the nature of discipline and program.

Table 17. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Facilities & Resources' based on LOS

Criteria	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1) Maintains a policy for student enrollment in a class/semester on the basis of capacity in terms of free space, number and size of class room, common room, washroom and other facilities	461	76.83	2 nd
2) Has library managed by appropriate library management software and well-trained qualified library professionals with adequate space, workstation, e-library services, periodicals and journals in printed and electronic forms	226	37.67	4 th
3) Necessary physical facilities like, office facilities including secretarial and technical services, fire and safety, free space, workstation, canteen, washroom, prayer room facilities etc. are in good condition	480	80.00	1 st
4) Laboratory facilities, instructional technology & software, IT learning facilities to conduct research are in good condition with appropriate safety measures, appropriate, adequate and accessible when needed by the students	391	65.17	3 rd
Total	389.50	64.92	

Among the 4 criteria under the standard Facilities & Resources, the PoE maintained

an excellent level of satisfaction regarding criterion 3, followed by 1 and 4 with a very good level of satisfaction. Where criterion

2 showed a fair level of satisfaction among the 4 criteria, PoE should give more concentration on criterion 2 (Table 17). Adhikary et al. (2014) studied institutional structure and facilities considering 17 issues/criteria among which the students expressed their highest level of satisfaction

regarding cultural environment and recreation (66.60%) followed by academic progress documentation (61.05%). The level of satisfaction regarding classroom space expressed by the students was good (51.62%).

Table 18. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Facilities and Resources'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-4	0	0.00	11-15	12.98 $\pm$ 0.79
Fair	4-8	0	0.00		
Good	8-12	30	25.00		
Very Good	12-16	90	75.00		
Excellent	16-20	0	0.00		

Data presented in Table 4.17 indicate that three-fourth (75.00%) of the students expressed very high/excellent level of satisfaction about Facilities & Resources maintained by the PoE.

The 'Research and Scholarly Activities' standard was excluded from this study's scope because the participant demographic consisted primarily of undergraduate students. Since the institutional curriculum at this level prioritizes foundational coursework over independent investigation, student engagement with formal research initiatives was minimal. Retaining this metric would have skewed the dataset with disproportionately low or non-applicable

scores, thereby compromising the overall validity of the institutional assessment.

10. Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement: The HEI/PoE must have a comprehensive system of monitoring, evaluation and review of policies and practices to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats with achievable benchmark for sustainable quality assurance and continual improvement.

Table 19. Distribution of criteria under the standard 'Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement' based on LOS

Criteria	Index		Rank
	Score	LOS (%)	
1) Well-functional Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) with documented policies and procedures for quality assurance	502	83.67	1 st
2) Maintains a formal system of collection and management of stakeholder's feedback, comments of the course teacher and student on the courses	347	57.83	3 rd
3) Using the feedback from the stakeholders continually and systematically monitor, evaluate and review the effectiveness of the programs, policies and procedures to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats and ratify those	348	58.00	2 nd
Total	399	66.50	

Among the 3 criteria, under the standard 'Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual

Improvement' the PoE provided, an excellent level of satisfaction was regarding

criterion1, where the PoE provided a good level of satisfaction in criterion 2 and 3. From the finding it could be concluded that the PoE should pay attention to criteria 2 and 3 (Table 19). Ahmed et al. (2017) studied Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement and stated that no formal evaluation system of the faculties and even teaching learning process by the students was existed, but recently the university has decided to design an effective Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement system after introduction of new curriculum commenced

in January 2017. Chishty et al. (2017) studied Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement and stated that the feedbacks come from stakeholders, peer observers and others sources are cautiously noticed, evaluated and prioritized for further improvement of the management process. The outcomes of assessment processes are discussed in Discipline's meeting. Several committees or groups are formed to solve raised problems or improve the facilities (priority basis) for the development of this Discipline.

Table 20. Distribution of the respondents according to their LOS to the standard 'Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement'

Category	Score	Respondents (N=120)		Range	Mean $\pm$ SD
		Number	LOS (%)		
Poor	0-3	0	0.00	8-11	9.98 $\pm$ 0.63
Fair	3-6	0	0.00		
Good	6-9	15	12.50		
Very Good	9-12	105	87.50		
Excellent	12-15	0	0.00		
Total		120	100.00		

Data presented in Table 20 estimated that the Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement maintained by the PoE were very good as perceived by the students under study.

10. Overall Status of the Standards:

Data presented in Table 21 indicate that Khulna University Authority has been maintaining satisfactory level on standards 4 (98.61%), 3 (88.30%) and 1 (87.42%) as they scored more than 80.00%. While the standards- 6 (77.52%), 5 (66.69%), 9

(66.50%), 8 (64.92%), 2 (62.50%) and 7 (61.28%) need more attention of the authority because they show good level of maintenance but not satisfactory as they scored in between 60.00% to less than 80.00% (Table 21).

Table 21. Overall status of 9-selected standards

Standards	Respondents Index		Rank order
	Average Score	LOS (%)	
Governance	524.50	87.42	3 rd
Leadership, Responsibility and Autonomy	375.00	62.50	8 th
Institutional Integrity and Transparency	529.80	88.30	2 nd
Curriculum	591.63	98.61	1 st
Teaching-Learning & Assessment	400.11	66.69	5 th
Student Admission & Support Services	465.22	77.52	4 th
Faculty and Professional Staff	367.67	61.28	9 th
Facilities & Resources	389.50	64.92	7 th
Monitoring, Evaluation & Continual Improvement	399.00	66.50	6 th
Average Score	448.83	74.80	

CONCLUSION

The overall performance of the Agrotechnology Discipline, Khulna University, as assessed by the PoE, reflects a commendable level of achievement, particularly in the areas of curriculum, institutional integrity and transparency, and governance, all of which scored above 80.00%. The standard of student admission and support services was also rated as very good. However, certain key areas-including teaching-learning and assessment, monitoring, evaluation and continual improvement, facilities and resources, leadership, responsibility and autonomy, and faculty and professional staff-require more attention, as they scored below the desirable benchmark of 70.00%, indicating window for improvement. Despite these areas of concern, the overall assessment suggests that the program maintains a very good standard, positioning it as an accreditable program that aligns well with quality assurance expectations. Strengthening the identified areas will further enhance the program's academic excellence and sustainability.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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