INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW
OF
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

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Abbreviations

AHEAD - Accelerating Higher Education Expansion and Development
BDU - Business Development Unit
BIT - Bachelor of Information Technology
BL - Blended Learning
CCUC - Cyber Campus of University of Colombo
CD&E - Concept Development and Experimentation
CEDREP - Centre for Disability Research, Education and Practice
CGU - Career Guidance Unit
CODL - Centre for Open and Distance Learning
CPD - Continuing Professional Development
DELT - Department of English Language Teaching
E-Code - Establishment Code
EDP - External Degree Programme
ELTU - English Language Training Unit
EQA - External Quality Assurance
ERC - Ethics Review Committee
FB - Faculty Board
FGS - Faculty of Graduate Studies
FIM - Faculty of Indigenous Medicine
FoA - Faculty of Arts
FoE - Faculty of Education
FoL - Faculty of Law
FMF - Faculty of Management & Finance
FoM - Faculty of Medicine
FoN - Faculty of Nursing
FoS - Faculty of Science
FoT - Faculty of Technology
GEE - Gender Equality and Equity
GPA - Grade Point Average
HDC - Higher Degrees Committee
HEI - Higher Educational Institute
HEMIS - Higher Education Management Information System
HETC - Higher Education for Twenty First century
IARS - Institute of Agro-Technology and Rural Sciences
IBMBB - Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology and Biotechnology
ICT - Information and Communication Technology
IHRA - Institute of Human Resource Advancement
ILO - Intended Learning Outcome
IP - Intellectual Property
IQA - Internal Quality Assurance
IQAC - Internal Quality Assurance Cell
IR - Institutional Review
IT - Information Technology
KPI - Key Performance Indicator
LEARN - Lanka Education and Research Network
LMS - Learning Management System

MIS - Management Information System
MoU - Memorandum of Understanding
NAITA - National Apprentice and Industrial Training Authority
NILIS - National Institute of Library and Information Science
OBE - Outcome-Based Education
ODL - Open and Distance Learning
ODLC - Open and Distance Learning Centre
PG – Postgraduate
PGI - Postgraduate Institutes
PGIM - Postgraduate Institute of Medicine
PGIIM - Postgraduate Institute of Indigenous Medicine
QA - Quality Assurance
QAC - Quality Assurance Council
SBS - Subject benchmark statement
SC - Sri Palee Campus
SCE - Student-Centered Education
SCL - Student-Centered Learning
SDC - Staff Development Centre
SER - Self Evaluation Report
SGBV - Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
SIS - Student Information System
SLQF - Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework
SOPs - Standard Operating Procedures
TOR - Terms of Reference
UBL - University Business Linkage Cell
UCSC - University of Colombo School of Computing
UGC - University Grants Commission
UGVLE - Undergraduate Virtual Learning Environment
UoC - University of Colombo
URL - Uniform Resource Locator
VC - Vice Chancellor

Section 1: Brief introduction to the University and its review context

The University of Colombo has a rich history in Sri Lankan tertiary education as it's the first university with the motto *'Buddhi Sarvathra Bhrajate'*, as 'Wisdom Enlightens'. It was established in 1942 by the State Council of Ceylon, under the iconic leadership of Sir Ivor Jennings, who was appointed as its first Vice-Chancellor. Located primarily in the Colombo metropolitan region, except Sri Palee campus and a few out reached centres. The main premises are situated in the heart of Colombo, on a sprawling 50-acre estate, and comprises contemporary urban constructions, as well as old colonial architecture, considered national heritage sites.

The University is organized across 10 Faculties and 68 academic departments within faculties, along with 6 Institutes, a Campus, a School, and 20+ Centres & Units and offers a variety of courses for both undergraduate and postgraduate students, including programmes in multiple fields such as Arts, Science, Medicine, Management, Finance, Law, Education, Nursing , IT, Aesthetic Studies, and more. The University currently (as at 31 March 2023) has 15,705 undergraduates, 14,120 postgraduate students, 6,049 external undergraduates, and 9342 students enrolled in extension courses. Additionally, 74 undergraduate and 183 postgraduate foreign students are also registered with the university. Several scholarships are available for international students, and the university boasts a number of academic partnerships with overseas universities. The learning of these students is facilitated by 882 academic staff, 56 academic support staff, 51 administrative staff and 1006 non-academic staff.

Additionally, the university provides students with a range of services, including library resources, career guidance, and facilities for students with varying disabilities, supporting their academic and personal development.

Over the years, the university has built strong links with the industry in order to enhance the value of the education provided. Similarly, the sports and other facilities provided by the University encourage the students to balance their academic and social life.

Section 2: Review Team's view of the University's Self-Evaluation Report (SER)

As per the original timeline, the expedited process of conducting the Institutional Review of University of Colombo was due from 25th June- 24th July 2023. Soft copy version of the SER and IR Score sheets were made available to all reviewers (20th June 2023) and a properly type-set version of the SER on 22nd June 2023. However, due to a request of the Vice Chancellor of UoC, the site visit was rescheduled to July 24th, 2023, by the QAC and the review team informed.

Given the short period the UoC had to comply with the new IR manual, the CQA of UoC has provided satisfactory evidence to prove that the SER is prepared according to the guidelines of the Council (IR Manual 2023), in consultation with the stakeholders. The CQA of UoC has prepared the SER covering the period 2018 to 2022. After the SER was made available, the other documents and evidence were made available to the reviewers by the CQA of UoC through a Google drive folder.

In general, the SER and evidence documents were acceptable as reasonable, few remarks on it would help the UoC in preparation for future reviews. However, despite it should be mentioned that some faculties/institutes etc. have been excellent in providing evidence related to the 10 criteria.

- Less Clarity in Reporting**:** There was much evidence without the required clarity. For example, the given evidence may be relevant according to the IR manual, however, without highlighting the relevant sections of the evidence attached made the review process difficult.
- Misplacing evidence**:** Review Panel noticed several cases where the relevant evidence under a given criterion is reported elsewhere or not attached.
- Non-incorporation of relevant evidence**:** In the site visits, the Review Panel was able to uncover much useful evidence which were not mentioned in the SER or in evidence from some faculties and institutes.
- Lapses:
  (a) It was noted that the evidence of contribution by some faculties was not so satisfactory.
  (b) Some important information such as number of cadres, vacancies, number of degree programs conducted & students in each faculty/institutes etc. not reported in the SER.
  (c) Same evidence attached for different years (eg; 7.8)

  Further improvement of the quality of evidence can be achieved if the IQACs were given more responsibility in collecting necessary evidence and information on attaching evidence for contents in the SER. In the attaching evidence, if the evidence is provided Faculty/ Institute wise with common policies given in one folder that would make the review process more feasible.

Section 3: A brief description of the review process

The last Institutional Review of the University of Colombo was held in 2016. University had taken positive initiatives based on the recommendations of the review panel. As per the new cycle of Institutional Review (IR) of Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission, the IR of University of Colombo, Sri Lanka has been scheduled for 2023. In this respect University has submitted the Self Evaluation Report according to guidelines in the revised manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions.

The Chairman of the UGC appointed a seven - member Review Panel comprising, .

Prof N. Shanmugalingam (Chair) -Professor Emeritus, University of Jaffna
Prof. P. Hewage - Professor Emeritus, University of Ruhuna
Prof. Hema M.K.K. Pathirana- Professor Emeritus, University of Ruhuna
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The desk review was based on the evidence mentioned in the SER. The Review Panel conducted the on-site review during July 24-28, 2023. The site visit took place in an extremely cordial manner. The Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Deans of Faculties, the Director CQA ,Deputy Director CQA and A.R CQA ,Coordinator CQA had paid attention to every detail to ensure that the site visit was conducted successfully. The team visited ten faculties, departments and centres, units, libraries, hostels and the administrative divisions. Considerable time was spent by the Review Panel in discussions triangulating the evidence provided as documentation and the outcomes of their meetings and the observation of facilities. In this respect, the panel wishes to record that the non-availability of centralized documents for verification and missing evidence in the online documents initially was a concern. However, this was overcome with the cooperation and facilitation of appropriate stakeholders.

