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Agricultural Universities of India

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A farm university teaches farm science. It also tests new methods, and shares useful findings with farmers. India’s first opened at Pantnagar in 1960. Today’s network spans state schools, central schools, ICAR deemed schools, and other schools with farm units.



The University Library at Pantnagar, India’s first agricultural university. Photo: Fromshahar, CC BY-SA 3.0.

01 First UniversityPantnagar, opened on 17 November 1960.
02 Institution TypesFour: SAU, Central, ICAR deemed, and other.
03 Core ModelTeaching, research, and extension, in one loop.
04 RenamedIn 1972, after Govind Ballabh Pant.

State Agricultural University (SAU)
: Set up by a state law. Run by a state government. Example: Pantnagar.

ICAR deemed university
: An ICAR school that counts as a university. Examples: IARI, NDRI, IVRI, and CIFE.

Land-grant model
: A three-part design — teaching, research, and farm extension, all in one place.

How the Agricultural University Network Began

A single idea grew, over three decades, into a national network of farm schools.

How the First University Came to Be

- **1929:** ICAR began, as the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research.
- **1949:** The Radhakrishnan University Education Commission called for rural and agricultural higher education.
- **Mid-1950s:** An Indo-American team, led by K. R. Damle, studied a land-grant style university.
- **17 November 1960:** Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru dedicated the first agricultural university, at Pantnagar.
- **1972:** The university took the name Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology.

Why Do Histories Disagree on the Exact Date?

University histories give different dates for the Damle team. Some say it formed in 1954. Others date it by its 1955 report. “Mid-1950s” avoids picking one wrong date, since both years point to the same planning work. **The 1949 commission raised the need. The mid-1950s Damle team studied the model.** These are two different steps, not one event.

> **Quick check 1.** The 1949 Education Commission and the mid-1950s Damle team had the same job. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Four Types of Agricultural Institutions

Not every farm school fits the same mould. India actually runs four separate kinds.

The Four Types

- **State Agricultural University (SAU).** Set up by a state law. Run by a state government. Example: Pantnagar.
- **Central Agricultural University.** Set up by Union law, with central support. Examples: Imphal, Jhansi, and Pusa.
- **ICAR deemed university.** An ICAR school that counts as a university. Examples: IARI, NDRI, IVRI, and CIFE.
- **Other university with an agriculture faculty.** Runs under its own general university law. Example: Banaras Hindu University.

ICAR’s own list also names other central schools, that teach farming. Do not force every school into just three kinds.

What ICAR Actually Does, and Does Not Do

ICAR guides farm research and teaching, across India. It also checks institutions and courses, against set standards. This check is called accreditation. It is a quality check, nothing more. It does not turn a state university into a central one. A course does not stay accredited forever, either. A state usually runs its own SAU. ICAR can still help with research and quality checks.

> **Quick check 2.** ICAR accreditation turns a state-run university into a central university. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Teaching, Research, and Extension

This three-part loop is what actually connects a lab to a real farmer's field.

The Land-Grant Model's Three Jobs

- **Teaching** trains agronomists, veterinarians, engineers, and other farm-sector workers.
- **Research** tests crops, soils, animals, and methods, under real conditions.
- **Extension** takes useful know-how beyond the campus. Staff show farmers a method. They hear farmers' problems. They carry those problems back to researchers.

This loop is called the land-grant model. It shaped Pantnagar, and every SAU that followed it. It does not mean each university owns the same amount of land.

> **Quick check 3.** The land-grant model has three parts — teaching, research, and extension. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

How This Plays Out for a Real Farmer

Say a farmer asks why a wheat seed grows poorly, in local soil. A university team can test the soil, water, and seed, under local farm conditions. Students learn from the trial. Researchers compare the results. Extension staff then show farmers which method worked, and where it may still fail. One trial result is not a promise, for every farm. Weather, irrigation, and access to inputs can all change the outcome.

Remember: Teaching, research, and extension are three separate jobs, not one. A university can teach well but extend poorly, or the reverse. Exam questions often test whether you can name all three, in the right order.

Pantnagar and the Green Revolution

India's first agricultural university carries a longer, more layered history than its name suggests.

How Pantnagar Was Founded, and Why Its Name Changed

- **Pantnagar is India's first agricultural university.** It opened in the Tarai area of then Uttar Pradesh, on 17 November 1960. Jawaharlal Nehru dedicated it.
- Its first name was **Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University**. In 1972, twelve years later, it was renamed **Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture and Technology**.
- Govind Ballabh Pant was Uttar Pradesh's first Chief Minister.
- Pantnagar became part of Uttarakhand, when the new state formed on 9 November 2000. It now sits in Udham Singh Nagar district.

> **Quick check 4.** Pantnagar was named after Govind Ballabh Pant from its first day. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓



President Pranab Mukherjee addresses the 29th Convocation of Govind Ballabh Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, at Pantnagar, on 17 November 2015. Photo: Government Open Data License – India (GODL).

