

# SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY



**FACULTY OF ARTS  
UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO**

26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009

**Review Team :**

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Prof. U. B. Karunananda/University of Kelaniya



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Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) Council, established in 2005 under the University Grants Commission/ Ministry of Education with financial support from the IRQUE (Improvement of Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education) project, is to ensure quality, continuous development and efficient performance of Sri Lankan higher education institutions, and to help gain the confidence of the community in their graduates in accordance with internationally recognized evaluation mechanisms. University accountability for quality and standards is a key factor in promoting and safeguarding public confidence in Sri Lankan higher education.

Being a key component in the national quality assurance system for Sri Lanka, the Subject Review evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. Subject Review is carried out in relation to the aims of the subject and objectives set out by each course of study pertaining to both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It is focused on the student learning experience and on student achievement. It is designed to evaluate the quality of both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. However, the responsibility for quality and standards lies within the institution itself, since it alone has the powers to control and to change existing practices.

The Review process is conducted according to the guidelines given in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities, published by the CVCD and University Grants Commission in July 2002. The Department of History and International Relations (DH & INR) of the University of Colombo submitted a Self Evaluation Report consisting of ten sections namely: (1) Introduction (2) Aims, Learning Outcomes and Programme Details (3) Students, Staff and Faculties (4) The system of Evaluation (5) Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods (6) Students Feed back, qualitative and quantitative, (7) Peer Observation (8) Academic Guidance and Counseling (9) Quality of students. Progress and Achievements (10) Conclusions. The Self-Evaluation Report included 7 Annexures as well.

The following eight aspects of education were reviewed at subject level:

1. Curriculum design, content and review
2. Teaching learning and assessment methods.
3. Quality of students including student progress and achievements.
4. Extent and use of student feedback - qualitative and quantitative.
5. Postgraduate studies.
6. Peer observations.
7. Skills development
8. Academic guidance and counseling

The review method has two main processes, internal and external evaluations. Internal evaluation is the self-assessment in the subject, based on the programme's own aims and objectives, and set out in the structure provided by the core set of aspects of provision. The external evaluation comprises a three-day review visit carried out by a team of Reviewers.

The purpose of the review visit is to review, consider and test the evidence provided by the study programmes in the light of the aims and intended student learning outcomes. Reviewers do not use any externally set standards against which the programmes are judged. There are three options open to the review team in making the overall judgment concerning the quality

ndy concerned, Confidence, Limited confidence and No

In all cases, the overall judgment will be supported by the evidence contained in the report. In addition to the overall judgment, review teams will provide a separate judgment of each subject review aspect. The review team will summarize its findings on each aspect, emphasizing strengths, good practices and weaknesses. At the end of each aspect, they will use one of three judgments; Good; Satisfactory; Unsatisfactory.

Professor Colin N. Peiris, Quality Assurance Specialist of the QAA Council by a letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 2009 notified that the following team has been appointed to accomplish the Subject Review in the Department of History and International Relations, University of Colombo from 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January, 2009.

- Prof. U.B. Karunananda, University of Kelaniya
- Prof. (Ms) T.P.Meththananda, University of Peradeniya
- Prof. (Ms) Malani Endagama, University of Sri Jayewardenepura

The agenda for the Review Visit is annexed (Annexure 1)

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

- Meetings held with the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Head of the Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- Reviewing the documents available at the Department.
- Observing teaching and student presentations,
- Observation of facilities at the Department and the Faculty (University Library, Department Library, Computer Unit etc.)

The Review Team visited the Department of History and International Relations of the University of Colombo during the period 26<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009 and initiated the peer review process. The purpose of the visit was to search for evidences and observe those pertaining to the aims and the intended learning outcomes as stated in the Self Evaluation Report of the department and evaluate them according to the set guidelines. At 8.00 a.m. on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, the Review Team met the Quality Assurance Specialist Prof. Colin N. Peiris at the University of Colombo to further familiarize with the Subject Review Process. At 9.00 a.m. on the 26<sup>th</sup> January, the team met Prof. Indralal Silva the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Prof. (Ms) Nayani Melagoda the Head of the D.H. & I.N.R. The Dean briefed the Review Team of the activities of the Faculty in general and current trends in undergraduate and postgraduate teaching in the Faculty of Arts.

The agenda for the review process was discussed and finalized with the Head of the DH & INR who then made a presentation, clarifying certain points and explaining where necessary, some information included in the self evaluation report. All the Senior and Junior academic members were present at the meeting and the open and outright discussion that followed was extremely helpful for the evaluation activity.