A wrap-up meeting was held on 28th July with the Vice Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar, Deans, Directors, Director CQA, members of the SER writing team, and other relevant staff members. The major findings of the review were highlighted at this final wrap-up meeting.

Section 4: Overview of the University's approach to quality and standards

The primary responsibility of maintaining quality lies with the entire University. The Institution may realize improvement of quality by operationalizing a QA policy, embracing a very effective internal quality assurance system, reviewing of programmes and courses offered by the University periodically, establishing a mechanism to collect, analyze and the use of relevant information for future decision making, reflecting on the recommendations of previous programmes and institutional reviews.

The University of Colombo has established its IQAU in 2014, as prescribed by the former Quality Assurance and Accreditation Council (QAAC) of the UGC, with clearly defined TORs. Quality Assurance (QA) is embedded in the operations of the University of Colombo, reflecting its commitment to a satisfactory level. All IQACs established across all entities and as guided by the CQA have clear terms of reference. CQA conducts meetings and monitors the progress of the IQACs once a month and in addition, the QA Standing Committee chaired by the Vice Chancellor regularly conducts monitoring once a month. The QA activities of the University are discussed under a permanent agenda item of the Senate.

The Strategic Plan (2018-2022) of the University, under all seven goals, had many strategies to establish, improve and ensure quality and standards for the regular monitoring of quality of its education. However, the goals, strategies, objectives and activities in the Strategic Plan are not consciously monitored in the planning, in order to obtain high standards of quality in education anticipated. Few Faculties in the University have not yet paid due attention to the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF), in planning and implementing the curricula for the anticipated academic standards. Internationalization of QA best practices are not much taken into account within the University. This should be promoted through a well-established and robust awareness programme, involving all categories of staff with the intervention of the University QA Standing Committee.

It was noted that under the guidance of the Director CQA, the Center diligently fulfills its responsibilities. In support of this, a Deputy Director position has been created in the CQA office. To facilitate the CQA, the university has appointed a Senior Assistant Registrar and a Coordinator. As a recommendation of the previous Institutional Review (IR) all the entities of the University are now established with the IQACs. It is praiseworthy that the initiative of establishing IQAC in postgraduate institutions to enhance their standards. Annual funding from the University's recurrent budget ensures its uninterrupted operation.

However, a few shortcomings in the implementation of remedial measures of some recommendations of the previous IR were identified. This may be partly due to the pandemic that prevailed during 2019 to 2022. It was noted that most of the IR and PR recommendations were discussed at the University QA standing committee. University has the potential to rectify most of them within a short period. Other recommendations like infrastructure improvements and enhancing the number and qualification of academic staff need extra time.

Most of the best practices which a Sri Lankan University should adhere to are practiced sufficiently by a large majority of the Faculties/Institutes of University of Colombo, with the exception of a few entities. There are many outstanding examples at the University of Colombo which could be used by other HEIs for their benefit. With more commitment and regularity in efforts, University of Colombo can make a great stride in its quality assurance process.

Section 5: Commentary on the ten criteria of Institutional Review

5.1. Governance and Management

The governing structure of the University of Colombo (UoC) comprises the Council, the Senate, and Faculty Boards established in compliance with the Universities Act No 16 of 1978 and UGC regulations. There is a clear division of responsibility vested with the Vice Chancellor, Librarian, Registrar and the Bursar as shown in the organizational chart, especially with regards to Centers and Units. The University governs its own vision, mission and objectives that reflect its values, standards and academic commitments. The website of the university is updated well and provides most of the essential information about the university and its functions. Vision and mission statements should be made public at least at the office of the faculties.

UoC revises its Strategic Plan periodically. The last one prepared for the period from 2023 to 2027 along with the annual action plan for year 2023 was made available to the review team. Annual action plans of 2023 with specific timelines, funds required for their implementation with clear responsibilities assigned to respective officers are available. The UoC has identified Key Performance Indicators under 4 goals with projections up to 2027 in the Strategic Plan. However, there is no clear mechanism available to monitor these indicators, as expressed by the members of the Council.

As in any other University, the UoC also has all its institutional arrangements and structures to enable it to fulfill its mission, goals, and objectives such as the Council, Senate, Faculty Boards and other essential standing committees (i.e. Finance Committee, Procurement Committee, Audit Committee etc.). These committees ensure that there is wider consultation whilst delegating power to many individuals. In addition, there are various ad-hoc committees which meet regularly, to ensure that the University is administered without major issues.

In general, it has essential administrative policies, procedures, financial stability, efficient management and administrative capacity, human and physical resources. University acts, ordinance, establishment codes, UGC circulars, rules and regulations are integrated within the governance and management of the University.

The University has an explicit policy and a framework on internationalization that includes international student recruitment, staff/student exchange, alliances with off-shore University/HEIs, student support services and cross-border delivery. A few faculties established collaborative partnerships with foreign universities for academic and research cooperation.

Although the University has developed comprehensive policies regarding Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) and Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), the activities of the centre for Gender Equity & Equality (GEE) should be promoted to deter Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) amongst all categories of staff and students. University Calendar having all the policies, codes and by-laws should be compiled. Management Guide having the SORs,

manual of financial procedures as well as SOPs and TORs of the sub-committees of the Senate and the Council should be compiled. Periodical Monitoring of the Action Plan should be carried out. Stakeholder awareness on addressing grievances through the established Grievance committee should be increased.

Overall, the Governance and Management of the UoC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of 85%.

5.2. Strength and Quality of Staff

The University of Colombo complies with a comprehensive Human Resource policy on recruitment, retention, performance appraisal and career development only for non-academic staff. However, the University adopts UGC circulars, policy and related guidelines in recruiting academic and non-academic staff. Most of the cadre positions have been filled, some faculties remained with unfilled vacancies, probably due to restrictions imposed by the government presently. The University has to recruit appropriately qualified staff while maintaining an adequately balanced, subject-wise staff to student ratio, in order to ensure the highest quality of teaching and learning. It is praiseworthy that the majority of academic staff are qualified at PhD level, with many Senior Professors and Professors to ensure high quality teaching and research. Most staff members have academic and professional training and experience gained through the centers of excellence in Sri Lanka and overseas. In few faculties majority of the staff are probationary staff, those must be encouraged to obtain their postgraduate qualifications at PhD level.

Awards such as Vice Chancellor's and that of the Senate and other incentives are provided to motivate academic staff to perform high quality research activities. It is praiseworthy to note the initiation of an award scheme for recognition of teaching excellence and innovative teaching by the Faculty of Medicine. It is recommended to extend this best practice among other faculties and institutes of the University. Policies and guidelines on performance appraisal of academic staff and criteria for outstanding performance are in place. However, performance by the administrative and non-academic staff are not appraised adequately. A proper procedure should be in place to identify underperforming staff members (academic/non-academic) and action should be taken to improve their quality of work/services.

Annually, the Staff Development Center (SDC) offers for all the newly recruited academic staff, an induction programme (CTHE) which is accredited with Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA), of the United Kingdom. It is noteworthy that this programme has been offered continuously during the entire pandemic period. However, bare minimum of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programmes for all categories of staff have been undertaken during the review period (2018-2022) and this has now been taken up by the new Director of the SDC with gradual improvement. It is suggested to give more emphasis on pedagogical training based on OBE and SCL to the academic and academic-support staff, addressing the professional development needs of administrative and non-academic staff too. It is also noteworthy that the University provided sufficient necessary training to improve both their IT skills and proficiency in ICT applications that are being used

and relevant in their working environment. It is recommended to prepare an annual action plan which is approved by the Management Committee of the SDC, based on training need analysis, and to form a “Programme Committee" according to the UGC commission circular 937 for the SDCs, for planning and implementation of the training programmes of the SDC.