How Pantnagar Applied the Model on the Ground

Pantnagar copied the American land-grant pattern, with the University of Illinois helping plan it. Teaching, research, and extension all sat inside one campus. The campus grew on the Tarai State Farm. Published campus-area figures vary, so this lesson skips one exact size. Its work helped spread farm science during the Green Revolution. That change also relied on farmers, irrigation, seeds, credit, and many other institutions. **Some accounts call Pantnagar a spark for the Green Revolution.** That does not mean it caused the change alone.

Quick check 5. Pantnagar became part of Uttarakhand when the new state formed in 2000. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Exam Edge

A few traps come up often around this topic. These are worth knowing before an exam.

- Must Know Keep 1949, mid-1950s, 1960, 1972, and 2000 straight. Each date is its own step: first an idea, then a plan, then an opening, then a rename, then a state change.
- Good to Know ICAR's accreditation checks set standards. It does not change who owns or runs a school. A state-run SAU stays state-run, even after an ICAR check.
- Great to Know Do not assume only three kinds of farm schools exist. ICAR's own list names other central schools with farm units, sitting outside the four main groups.

Q: Which prime minister dedicated India's first agricultural university?

A: Jawaharlal Nehru, on 17 November 1960, at Pantnagar.

Q: What was Pantnagar's original name?

A: Uttar Pradesh Agricultural University, before its 1972 rename.

Q: What are the three jobs of the land-grant model?

A: Teaching, research, and extension.

Q: Name two ICAR deemed universities.

A: IARI and NDRI (also IVRI and CIFE).

Q: Which state did Pantnagar join in 2000?

A: Uttarakhand, when the new state formed on 9 November 2000.

Reference: who runs each institution type, with examples

Group	Who runs it?	Example
State Agricultural University (SAU)	A state law and state government	Pantnagar; Tamil Nadu Agricultural University
Central Agricultural University	Union law and central support	Imphal; Jhansi; Pusa
ICAR deemed-to-be university	Specialised ICAR institution with deemed status	IARI, NDRI, IVRI, CIFE
Other university with an agriculture faculty	Its own university law and governance	Banaras Hindu University

Practice MCQs

1. India's first Agricultural University was established in which year?

A. 1980

B. 1960

C. 1950

D. 1970

See answer ↓

2. Who inaugurated India's first agricultural university at Pantnagar, on 17 November 1960?

A. Lal Bahadur Shastri

B. Jawaharlal Nehru

C. Govind Ballabh Pant

D. Indira Gandhi

See answer ↓

3. On 9 November 2000, which new state was carved out of Uttar Pradesh, taking Pantnagar with it?

A. Uttarakhand

B. Chhattisgarh

C. Jharkhand

D. Himachal Pradesh

See answer ↓

4. India's agricultural university network is organized into how many tiers?

A. Four: State, Central, Deemed, and Private universities

B. Three: State, Central, and ICAR Deemed universities

C. One: all universities report directly to ICAR

D. Two: State and Central universities only

See answer ↓

5. On what date was the Imperial Council of Agricultural Research, now ICAR, first registered as a society?

A. 26 January 1930

B. 15 August 1947

C. 1 April 1935

D. 16 July 1929

See answer ↓

6. What is the defining institutional feature of the land-grant model used by India's SAUs?

A. Only postgraduate degrees are offered

B. Funding comes entirely from private industry

C. Teaching, research, and extension are combined within one institution

D. Each university specializes in a single crop

See answer ↓

7. ICAR functions as an autonomous organisation under which department?

A. NITI Aayog

B. Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE)

C. Ministry of Rural Development

D. Ministry of Commerce and Industry

See answer ↓

8. Approximately how many ICAR institutes and agricultural universities together make up its research network today?

A. 50 institutes and 20 universities

B. 200 institutes and 100 universities

C. 30 institutes and 15 universities

D. 113 institutes and 74 universities

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** G.B. Pant University of Agriculture and Technology, established in 1960 in Uttar Pradesh, became India's first agricultural university. It was modelled on the American land-grant university system, combining teaching, research and extension work. Its founding marked an important step in modernising Indian agricultural education and research. ↑ Q1
2. **B.** Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru inaugurated India's first agricultural university at Pantnagar on 17 November 1960. ↑ Q2
3. **A.** On 9 November 2000, Pantnagar became part of the newly created state of Uttarakhand, and the university now sits in Udham Singh Nagar district, near Nainital. ↑ Q3
4. **B.** The network has three tiers — State Agricultural Universities, Central Agricultural Universities, and ICAR Deemed Universities. ↑ Q4
5. **D.** ICAR was registered on 16 July 1929 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860, following the Royal Commission on Agriculture's recommendation. ↑ Q5
6. **C.** The land-grant model bundles teaching, research, and farmer extension into a single institution. ↑ Q6
7. **B.** ICAR operates under the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE), within the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. ↑ Q7
8. **D.** ICAR's own figures list 113 institutes and 74 agricultural universities spread across India, per its official website. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **False.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2
3. **False.** ↑ 3
4. **False.** ↑ 4
5. **False.** ↑ 5

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