Additional data were collected by meeting with academic staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students and observing lectures and student presentations. The Review Team also went through relevant documents inspected facilities provided by the DH & INR including lecture theatres, computer laboratory, staff rooms, department library and the main library.

be a center of excellence through intertwining the  
research excellence. To achieve this, the Department strives

to focus on key issues, thematic areas, and theoretical underpinnings in both History & International Relations by

- Focusing increasingly on **problems** rather than simply discussing incidents and events.
- By engaging in **questioning** all aspects of issues, themes and theories in both these subject disciplines.
- By being more **inclusive** in examining all aspects of society and encouraging critical attention that broadens this understanding.

### Mission

To achieve the mission of **providing excellence in learning and knowledge creation with an ethical commitment**, the Department strives to :

- Provide students with some key competencies that will help them in their future professional life
- Give them the necessary skills to adapt to any type of challenging work environment.
- Create a graduate who will have a sense of justice and integrity, intellectual honesty and tolerance towards difference.

## **2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY AND THE DEPARTMENT**

The Department of History and International Relations in its present form is heir to one of the oldest departments in the University of Colombo, created when the University of Ceylon established a second Arts Faculty in Colombo in the early 1960s. The Department was initially called Department of History, renamed Department of Modern History, more recently Department of History and Political Science. Today after the bifurcation of the department led to the creation of a Department of Political Science and Public Policy, it is called the Department of History and International Relations.

### The Study Courses, Medium of Instruction and the Resources

The Department of History and International Relations is known for its contribution to new branches of history such as cultural history and gender history as well as to establish fields of study such as Political, Economic, Social History of Sri Lanka and other regions. In International Relations, it is the first to introduce courses on Conflict Resolution as well as on area studies like Modern Japan and USA, which in turn resulted in the introduction of a course of Master in American Studies.

It is evident that the Department of History and International Relations at the Colombo University attracts large number of students due to several reasons.

1. It is the only Department that offers a Special Degree course in International Relations in Sri Lanka.
2. The Curricula of the two Special Degree programme namely History and International Relations are very heavily interrelated and hence the students could gain a broad knowledge on the modern world.
3. The M.A. in International Relations ó a two year programme is an extremely inspiring and sought after course of study.



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degree programmes, as follows.

	<b>Duration</b>
BA General Degree in History	3 years
BA General Degree in International Relations	3 years
BA Special Degree in History	4 years
BA Special Degree in International Relations	4 years

The medium of instruction is Sinhala, Tamil and English for undergraduates and English for the postgraduate programme.

The DH & INR at the University of Colombo is very fortunate to have the opportunity of using several national and international resource centers available in the metropolitan City of Colombo. Sri Lanka National Archives, National Library Services Board, National Museum, Royal Asiatic Society, well organized libraries of the Embassies, such as the British Council Library, American Studies Resource Center, etc. together with International Organizations, NGOs and think tanks that exist in the capital are few such assets available at the vicinity of the University.

### **The Academic Staff**

The Department has a diverse mixture of professional Historians and Internal Relations Specialists. In addition to its undergraduate teaching, guiding and supervising post-graduate research students, the staff members of the DH & INR have taken part in many programmes of national importance. They have played a significant role in the preparation of School Curriculum for GCE O Level and A Level and A Level paper marking programmes.

The academic members of the Department have very often contributed to the administrative work of the University. They have served as Council Members, Senate Representatives and Student Counselors and several other administrative positions such as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the post of Rector and the Director of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies that involved very crucial responsibilities were very often held by the members of the DH & INR. It is evident that they fulfilled those responsibilities very enthusiastically.

Although it is not compulsory for the Senior Staff members to complete a Course of Staff Development, all the members of the Department have followed and completed the Colombo University Staff Development Course. Some of them have followed workshops /seminars within and outside Sri Lanka.

		Status at Jan. 2009	Date of First Appointment	Teaching/Administrative Responsibilities
Prof. Nayani Melagoda	Ph.D	Associate Professor	16 May 1996	Head of the Dept. , Senate nominee to the University Council, Course Coordinator MAINR, Former Warden, Student Counselor, Director/Deputy Coordinator IRQUE Project, President SLTU, Coordinator Extended Campus, Member UGC Standing Committee on Post-graduate Studies.
Prof. Amal Jayawardene	Ph.D	Professor	14 <sup>th</sup> July 1970	Former Head of the Dept. Currently Dean Faculty of Arts.
Prof. Nira Wickremasinghe	Ph.D	Professor	30 <sup>th</sup> Aug 1990	On Sabbatical Leave
Dr. D.N. Nirmal Ranjith Dewsiri	Ph.D	Senior Lecturer	25 <sup>th</sup> Sept 1992	Acting Head of the Dept/Student Counselor
Dr. Janaki D Jayawardene	Ph.D	Senior Lecturer	1 <sup>st</sup> June 1993	Former Student Counselor, Former Senior Treasurer -History Society
Ms Nirmali Wijegunawardene	M Phil	Senior Lecturer Gr.II	13 June 2003	On Study Leave
Ms. Maneesha Wanasinghe Pasqual	Ph.d	Lecturer	10 Feb 2000	Senior Treasurer - History Society, Student Counselor, QET Project GPC, Course Director MAIR, Exam Coordinator, Secretary SLFUW, Convener óExtended Campus, Acting Head of the Dept.
Ms Y.A. Vidyalankara	M.A	Lecturer	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2001	On Study Leave
Ms W.L.P.V.C. Wijesinghe	B.A.	Tutor	1 <sup>st</sup> Oct 2007	