Human resource strength at the SDC is adequate. However, the SDC needs a larger auditorium to cater to the entire university community. Terms of reference of the Director of SDC and duty lists for the non-academic staff of the SDC have been provided. Composition of the SDC Management Committee complies with the UGC commission circular 937 and the meetings are held once in two months. It was noted that financial allocation to conduct SDC programmes are carried out by the Vice Chancellor’s fund. It is recommended to explore the possibility of using treasury funds under the budgetary vote of ‘Capacity Building’.

There is a formal mechanism adopted by the faculties to guide newly recruited academic staff in their career development by their senior academics. Guidelines for academic mentors and mentees and other related documents in academic mentoring programmes are in place. It is commendable that the Faculty of Nursing has conducted orientation programmes for new recruits and the Sri Palee Campus has conducted its workshop on academic mentoring separately.

Overall, the Strength and Quality of Staff of the UoC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of 83%.

5.3. Curriculum Design and Programme Development

The University of Colombo offers a large number of degree programmes under sixty-eight Departments in ten faculties, a campus, a school, seven institutes, eighteen centres and ten units. The University offers a variety of courses for both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The University also provides students with a range of services, including library resources, career guidance and facilities for students with disabilities and an extensive range of extracurricular activities on its premises. These include sports opportunities with modern gymnasiums and playgrounds, as well as a diverse and multicultural student and staff population, focusing on fostering social harmony, cultural diversity, equal opportunity, and unity among students.

University of Colombo has policies and mechanisms to ensure that programme design and development adopt a stakeholder participatory approach in this regard. Different Departments and entities develop their own curricula complying with the university policies and monitored by the Curriculum Development and Evaluation Committees. University has policies and mechanisms that ensure the goals of academic programmes aligned with university’s mission and graduate profiles. Academic programmes are in line with the university’s graduate profile. Academic programmes maintain publicly available programme specifications.

University has a policy and mechanisms to promote outcome-based education and student-centered learning approaches in the design and development of curricula of all study programmes. In addition, the university offers supplementary courses to enrich curricula and enhance student competencies. Also, university promotes innovation and ensuring the diversity.

University ensures that policies and principles on which academic programmes are designed, developed, and evaluated. These programmes are structured, clear, and updated information are communicated to stakeholders.

A few faculties have inter-faculty and inter-university credit transfer mechanisms. University has a policy on workplace based / Industrial training. It has a policy on phasing out of curricula and the by-Laws have sections for the transition. University has a policy on monitoring, reviewing and revising academic programmes. The tracer studies are conducted annually to monitor employability of our graduates.

Overall, the Curriculum Design and Programme Development of the UoC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of about 86%.

5.4. Teaching-Learning

All 18 Faculties/Institutes/Schools of University of Colombo adopts quality teaching and learning process in accordance with current trends, Student-Centered (internships, more practical exposure and skill development by peer interaction) as well as Outcome-Based education. Majority of entities of UoC has conducted programs on SCL and BL training for academic staff members which were organized by the faculties etc. itself. The Staff Development Center has introduced new teaching learning methods for the newly recruited members regularly.

The Medical Faculty already has in place, an award scheme to recognize innovative pedagogy and innovative approach to teaching and FoA, FIM, FoS and IBMBB have already initiated the process. All other faculties etc. should adopt this practice to improve the teaching-learning practices to a higher level.

ICT-based teaching and learning tools are used in all faculties/institutes/schools. Learning Management System (LMS) is being used for teaching-learning activities of undergraduates. Details of course units, teaching materials, tutorials, continuous assessments, etc. should be made available on LMS for as many course units as possible in all study programs. It was noted that many web based Teaching -Learning methods (webinars, LMS based independent learning activities, interactive videos, web-based flash card activities etc.) are being practiced by some faculties academics could use the LMS more to conduct interactive sessions such as group discussions, quizzes, question/answer sessions, student feedback sessions in addition to uploading course materials. Internet access with broadband is available at the main university premises as well as in outside faculties/institutes and hostels providing student access to the

library and all web resources at all times and is commendable. However, it was noted during the site visit that this facility is not available for students of Sri Palee campus and the hostels of FoT.

UoC has qualified and experienced staff in all faculties and course specifications are clearly outlined. However, resources available for teaching- learning activities and skills development in a few faculties are not at optimal level. On the human resource requirement, FoL, FoT etc. lack permanent academic staff and especially in FoT with a student staff ratio of 38:1. More academic staff is required to cater to the student populations in those faculties. The physical facilities for undergraduates are not satisfactory to cater to the high student intake (no chairs with writing arms, visibility of white boards in large lecture halls, no ventilation) especially in the Faculty of Law,. Likewise, the physical facilities at SC, PGIIM, FoT (lecture theatres) require urgent attention of the authorities for improving the Teaching -Learning process.

All Faculties/Institutes/Schools of UoC obtain student review on teaching and students are part of Faculty Board meetings. However, evidence of follow-up actions, provision of feedback to the teacher for self-improvement was not available for most entities. FoM has introduced a system for supporting poor performers which is commendable and a process that could be adopted by other faculties/Institutes/schools. Peer reviews are obtained on academic deliverance by faculties with the FoT yet to introduce the process. However, as with the student feedback process, evidence for follow-up actions and the feed-back to the academic was not available with the exception of IBMBB. Student FB analyses and actions for the improvement of teaching skills etc. are areas that need further improvement.

Teacher guided peer group activities which help develop skills and competencies are included in CR of majority of the faculties etc. However, there is no UoC approved guideline on teacher guided peer study group formation and may need to be introduced based on the faculty etc. This is an area that needs to be streamlined and properly identified in the CRs as such with identifying facilities and student FB on facilities and opportunities provided.

It is commendable that all entities except for one or two of UoC take action in identifying gaps in existing curriculum and either have updated the CR or in the process of updating the CR with minor changes being introduced during the past years. Some entities have initiated links with national and international networks which will contribute to the Teaching -Learning process. It is recommended that major curriculum revisions are to be carried out every five years by all faculties and entities of UoC which have not done so. More linkages with international and national networks can enhance best practices in Teaching-Learning strategies. Even though academics of UoC engage in very good research output and innovations, evidence of teachers incorporating research and those in the public domain to enrich the teaching learning strategies or to include in the course content where applicable was not very evident.

A SLQF aligned UoC policy on Teaching -Learning and Development, Evaluation, Revising and Phasing out of curriculum is available and ensures SCL is part of curriculum. Diverse teaching learning methods are practiced for the Teaching-Learning process by all entities of UoC which is commendable. It was noted that in addition to lectures many different Teaching and Learning L methods are used to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the students

which also contributes to increase the employment opportunities of the undergraduates following programs which are not professional study programs.

Students with special needs have been provided with adequate facilities for Teaching -Learning activities. The number of such students in FoA is quite high (94). The Teaching -Learning and assessment strategies provided for these students are at a very satisfactory level. The role of the Centre for Disability Research, Education, and Practice in taking measures to ensure that all students have the opportunity to realize their gifts and fulfill their personal potential in a safe, respectful and compassionate teaching and learning environment is commendable. Very satisfactory hostel facilities and transport facilities from hostels to the faculty are provided for these students. However, as the student number is quite high some improvement is required in transport facilities. Reviewers also appreciate the FoS Policy on Students with special needs and their initiation to identify such students during orientation so that the action plan can be started from the entry to Faculty. This process could be adopted by other faculties etc. as well.

Overall, the Teaching-Learning of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of about 89%.

5.5. Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression

The organization structure of UoC consisted of eighteen entities including ten faculties and two postgraduate institutes offering a large number of degree programmes for both undergraduates and postgraduates, in different disciplines. University has a strong resource base in-terms of physical resources as well as human resources to conduct diverse degree programs and cater to its stakeholders. Further, UoC's contribution on resource allocation for differently abled students was recognized as a satisfactory arrangement along with student support and all relevant facilities for other student groups. University provides adequate, appropriate, and accessible infrastructure facilities to support teaching-learning activities.

