

MAKERERE UNIVERSITY HIGHER EDUCATION IN AGRICULTURE AND PARTNERSHIP WITH GO-FAU PROGRAM

Faculty of Agriculture (www.agric.mak.ac.ug)

Programs: The Faculty of Agriculture is one of the oldest Units of Makerere University. It was established in 1924 to teach agricultural sciences leading to a Certificate in Agriculture, elevated to a Diploma program in 1933, and started awarding the Degree in Agriculture in 1961. Over time the faculty built capacity to train MSc and PhD level graduates in various fields of agriculture. Presently, the Faculty is offering programs to about 1000 students that lead to the award of the following degrees:

- Bachelor of Science in Agriculture
- Bachelor of Science in Food Science and Technology
- Bachelor of Science in Agricultural engineering
- Bachelor of Land Use management
- Bachelor of Agribusiness Management
- Bachelor of Science in Horticulture
- Bachelor of Agriculture and Rural Innovation

Graduate programmes are offered in the specialised disciplines of crop, soil, animal and food sciences, agricultural economics, agribusiness, engineering and extension, and human nutrition. Some of the programs are implemented in collaboration with other universities and institutions (e.g. UshePIA, BIO-EARN). The Faculty is also implementing the following regional programs:

- The Regional Masters in Agricultural and Applied Economics
- Master of Science in Plant Breeding and Biotechnology
- Master of Science in Research Methodology
- PhD in Plant breeding and Biotechnology

All graduate training has a research component resulting in a thesis and publications. Clearly, the disciplines described above and in which the graduate research is conducted fit in the CGIAR's five specific research priorities.

Training and research infrastructure: Over the last decade the Faculty of Agriculture has undertaken a number of institutional and infrastructural developments. These include:

1. Rehabilitation and upgrading of the University Farm to a research institute (Makerere University Agricultural Research Institute, Kabanyolo - MUARIK). Land acreage for research has also been expanded to 600 ha.
2. Construction of the Continuing Agriculture Education Center (CAEC). It is to operate as a demand driven and proactive service provider for agricultural related professionals and practitioners. Distance education is one mode of operation planned under this Centre.

3. Construction of the Department of Food Science and Technology office block, lecture theatres and pilot food processing plant.
4. Rehabilitation and development of laboratories for Biotechnology and Bio-safety.

Human Capacity: The Faculty Training, Research and Outreach programmes are supported by a well qualified human resource personnel comprising 48 Ph.D., 39 M.Sc. and 5 B.Sc. holders. Among these are 5 Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 23 Senior Lecturers and 33 Lecturers. Makerere University policy now is that all lecturers should be Ph.D. graduates.

Developing functioning partnerships: The Faculty of Agriculture is focusing more on graduate training as a niche to strengthen its position as a centre of excellence in knowledge and technology generation. There is a comparative advantage in doing so, given the calibre of staff, research and training infrastructure including MUARIK. By strengthening and expanding graduate training, the Faculty will be able to engage more in research and increase its productivity in terms of human capacity, new knowledge and technologies that enhance agricultural development. But the relevance of this is only possible with the engagement of stakeholders who continuously challenge and support it to readjust its programmes. In developing curricular and resources for teaching and research, the faculty is strengthening its linkages with the private sector including industrialists, NGOs, farmer organisations, farmers and other training, research and development agents.

The Faculty of Agriculture in collaboration with EARTH University is involved in a regional project in Africa titled “*Catalysing the Change Process in African Higher Agricultural Education*”. It is designed to help African institutions of higher agricultural education to attract support for their own efforts to change and reform programmes in response to the needs of sustainable rural development.

Other initiatives are EDULINK and Commonwealth of Learning projects. An EDULINK proposal is in the final stages of approval. Titled “Strengthening of university capacity for promoting, facilitating and teaching rural innovation processes (SUCAPRI)”, it will form a network of teaching and research staff in Makerere University in Uganda and four universities (Nairobi, Egerton, Kenyatta, and Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology) in Kenya. The active interaction and sharing of knowledge between these universities and the International Centre for Development Oriented Research in Agriculture (ICRA) in the Netherlands will improve teaching practice and research in rural innovation processes. Some efforts for joint course curricula review and development will be made via e-learning.

The Commonwealth of Learning group is discussing opportunities for increasing efficiency and effectiveness of the NARS using ICT in identifying and implementing priorities in agriculture education, research and extension. A national brainstorming meeting supported by Faculty of Agriculture has been convened and now efforts are underway to exhibit a micro-scale show case under CHOGM (Nov 2007).

New ways of facilitating learning: In order to impart skills demanded among its graduates, Makerere University has taken the initiative to institutionalize pedagogy

training for all university lecturers. In addition, the Faculty of Agriculture has pioneered the Personal Mastery/Soft Skills (PMSS) to transform learning, research, and consultancy for development impact. In our new strategic plan, we shall decongest the lecture rooms using ICT and distance learning. New actions will be undertaken to acquire the necessary ICT and distance learning facilities, and equip course instructors in these approaches. Our strategy is to increase access (quantity) and quality (students competitive in the global labour market) by increasing options for learning (1. face-to-face, 2. blended face-to-face and distance learning, and 3. full distance learning).

The University has been training staff (2 per department) for developing new courses on learning management programme-KEWL for students under face to face to access materials. For distance learning, the Faculty of Agriculture has been piloting a programme “Strengthening Agricultural and Environmental Capacities-Distance Education (SAEC-DE) in partnership with University of Florida, University of Nairobi, and CIAT, where 2 NARS staff is pursuing M.Sc. from the University of Florida as a means of generating experiences for developing our distance learning programmes.

The Faculty will liaise with appropriate Makerere units involved in distance learning, especially the Department of Distance Education, whose mandate is to administer all distance education programmes in the University.

Partnering with GO-FAU: The Faculty of Agriculture has collaborated with nearly all the CGIAR Centers in leveraging resource mobilization for, and actually participating in training, research and outreach. Several staff from the CGIAR Centers have acted as academic supervisors to our graduate students. GO-FAU will build on, and institutionalize these on-going activities. Makerere would like to have a partnership with GO-FAU that will:

1. Develop Makerere’s capacity to offer good distance agricultural education services that meet community and individual needs at the undergraduate and graduate levels
2. Produce quality agricultural course materials to be used by regular students as well as converting them into online-interactive forms using free-libre open softwares e.g. Moodle, Wiki...

Introduce degree, diploma and short courses in agriculture by distance education so as to increase university intake and meet the urgent national needs of high and middle-level human resource personnel.