		Status at an. 2009	Date of First Appointment	Teaching/Administrative Responsibilities
Ms D.L. Kumkaran	B.A.	Tutor	1 <sup>st</sup> Nov 2007	
Ms. T.M.T.D. Pothuhera	B.A.	Tutor	20 Nov 2007	
Ms P.G.P.T.C. Silva	B.A.	Tutor	15 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2008	
Ms H.N. Jeevani	B.A.	Tutor	15 Sep 2008	

### *Number of Students registered in the Department*

The number of students registered for special and general degree programmes conducted by the DH & INR in the recent years are given in the table below:

No. of students who followed History / International Relations in the 1<sup>st</sup> Year.

Year	No. of students and the Medium		
	Sinhala	Tamil	English
2005 Double Batch	447	11	70
2006	256	52	39
2007	412	24	146

Number of students who followed History / International Relations Special Degree Programmes.

Subject	Registered Year	Number of Students
History	2008	25 (Double Batch)
	2007	13
	2006	39 (Double batch)
International Relations	2008	42 (Double Batch)
	2007	34
	2006	51 (Double Batch)

## **3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

### **3.1. Aims**

In line with the mission of the University of Colombo the D.H. & INR has two major groups of aims and objectives. The first of them, addresses the development of students historical knowledge and awareness on the International Relations. The second involves in improvement of transferable skills that average University Students must acquire to prepare themselves for the world to work.

Both history and International Relations are interdisciplinary yet distinct branches of Social Sciences. Hence the curriculum offered by the department is varied according to each discipline and the professionalism of some of the staff members

Sciences that gives prominence to social inquiry, the common aims through the various subjects offered.

- Equip students with necessary skills and techniques in order to develop research skills which, important for critical social inquiry and to develop skills which can be used in any future career.
- Expose students to changing dimensions, concepts and theories of the fields.
- Promote staff members to conduct research and strive for higher education qualifications.
- Equip the department with audio and visual facilities to create a better environment for academic learning.
- Encourage staff members to use new teaching methods to promote more student centered teaching.
- Provide learning opportunities beyond the classroom.

### 3.2 Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of these programmes, students should have:

- Gained conceptual, theoretical and empirical understanding of the subjects they have selected to study.
- Gained practicability in applying the research skills they have learned as undergraduates in doing higher studies or as researchers in social sciences.
- Ability to apply the skills learned through courses such as critical thinking, analytical skills, teamwork, planning, leadership, presentation skills to their future careers.
- A cultured personality and good interpersonal skills.

#### **In order to achieve the outcomes, the department offer courses of multidisciplinary nature that intend to**

- Offer a range of courses of multidisciplinary nature allowing students to select course units according to their interest.
- Department offers several compulsory course units, which are important in learning theoretical and research skills on the subject streams students have chosen to follow in order to broaden their knowledge.
- Encourage staff to participate in workshops and seminars to enhance their teaching abilities and methods.
- Offer a research paper for final year special degree students to apply the research skills they have gained and to train them for future research endeavors.
- Organize field trips and workshops to provide students a more active learning environment out side the classroom.
- Use the available resources to the maximum level to provide a more student centered learning and good quality learning experience.
- Provide the students details of curriculum offered by the department and how the course unit evaluations are done, the objectives and learning outcomes.
- Do occasional assessments at formal and informal level to receive student feedback on the courses offered.

B.A. General Degree and Special Degree programmes are structured according to the Semester ó based Course modular system.

Curriculum is designed to provide subject specific knowledge and certain transferable skills mentioned in the courses offered. However, there is no unified method in the Department with regard to curricula design and the lecturer in-charge of the course does its. Hence not all course syllabuses explicitly reflect the expected learning outcomes.

The final year students follow three subjects according to their subject interest. Based on the results obtained in the first year examination the students will be selected to History/ International Relation special degree programmes. To get selected for either of the two special degree programmes the students should obtain an average of over 65 marks for the first year course units studied by them.