Rich learning resources and arrangements to share the resources among academic, non-academic and students' communities are in compliance with the requirements of modern higher education requirements. Main library and eight faculty libraries with experienced staff and reasonable infrastructure development facilitate student progression while catering to the needs of external degree programs. The library has been digitalized and well organized with a unique collection of printed and electronic versions of relevant resources that really assist students and staff in their learning and teaching. The main library and branch libraries are fully automated and easily accessible. Proper guidance is provided to students by the relevant staff of the library during the orientation programmes conducted by all faculties. The University can pay special attention to provide the same opportunity in other places as much as possible. Students from almost all faculties can access all relevant information including degree programmes, examinations, disciplinary matters, etc. through a Handbook/prospectus which was uploaded on the website or distributed among them during this orientation programme.

Learning Management Systems (LMS) are well used by all faculties, and students' usage rates are significantly high, and the system operations are user-friendly. The scheduled academic

programme, teaching plan, learning materials, assignments and answers, and additional materials are made available for students. Anyhow, it should be ensured that all departments in all faculties adopt the same mechanism.

Even though most of the faculties have adequate infrastructure facilities for the effective implementation of programme related activities, a few entities/faculties lack adequate infrastructure facilities, It was observed that the faculty alumni especially with foreign chapters abundantly support the respective faculties by providing scholarships and training for students, and other infrastructure facilities. University/faculties provide students opportunities to get internships, and on hand experiences by having a strong bond with its alumni, ultimately, they were absorbed by the industries/organizations as permanent employees.

The learner support mechanism of most of the faculties provided well-equipped and properly functional centres. The ICT centres of the faculties and institutes provide essential services; networking, and relevant technological services for all departments and work divisions/units. UCSC was a pioneering school for ICT studies playing an important role in introducing promising tools and processes. Further, Wi-Fi facilities need to be strengthened in Sri Palee campus, student hostels, this will be a barrier for students to connect students to each other locally and globally for their knowledge advancement and information sharing. Moreover, few faculties provide preparatory programmes for freshers to gain a reasonable knowledge in English and ICT which are very much essential to prepare for undergraduate education. This can be mandatory in all faculties. It is important to note here that the university has a well-set up special needs education centre for differently abled students with some essential equipment and functioning well which is appreciable.

University put forward a strong platform for extra-curricular activities: sports, recreation, cultural and creative activities. Sports and cultural competitions are also organized frequently so that students can record their performances. The same is available for special needs students too, the evidence is documented by the SNEC that is commendable. Outreach programs, volunteering activities of the students enrich their personality development as well as national contribution.

The student support system including mentoring, counseling, and career guidance is adequately functioning in most of the faculties and institutions. Mentoring and counseling services need to be common practice among all sub units and resource allocation, monitoring the progress is vital for its sustainability. Mentors are appointed not only for students but also for junior academic staff. Students with financial needs are identified and facilitated to continue their studies. Providing financial support by academic staff of the respective faculties are observed and such approaches are appreciable. Counseling services are also provided to students to be free from stress and personal complexity. Anyhow, student counselors should be responsible to identify students who need counseling instead of approaching students themselves who will come for counseling. For this purpose, regular training should be provided for all staff not limited to students' counselors. Even though learning resources and student support systems are reasonably available, a regular mechanism to monitor the progression of students is not in place.

Overall, the Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of 83%.

5.6. Student Assessment and Awards

University governs student assessments conducted by academic entities by having Examination Manuals and certain policies for the University. All the academic entities maintain consistency of assessment processes by using senate and council approved by-laws, regulations, guidelines etc. prepared by them based on the above-mentioned documents and also by considering their special requirements. Transparency of assessment processes is maintained by publishing/communicating those details in the student handbook, web etc. SOPs have also been published by certain departments/faculties. A few departments have failed to publish/communicate important details on assessment of certain course units. It is recommended to have a council approved university examination policy to solve such issues. Periodic review of assessment methods/regulations were not presented with appropriate evidence and this requirement also should be included in the recommended university examination policy. Certain academic entities have developed policy documents on continuous assessments. Annual declaration of "no conflict of interest" practiced by a few academic entities to maintain the confidentiality of examination related matters is commendable. A strategy should be introduced by the university examination policy for relevant persons involved in the assessment process to sign a "no conflict-of-interest form" prior to each assessment. Award of gold medals and other awards by academic entities based on the established criteria was evident. Dean's List for the students who perform well in their educational and extra-curricular activities is recommended.

Assessment methods of academic entities have been aligned with ILOs, SLQF etc. According to approved regulations, appointment of qualified examiners for setting, moderation, marking and second marking is practiced. Incorporation of moderator's comments was evident. It was noted that in a few academic entities, a person from the scrutiny board serves as the moderator. The team also observed that one of the second markers has stated in his/her report that he/she has marked only the first 20 answer scripts and it cannot be accepted as random marking. A strategy for proper second marking process should be developed and included in the recommended university examination policy. In par with the UGC circular # 978, provision for re-scrutinization of marks and grades has been provided by the university and practiced by all the academic entities. Confidentiality of examinations is maintained, and the service provided by the examination branch is appreciated.

All degree programs have assessment strategies, and these include formative and summative assessments. However, for certain course units, some departments conduct only the end-semester examinations or end of the year examinations and attention is needed on introduction of formative assessments. Formative assessments should be treated as learning tools for students, and it is recommended to give constructive feedback to students, which enables them to improve their own learning. It is commendable that all the academic entities have released

results on-time and students are happy about it. The long delay of releasing results of two course unit examinations by an academic entity should be rectified. The special attention given by the university on disciplinary procedures on examination related matters is commendable.

Overall, the Student Assessments and Awards of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of about 84 %.

5.7. Postgraduate studies, Research Innovation and Commercialization

The UoC recognizes postgraduate training, research, innovation, scholarship, and commercialization as important functions as reflected by the strategic plan, and the organizational structure. UoC has been established in addition to FGS, other institutes or units for conducting PG degree courses (PGIM, PGIIM, IBMBB, NILIS) with established policies and guidelines. UoC has Research policy guidelines (covering research and innovation, commercialization, safeguarding ethics and dissemination of knowledge), policy on plagiarism, and has identified and introduced intuitional measures to develop and enhance research.

By-laws and regulations for award of PG degrees are clearly identified by all entities offering PG courses and in accordance with the general rules stipulated by the University Act and other UGC guidelines. Faculties/Institute/Schools also offer different postgraduate programs, administered by each in addition to FGS.

Review panel noted that not all PG programs conducted by UoC have in place a mechanism that monitors the programs against a Senate approved set of indicators of quality as mentioned in the IR manual. Involvement of IQAC in PG programs was not much apparent except for some entities such as FGS, UCSC, IBMBB, FoM. However, PG program reviews, new PG program evaluations, are being conducted via Higher degrees committees etc. It is suggested that QA of PG could be a matter to be discussed separately by the entities conducting PG programs. A mechanism for obtaining PG student feedback as practiced by some faculties/institutes/centres etc. could help further improve the quality of PG courses.

UoC has taken many measures to promote research culture within the entities which is commendable. Many centres (ie: IBMBB, UCSC, PGIM, PGIIM etc.), promoting diverse research related to important aspects, policies related to conducting research ethically, promoting innovation and commercialization, in each of different entity establishment of research or higher degrees committees, facilitating research grants, and promoting international dissemination by providing travel grants (in some entities functioning independently (ie; USCS) yearly increments in those), and recognizing research excellence by many award systems motivate and encourage staff to engage in research. Some faculties have introduced research centers and FGS conducts over 30 PG programs with major and minor curriculum changes with stakeholder feedback which is appreciable. However, the review team noted that the PGIIM, the only PG research centre catering to PG training in indigenous medicine in the country lacks physical facilities, support staff, and office space (much unused space Ayurveda Hospital new building) which needs to be addressed. It is strongly felt that this institute can also be developed to the capacity of the PGIM. The possibility to offer MScs, Diplomas related to Ayuvedha and Unani and Siddha Medicine through this institute need to be

considered. These will provide a unique opportunity to generate funding through international collaborations etc. In addition, development of professorial units availing the unused space in the Rajagiriya Ayuvedha Hospital premises for training MD students and the conflicts between FIM, Dept of Ayurveda and PGIIM need to be resolved in an amicable manner benefiting all parties for national development.

