The Punjab Agricultural University was established in 1962 to serve the state of erstwhile Punjab. On trifurcation of Punjab in November 1966, Haryana Agricultural University was carved out of PAU by an Act of Parliament in February 1970.

Later, in July 1970, Himachal Pradesh Krishi Vishvavidalya was established. In 2006 the College of Veterinary Science was upgraded to become Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Science University (GADVASU) at Ludhiana.

The Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) is located in Ludhiana city (Punjab State) in north-west India at a distance of 316 km from New Delhi. It is well connected by road and rail with the national capital. Situated on the Ludhiana - Ferozepur Road, the University covers an area of 1510 acres on its main campus and 4615 acres at the regional research stations. Modeled on the pattern of land grant colleges in U.S.A., the PAU performs the integrated functions of teaching, research and extension in agriculture, agricultural engineering, home science and allied disciplines.

The University has well equipped laboratories, library and lecture rooms and elaborate farm facilities. Hostel accommodation is available in the university hostels for single students. Married students, if accompanied by their family members, will have to find accommodation outside the campus.

The PAU has played a key role in increasing food grain production in the Punjab State several folds share its reputation and ushering in an era of Green Revolution in India. It has also made notable contributions in increasing livestock and poultry production. In recognition of its outstanding achievements in agricultural research, education and extension, it was adjudged the Best Agricultural University in India in 1995.

The Punjab Agricultural University now has four constituent colleges, viz. College of Agriculture, College of Agricultural Engineering, College of Home science and College of Basic Sciences & Humanities.

At present the University, through 28 departments in the four constituent colleges, offers 31 Master's and 30 Ph.D. programmes. The course curricula are constantly revised and restructured to keep pace with the latest developments in agriculture and allied fields.