The different entities of UoC ensure research training is provided to staff for development of knowledge and skills through certificate courses, research forums, improving writing skills, workshops and seminars. However, this is an area that needs to be further developed in some faculties probably through SDC and respective higher degrees committees.

It was observed that academic staff members of the university are engaging in significant nationally important and good quality research projects through students with the guidance of the staff members. Some of them received patents for their inventions which were commercialized and commendable. UoC has a policy on MOU signing which is appreciated. Many MOUs for collaborative research indicate the facilitation to harness applied research into practice, which was especially noted in FoS, IBBMB, UCSC & FIM. However, records of awards for harnessing research into practice were not evident. In addition, to many other awards (Senate, VC award, Publication etc.) if such an award could be introduced it would be a motivation.

UOC encourages dissemination and publication of research by providing many incentives in the form of awards or financial support for publications etc. which is commendable. Further, faculties and the university conduct national and international conferences annually that provide a platform for research scholars to disseminate ideas and findings. UoC also conducts an annual research symposium for postgraduate students from all entities of the UOC as well as other universities. It was also observed that faculties have journals which are published annually or bi-annually to disseminate research findings. Some faculties have produced books related to their fields. Staff members have their research publications in peer reviewed journals indexed in Scopus and web of science, etc. with the papers at the university e-repository which is very commendable.

A well-established UBL (university business linkage) has been involved in successful commercialization of products and many national and international patents have been obtained. Guidelines for applying for patents are clearly defined by the UBL cell. However, though some faculties and institutes are successful the others are yet to reach the full potential for commercialization or patenting of products, methods or ideas etc.

A policy on academic and research and collaborations were not available. However, collaborative works are mainly through MOUs signed with the collaborator with a policy available for signing MOUs. Many faculties and entities are involved in conducting collaborative research which is commendable. Joint publications of such work are available. However, a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of such research collaborations needs to be made available.

UoC follows the IP policy guidelines, for producing, assessing and disseminating creative work as there is no published specific policy available for creative works. However, this is an area

where input is required as the IP policy may not be adequate to cover some creative works of staff and students.

UoC has a well-documented, approved policy (Intellectual Property Policy) on commercialization covering aspects of conflict of interest. SOP of ERC of FIM covers aspects related to handling conflict of interest in research. PGIIM has introduced confidentiality, conflict of interest declaration forms for examiners. However, this is an area that needs some input with conflict-of-interest declaration forms for PG supervisors, examiners and teaching panel members.

Criteria for appointment of supervisors for PG programs, TOR guidelines on PG student supervision are available for each faculty and other entities in some with the role and responsibility of student outlined (FGS). However, a common policy for postgraduate supervision including the appointment of supervisors with appropriate skills and subject knowledge and maximum number of students under one supervisor, and policy for authorship of research, outputs and publication of papers should be prepared. A mechanism to conduct formal review of student progress by all entities was not evident.

Overall, the Postgraduate studies, Research Innovation and Commercialization of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of 75%.

5.8. Distance education

University of Colombo has established the Center for Open and Distance learning (CODL) in 2011 as a self-financing centre with the mission of **"**to be a facilitator for expanded higher education through extension, distance and blended courses using advanced technology, thereby contributing to national development". In 2019, the above Centre has been renamed as 'Cyber Campus' of the University of Colombo and it provides open and distance learning opportunities for registered students to obtain their graduate level/diploma level/certificate qualifications. The chief administrator of the Cyber Campus is a Director, and the BOS serves as the management body. The strategic plan of the university provides a foundation for distance learning related matters. University ensures that the programs/courses offered meet the mission and objectives of the university. Policy documents, By-laws, SOPs and guidelines ensure academic quality, operational efficiency and financial sustenance of programs offered. The Learning Management System (LMS) or Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) offers an online portal to access BIT degree learning courses with self-evaluating quizzes, learning materials, and related activities. UCSC does not accredit any of the external training institutes providing learning support to BIT candidates; instead passing rates are published. Implementation of a better strategy to ensure academic quality of such institutes is recommended. A manual for the Accreditation of BIT Teaching Institutes is available. No MOU has been signed with an external partner institutes yet.

Structure of new degree programs are designed in-line with the UGC circular No.932. Minimum and maximum period for a degree program is given in the by-laws and timely

completion of the degree programs was evident. UGC circulars are used for admission of students for external degree programs.

Records on student enrolment and graduation are maintained to evaluate the success of the programs. Feedback from students and graduates on CODL are also used for this purpose. ODL specific staff training is evident. Only certain schools/faculties/departments of the university are actively involved in open and distance educational activities. Demand for the BIT program offered by the school of computing is very high in the country and they are now exploring possibilities to attract foreign students also. The Faculty of Science offers six external degree programs and five certificate courses. A list of information on current external degree programs and extension courses with their dates of inception are not given in the SER. 'Cyber campus' is not a campus. It is a center. The name campus may mislead the general public and renaming is required.

Overall, the Distance education of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of about 83%.

5.9. Community Engagement, Consultancy, and Outreach

'To discover and disseminate knowledge; enhance innovation; and promote a culture of broad inquiry throughout and beyond the university through engagement and collaboration with the industry and community' -- the mission statement clearly reflects the social concern of the UoC. Outreach activities are evident in most of the faculties, institutions, and student societies in various scales. Structural arrangements and mechanisms adopted by the university to ensure and enrich consultancy and outreach activities such as the establishment of Campus Industrial Linkage Unit (CILU) and on-Campus Career Guidance and Community Outreach Unit (CGCU) at Sri Palee Campus are commendable.

Faculties which have evolved an in-built undergraduate curriculum to empower the student's community engagement are notable. Rural development activities such as empowering farmers towards the latest technology by UCIARS is a good model for community outreach. Large number of MOUs with other HEIs and organizations both locally and internationally by certain faculties. Science- based faculties have supported the industrial sector through consultancies and technology transfers while others have supported in developing and implementing policies at different levels. The funds generated from the services were invested in uplifting academic activities, especially undergraduate teaching and developing the infrastructure, also an appreciable endeavor.

In addition, maintaining the heritage architectural structures amidst the new structures and celebrating the cultural roots and inter cultural endeavours reflect the cultural sensitivity of the university and promotes harmony among the communities.

In the meantime, the Review Panel wishes to underline the importance of an established policy on community engagement, consultancy, and outreach activities which will ensure a holistic

approach and involvement across the faculties. As indicated in the previous IR, proper system of monitoring and evaluation of existing programs is necessary for enrichment of such programs. In this respect regular surveys, in-depth analysis, and assessments on present programs of engagements have to be done; Periodic community surveys are also necessary.

Overall, the Community Engagement, Consultancy, and Outreach of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment, equal to a percentage score of about 78%.

5.10. Quality Assurance

The CQA and all IQACs have been established according to the Commission Circular 09/2019 of the UGC, with adequate staff and office facilities. The CQA is governed by its' by-laws, introduced in 2015 and as revised in 2022. Relevant terms of references have been instituted for the Director, Deputy Director, and IQAC coordinators. Quality assurance is a standing agenda item in the Senate and Faculty Board meetings. The University conducts its Senate's Standing Committee meetings once a month chaired by the Vice Chancellor. Quality Assurance practices have been recognized in the University Strategic Plan under each of identified seven goals. CQA has developed its own Strategic plans for 2018 - 2020 and 2019 - 2021, yet action plans of the IQACs were not evident in most of the entities. However, IQACs conduct their monthly meetings with a view to report monthly progress to the CQA for the purpose of monitoring. CQA of the University of Colombo is added to the QAC performance scorecard system, which provides quarterly progress to the QAC. The University has many policies on the quality of its education provision in compliance with the UGC circulars and their guidelines. There are institute-wide policy documents, strategic plans, and action plans that are in compliance with the university's overall strategic and action plans.

A few faculties and the institutes have developed excellent QA practices for the continuous improvement of quality of its education provision. However, internalization of most of those best QA practices are not promoted through well-established and robust awareness-raising programmes, including all categories of staff members. In addition, the university has to march forward for better engagement with national, regional, and international networks in order to share best practices and internalization of the same. It is noteworthy that all the entities of the university have formal mechanisms to internally review by means of course, teacher evaluation and peer observation of teaching practices against established criteria to ensure that all study programmes are well designed, regularly monitored in order to maintain quality education. Nevertheless, follow-up action or any action taken of the feedback has not been evident for continuous improvement of the study programmes. It was also evident that most study programmes are not periodically reviewed to cater to changing demands in the job market. Quality related information such as tracer studies, graduate employment rates, employer and graduate satisfaction surveys, feedback from alumni on improvement of study programmes are not regularly collated and analyzed by most of the entities within the University.

There are no university approved procedures or guidelines, apart from the provision of the UGC, to facilitate the external review process. Very few study programmes are reviewed by external parties. All the programmes and institutional review recommendations provided by the

external reviewers are appropriately dealt with by the CQA and the Senate Standing Committee and such progress is quarterly reported to the QAC.

Discussions with university administration at all levels of academic staff, academic support staff and non-academic staff confirmed that they are aware of the quality assurance system and its process. Most of the staff members have a clear understanding about the role, responsibility and activities of Quality Assurance efforts of the UGC and the university.

Overall, the Quality Assurance of the UOC is at a high level of accomplishment. This criterion earned, equal to a percentage score of about 88%.

Section 6: Grading of overall performance of the University

The actual criteria-wise scores were calculated based on the cumulative total score under each of the 10 criteria and the weightage given in Table 4.1 of the Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions-Revised Edition (Table 2).

The Review Panel's assessment of the level of accomplishment of quality expected of the University of Colombo, based on the grading of performance with respect to the prescribed standards of the 10 review criteria as specified by the "Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions" , Revised Edition (Table 2), is given in Table 6.1 below.

Table 6.1. Grading of Overall Performance of Quality by the University of Colombo

Criterion No.	Assessment Criteria	Weight	Weighted Minimum Score*	Converted Actual Score**
1	Governance and Management	200	100	170
2	Strength and Quality of Staff	100	50	83
3	Curriculum Design and Programme Development	120	60	103
4	Teaching-learning	90	45	80
5	Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression	100	50	83
6	Student Assessment an Awards	80	40	67
7	Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization	100	50	75
8	Distance Education	70	35	58
9	Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach	60	30	47
10	Quality Assurance	80	40	70
	Total Score (out of 1000)			**837**
	Total Score (out of 100)			**84**
	Final grade			**A**
	Performance Descriptor			**Very Good**
	Interpretation of Descriptor: "High level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; should move towards excellence"			

* Represents 50% of the maximum achievable standardized criterion-wise score.

** All Criteria received more than the weighted minimum score.

Based on the above evaluation made, the review team recommends that the University of Colombo is awarded the grade of 'A', with the performance descriptor of "Very Good" which is interpreted as "High level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution; should move towards excellence".

Section 7: Criterion-wise commendations and recommendations

Criterion 1: Governance & Management

Commendations

- The University governs its own vision, mission and objectives that reflect its values, standards and academic commitments.
- In general, it has essential administrative policies, procedures, financial stability, efficient management and administrative capacity, human and physical resources.
- The University Act, ordinance, establishment codes, UGC circulars, rules and regulations are integrated within the governance and management of the university.
- Most of the entities manage their activities in a technology-enabled way in addition to using technology as a teaching / learning resource in a friendly non-discriminative environment.
- Certain faculties established collaborative partnerships with foreign universities for academic and research cooperation.
- The website of the university is updated and provides most of the essential information about the university and its functions.

Recommendations

- A University Calendar having all the policies, codes and by-laws should be compiled.
- Management Guide having the SORs, manual of financial procedures as well as SOPs and TORs of the sub-committees of the Senate and the Council should be compiled.
- Visibility of Vision and Mission statements of university should be made more prominent in the Administrative building.
- Periodical Monitoring of the Action Plan should be carried out.
- The activities of the centre for Gender Equity & Equality (GEE) should be promoted to deter Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) amongst all categories of staff and students.
- Stakeholder awareness on addressing grievances through the established Grievance committee should be increased.

Criterion 2: Strength and Quality of Staff

Commendations

- The University has adequately qualified staff to ensure high quality teaching and research.
- Staff appraisal system has been initiated to inculcate the research culture of the university by introducing a research awards system for outstanding research.
- SDC offers a well-designed CTHE programme which is affiliated to the SEDA, of the UK.

Recommendations

- Performance of the administrative and non-academic staff should be appraised adequately.
- A proper procedure should be established to identify underperforming staff members (both academic/non-academic) and action should be taken to improve their quality of work/services.
- Annual action plan of the SDC should be prepared based on training need analysis, which should be approved by the Management Committee.

Criterion 3: Curriculum design and programme development

Commendations

- Study programmes maintain publicly available 'programme specifications'.
- Policies and mechanisms are available to promote outcome-based education and student-centred learning.
- Supplementary courses are introduced to enhance student's competencies.
- Information related to policies, principles and regulations are communicated to the stakeholders.
- Collaborations with external partners are promoted.
- A policy on phasing out the curricula is available to protect the academic interests of students.
- A mechanism for annual tracer studies on graduate employment is available.

Recommendations

- Adequate need analysis and market surveys have to be undertaken when introducing new programmes.
- Incorporate the previous IR recommendations given under Teaching-Learning related to IT based creative teaching methods in the curriculum design to ensure the implementation in all entities.
- All faculties must be in line with University vision and mission.
- Regular monitoring is not available in some faculties. It is recommended for such faculties
- Limited evidence on interdisciplinary studies (e.g. cross faculty teaching and learning,).
- Some faculties are not practicing inter-faculty and inter- institutional credit transfer. Since there are ample opportunities available, it is recommended to evolve such practices.
- The physical facilities available at the Disability Centre need further expansion and funding opportunities should also be explored for extra-curricular activities to the students.
- Propose to rename the ''Disability Center'' as ''Center for Students with Special Needs'' or any other appropriate name.

Criterion 4: Teaching-Learning

Commendations

- Strategies and action plans of the University ensure the use of student-centered learning (SCL) processes.
- The University provides a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) including Learning Management System (LMS).
- Teaching-Learning activities of all faculties are planned and executed by appropriately qualified and trained staff.
- All faculties have introduced into the curriculum peer study groups and diverse teaching learning methods which will help students to acquire required competencies and outcomes.
- University provides mechanisms and facilities to ensure that teaching-learning and assessment strategies provide equal opportunities for students with special needs.

Recommendations

- Even though the University has established policy and mechanisms to promote the use of innovative pedagogy and to recognize / reward those who excel in using innovative approaches for teaching it was not apparent in all faculties etc. It is recommended that all faculties adopt this practice.
- The University has a policy and mechanism to ensure regular peer and student review of teaching and to provide feedback to the teacher for self-improvement. However, even though student feedback is obtained by all the analyses and the feedback to the teacher requires improvement.
- Improvements are needed in enriching course content and teaching- learning strategy with recent advances in research and published literature, and to establish linkages with national, regional, and international networks to share the best practices in teaching-learning strategies in most faculties.
- Dearth of academic and supportive staff in certain entities (FoT/FoL/ELTU/PGIIM etc.) needs to be addressed urgently to improve the quality of Teaching-Learning process.

Criterion 5: Learning Resources and Student support

Commendations

- UoC's rich physical resource base along with student support mechanism of most of the faculties facilitate the effective implementation of degree programs
- The University has digitalized and well-organized main library and faculty libraries with experienced staff and resources.
- Library e-learning platform cater to the needs of the open and distance learning students.
- Learner support is provided through well-equipped and properly functional centres and laboratories.

- Some faculties provide preparatory programmes for new entrants(English and ICT).
- University provides facilities for extra-curricular facilities: sports, recreation, cultural and creative activities.
- The student support system (mentoring, counseling, career guidance, etc.) is adequately functioning in the university.
- Utilization of self-generated funds for strengthening the resources of the university and capacity building have significant impact on its performance.

Recommendations

- The physical resources, human resources and learning environments of some faculties need to be improved to comply with the modern-day higher education expectations.
- Hostel facilities or alternative arrangement for accommodation is essential for students of all faculties since the university is based in a metropolitan area.
- A regular mechanism to monitor the progression of students is not in place. Tracer studies, performance evaluation, corrective measures and monitoring the process is essential to improve the status of the graduates.
- Essential to tap the resources available at industry and other institutions to upgrade teaching-learning facilities.

Criterion 6: Student Assessment and Awards

Commendations

- University governs student assessments conducted by academic entities by having an Examination Manual and some relevant policies.
- Academic entities maintain transparency & consistency of assessment processes by publishing and using the Council approved by-laws, regulations etc.
- Approved regulations are available for appointment of examiners (setters and moderators).
- Release of examination results without undue delays in most entities.
- The service provided by the examination branch is appreciated.

Recommendations

- Have a comprehensive examination policy.
- Review and amend assessment regulations periodically.
- Develop a strategy to introduce formative assessments to departments which conduct only the end-semester examinations or end of the year examinations for certain course units.
- Introduce Dean's List in all the faculties.
- Make available assessment details for all course units.
- Implement necessary arrangements to sign a "no conflict-of-interest form" prior to each assessment by relevant persons involved in the assessment process.

- Establish a proper second marking system (e.g: Team observed that one of the second markers has stated in his/her report that he/she has marked only the first 20 answer scripts)
- Treat formative assessments as learning tools for students and provide constructive feedback to students

Criterion 7: Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization

Commendations

- Existence of policies, institutional arrangements, and procedures for research innovation, commercialization, securing IPR, and supporting the acquisition of patents together with the establishment of the Business Linkage, Innovation, Incubation, and Technology Transfer Office (UBLC).
- The University has formed collaborations and partnerships with local, national, regional, and international organizations, with established criteria for monitoring and evaluating the sharing of knowledge, expertise, human resources, services, and research with the exception of a few faculties.
- Introduction and establishment of IQAC in postgraduate institutions enhance their standards.
- Research publications & patents of academic staff, postgraduate students, and undergraduates are identified as rich assets of the university. Efforts in dissemination of research findings by many methods and publication of research and commercialization of research.
- Contribution of technical staff being considered for authorship by a few faculties.

Recommendations

- Conduct more vigorous tracer studies, student satisfaction surveys, graduate feedbacks which could offer valuable insights into students' perspectives, which could be utilized to evaluate the quality of postgraduate education, provided by some postgraduate institutes/programs for their postgraduate taught courses and research degree programs.
- Strengthen the unique institute, PGIIM as this is the only functioning PG institute for students to obtain Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani MD Board Certification qualification from UoC.
- Explore the possibility to offer MScs, Postgraduate Diplomas related to Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha Medicine through PGIIM. This will provide a unique opportunity to generate funds and establish international collaborations etc.
- Address the lack of established connections or collaborative partnerships with the industry and wider society through collaborations.
- Introduce an award scheme for harnessing research into practice under the academic - industry collaborations.
- Develop a Research Supervision Agreement, which outlines the respective roles and responsibilities of research supervisors and students and fosters a relationship of trust and avoids any conflicts of interest between them throughout the research process.

- Establish a policy/guidelines and mechanisms to implement the production, assessment, and dissemination of creative works. Currently the IP policy is being used for creative works as well.

Criterion 8: Distance Education

Commendations

- Respective entities offering the distance learning programmes engage with external partners according to the prior prepared and approved policies, procedures, and systems.
- Provide educational opportunities to students who are unable to enter the conventional university system.
- Availability of relevant by-laws.
- Timely completion of the external degree programmes.

Recommendations

- Encourage academic entities of UoC to offer more distance learning opportunities in the form of external degrees, diplomas and certificate courses.
- Explore the possibility to attract foreign students by offering programs through CODL.
- Provide an opportunity for learning, by offering different multidisciplinary programs.
- The Bachelor of Information Technology (BIT) degree programme conducted by the School of Computing (UCSC) and the Diploma programmes offered by the Faculty of Law need strong justification for not being included under the Center for Open and Distance Learning (CODL).
- Allow the external degree students to have access to the main library.
- Ensure no distinction in issuing internal and external degree certificates for the same qualification as per the manual of the QAC.
- Programs introduced before establishing CODL should comply with the current requirements of UGC/QAC.
- Ensure the ownership of learning materials and protect copyrights.
- Rename the 'Cyber campus' as it may mislead the stakeholders.

Criteria 9: Community engagement, consultancy, and outreach

Commendations

- University has recognized the importance of community engagement, consultancy, and outreach activities and encouraged the entities to engage in such activities.
- A significant number of MOUs with local and international HEIs and other organizations with the university initiated by certain entities.
- Most of the faculties, institutes, centres, units and student societies engage in conducting outreach activities at different levels.

- Science - based faculties support the industrial sector through consultancies and technology transfers while other entities engage in developing policies at various levels.
- The funds generated from the services are invested in supporting academic activities, especially undergraduate teaching and to develop the infrastructure.

Recommendations

- Unavailability of policy on community engagement, consultancy, and outreach activities hinders the progress and implementation across the faculties.
- Community engagement, consultancy, and outreach activities should be strengthened in a few entities.
- Ensure proper system of monitoring and evaluation of existing outreach activities.
- Extend the publicity through media enabling the expansion of the services to all sectors.

Criteria 10: Quality Assurance

Commendations

- The members of the academic, academic support and non-academic staff are aware of the importance of maintaining and sustaining the quality of their services.
- CQA and IQACs have taken measures to improve the quality of education in compliance with relevant circulars and guidelines.
- Most of the relevant policies, by-laws, SOPs and other guidelines are implemented.

Recommendations

- Internalization of QA practices should further be promoted through a well-established mechanism involving all categories of staff across all the entities.
- Quality related information such as tracer studies, graduate employment rates, employer and graduate satisfaction surveys, feedback from alumni on improvement of study programmes should regularly be obtained and analysed for quality enhancement.
- A mechanism should be developed for documentation of monitoring of the progress and implementing the remedial measures based on students' feedback and peer evaluation.
- All IQACs should have an Annual Work Plan and report on the progress.

Section 8: Summary

The University of Colombo (UoC) has a rich heritage in Sri Lankan higher education. With its vision to be a center of global excellence in education, research and stakeholder engagement to enrich human potential for the betterment of society, UoC has successfully progressed with periodic Strategic Plan and earned world recognition.

The UoC excels in teaching and research with a skilled academic faculty, though a few entities lack qualified staff. UoC introduced a research award system of appraisal to promote research culture. Performance appraisal scheme has to be extended to both administrative and other non-academic staff for an enhanced efficiency.

UoC has commendable policies for outcome-based education, student-centered learning, VLEs, and phased curricula transition, applauded introduction of peer groups and diverse methods. Need analysis for new programmes, universal innovative pedagogy, interdisciplinary / trans-disciplinary programmes suggested. UoC possesses adequate physical resources and robust student support in most of the entities, fostering effective program execution. In this context, the review team noted that a few entities suffer from a lack of physical resources. Implementing continuous student progress monitoring is vital. The examination branch's procedures and service are commendable. Contribution of Alumni in developing certain departments/faculties are also commendable.

The presence of policies, institutional structures, and procedures for research, innovation, and commercialization, including intellectual property protection through University's Business Linkage is commendable.

Enhancing collaboration across faculties in developing interdisciplinary /trans-disciplinary programs is advised; sharing good practices among the entities would be beneficial.

Within limited entities, UoC excels in distance education which also needs interdisciplinary expansion. Independent degree /diploma programmes of the faculties /units beyond CODL need proper justification.

UoC's Community engagement, consultancy, and outreach activity efforts are commendable. However needs a holistic policy, evaluation and analysis.

Overall, Quality Assurance (QA) is embedded in the operations of the UoC, reflecting its commitment. With the constant dedication, UoC maintains a higher level of accomplishment of quality expected of an academic institution.

Indeed, on the journey of Quality Assurance, as the previous IR underlined, this review itself highlights that the internalization of the suggested best practices and facilitation of all sectors through a well-established mechanism, UoC will reach not only for the excellence of best practices but also lead for the next practices.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW -UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO, SRI LANKA

SCHEDULE FOR SITE VISIT 2023.07.24-2023.07.28

Day-1 Monday 2023.07.24		
08.30-9.00	Meeting with the Director IQAU/Finalizing the Agenda by the Review Team with the Director /IQAU	Director/IQAU
09.00-09.15	Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor (Courtesy visit)	Director/IQAU
09.15-10.00	Presentation by the Vice-Chancellor (in the presence of the Members of the Council, Rector/Deans/Directors, Directors of Centres/Units, IQAU Director, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, Marshall, Senior Medical Officer, Wardens, Senior Student Counsellor etc.)	Director/IQAU
10.00-10.30	Discussion (with tea)	AR/QA
10.30-11.00	Meeting with the Administrative Staff (Registrar, DRs, SARs, ARs)	Registrar
11.00 -11.30	Meeting with Bursar, SABs, ABs	Bursar
11.30 -12.00	Meeting with Internal Audit Department	Head / Internal Audit
12.00 -12.30	Meeting with the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit, Team leaders of SER writing team	Director/IQAU
12.30 -13.30	Lunch	AR/QA
13.30 -14.30	Visiting the Library/NILIS (National Institute of Library and Information Sciences), Meeting with the Librarian and Staff, Observing facilities	Librarian/Director NILIS
14.30-15.00	Meeting with Senior Student Counsellors/ Student Counsellors	Snr. Student Counsellor
15.00-15.45	Meeting with students and student representatives	
15.45 -17.45	Verification /Review of documents (with Tea)	Director/IQAU
17.45 -18.30	Visiting to the student's hostels	
18.30	Leaving for the Hotel	

Day-2 Tuesday 2023.07.25

	Team-1	Team-2	Team -3	
	Faculty of Science	**Faculty of Education**	**Faculty of Law**	
08.30-9.00	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments	Meeting with Dean, Heads of Departments	
09.00-9.45	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff	
09.45-10.15	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	
10.15-11.00	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea	
11.30-12.00	Visiting **Examination Branch**			
12.00-12.30	Lunch			
	Team-1	**Team-2**	**Team-3**	
	Sri Palee Campus	**Faculty of Technology**	**UCSC (University of Colombo School of Computing)**	
02.30-3.00	Meeting with the Rector and Board members	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments	Meeting with the Director and academic staff	
03.00-3.45	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff	
03.45-4.15	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	
04.15-5.00	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea	
05.00-5.30	**Observing Facilities:** Lecture halls, Computer Labs, Laboratories, Workshop, Research labs, Study/discussion areas, Canteens, etc.			

05.30-6.30	Verification/Review of documents (with Tea)
06.30	Leaving for the Hotel

Day-3 Wednesday 2023.07.26

	Team-1	**Team-2**	**Team -3**
	UCIARS (University of Colombo Institute for Agro-Technology and Rural Sciences)	**Faculty of Faculty of Indigenous Medicine**	**Faculty of Nursing**
08.30-10.30	Zoom meeting with Director, IQAC Coordinator and other staff of UCIARS	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments	Meeting the Dean and Heads of Departments
10.30-11.00	Possible visit to Examinations Unit if this was not possible on Tuesday	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff
		Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff
		Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea
11.00 -12.00	**Observing Facilities:** Lecture halls, Computer Labs, Laboratories, workshop, Research labs, study/discussion areas, canteens, etc.,		
12.00-1.00	Lunch		

	Team-1	**Team-2**	**Team -3**
	PGIM (Post Graduate Institute of Medicine	**PGIIM (Post Graduate Institute of Indigenous Medicine)**	**IBMBB (Institute of Biochemistry, Molecular Biology & Biotechnology)**
01.00-1.45	Meeting the Director, members of the Board of studies and academic staff	Meeting the Director, members of the Board of studies and academic staff	Meeting the Director, members of the Board of studies and academic staff
01.45-2.15	Meeting the Students	Meeting the Students	Meeting with students
02.15-3.00	**Observing Facilities:** Lecture halls, Computer Labs, Laboratories, Workshop, Research labs, study/discussion areas, canteens, etc.		

03.00-3.30	Visiting **Department of English Language Department**		
03.30- 4.00	Visiting the **Staff Development Centre**	Visiting the **Career Guidance Unit**	Visiting the **Community Extension Centre**
04.00- 4.30	Visiting the **GEE Unit**	Visiting **Business Development Unit**	Visiting the **Centre for Disability research Education and practice**
04.30 -6.30	Verification /Review of documents (with Tea)		
06.30	Leaving for the Hotel		

Day-4 Thursday 2023.07.27

	Team-1	**Team-2**	**Team -3**
	Faculty of Arts	**Faculty of Management and Finance**	**Faculty of Medicine**
08.30-9.00	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments	Meeting with the Dean, Heads of Departments
09.00-9.45	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff	Meeting with Academic staff
9.45-10.15	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff
10.15-11.00	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea
11.00-12.00	**Observing Facilities:** Lecture halls, Computer Labs, Study/discussion areas, canteens, etc.		
12.00-1.00	Lunch		
	Team-1	**Team-2**	**Team -3**
01.00-1.45	**Faculty of Graduate Studies**	**IHRA (Institute of Human Resource Advancement)**	**CCUC Cyber Campus of University of Colombo**

	Meeting the Dean and Members of Board of Studies and program coordinators	Meeting the Director, and Board of Manage ment and Academic staff	Meeting the Director and Board of management and Academic Staff
01.45-2.15	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff	Meeting with Non-Academic staff
02.15 -3.00	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea	Meeting the Students with Tea
3.00- 4.00	Meeting **the Alumni Association** (with Tea)		
4.00 - 4.30	Visiting **Department of Physical Education** and meeting the Head, Advisory Board Members, Staff and Students		
4.30- 5.00	Meeting with **Students' Cultural Groups**		
5.00-7.00	Verification/Review of documents		

Day 5: (Friday): 2023.07.28	
8.30-11.00	Discussion among members of the Review team and write up
11.00-12.00	Wrap-up meeting with the VC, Deans, Registrar, Bursar, Directors, IQAU Director, Leaders of writing team, etc.
12.00-12.30	Lunch
12.30	Departure

Good Initiatives/Practices

Review Panel:

Name	Signature
Prof. N. Shanmugalingam (Chair)	
Prof. P. Hewage	
Prof. Hema.K.K.Pathirana	
Prof. Aruni Weerasinghe	
Prof. Sagarika Ekanayaka	
Prof. P. Ravirajan	
Prof. D. Achini M De Silva	