When there are more applicants than the number the Department could cater for, the applicants will have to face an interview held by the Department and get selected. The students who are not selected to a Special Degree programme could follow a General Degree course and can select History and International Relations study courses as they prefer.

### Curriculum Contents

There are several specialized fields of study such as philosophical and theoretical issues in History and International Relations. Gender, Conflict Resolution, Peace Studies, Foreign Policy, Area Studies, Art History etc. included in the Curriculum.

Curriculum Course outlines consist of course objectives, expected outcomes, Course contents, assessment methods and suggested readings. It is evident therefore that a very comprehensive course outlines are been distributed among the students.

Multi disciplinary approach is evident on the curriculum contents. Some of the courses conducted under International Relations are included in the History Curriculum and vice-versa. However, there is further room in the curriculum to improve the multi-disciplinary contents. For example courses conducted in the Departments of Sociology, Demography Geography etc. have direct relevance to History and International Relations.

### Curriculum Review

It is evident that the course updating and curriculum design occur within the parameters of the above specialized areas and with regard to new developments. The Department follows the institutional review guidelines.

The staff also attempts to utilize the expertise of the staff through updating the study courses. When a member of the staff returns from training abroad the staff is used to change the course contents of the course/courses that particular teacher is entrusted to teach and absorb his/her enriched knowledge to the curriculum.

strongly of opinion that the amalgamation of two very International Relations - in one Department has definitely deterred the inclusion of very important fields of study that should essentially be in the curricula of the two subjects. This situation has resulted to a certain extent some sort of deficiency in the study of the two subjects. If the two subjects are separated under two departments lot of relevant and important courses could be included in to the curriculum and the multi-disciplinary nature of these subjects could be improved immensely. Hence the opinion of the Review Team is that arrangements already been made by the University for the bifurcation of the Department is most opportune. (The project proposal prepared by the Department for bifurcation and the decision of the University Council is attached (Annexure 2 & 3)

***The view of the Review Team is that the Curriculum Design, Contents and Review can be judged as SATISFACTORY.***

#### **4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods.**

##### **Teaching Procedures**

The Review Team observed a number of lectures and presentations by the staff members who displayed their teaching and presentation skills using modern technology and teaching methods. In addition to its internal staff the DH & INR benefits from few Senior Professors as visiting Lecturers.

The juniors who are recruited as Temporary Tutors have to conduct lectures due to the shortage of senior staff. Although they conduct lectures under the supervision of the senior teachers it looks as if they are not very confident about what they perform and the students are also not very happy with their performance. We understand that there are several vacancies in the approved carder and we are of opinion that they be filled soon and take measures to provide training for the younger teachers. The nature of the designation namely "Temporary Tutor" causes disappointment among the recruits themselves because in other Universities the temporary recruits are designated as "Temporary Lecturer". This disturbing factor can be remedied by designating the temporary staff members as Temporary Lecturers.

There are rooms allocated to the Department. Some of them are used as lecture rooms and others as staff rooms. One room is allocated for the use of the visually impaired students while another room is set aside for post-graduate coordinator. There is also a room allocated for students to meet and carry on discussions.

However, the space available for conducting lectures is very limited. The small room where a multimedia and OHP is being fixed and where seating capacity is limited to very few is hardly sufficient to fulfill the needs of the Department. This situation affects the quality of teaching.

The Department maintains a library with the collaboration of the Department of Political Science and Public Policy. It has been expanded with books obtained from the Asia Foundation on a regular basis. Many donations have come from staff members and well wishers. The undergraduate as well as post-graduate students appreciate this library more than the University main library because it comprises of latest books published in English and

tionally . Hence it is a very extensive resource provider  
ty.

The Review Team observed that there are comprehensive course outlines considering of course objectives, learning outcomes, detailed syllabuses, course duration, and assessment method and recommended readings. When the Course module system is adopted to replace the traditional curriculum it was necessary to introduce other innovative components of teaching and learning processes such as course guides and course outlines, to improve the effectiveness of teaching process.

One of the admirable features in teaching methodology used is the discussion hour followed by two hour lectures. The discussion is based on articles and questions where opportunity for participatory learning is provided. Apart from teaching and discussions the Department has several other programmes such as guided visits to the National Archives, Museums, Libraries and other resource centers, Field Trips, Documentary films, Guest lectures etc.

There are two other unique programmes very useful to students and worthy of improving. One of them is the History and Community Project implemented jointly with the students of the Eastern University. The uniqueness of the project is that the students are trained to study History in a practical perspective. It is not a course unit included in the curriculum of the department, but a project working for skill development of the students. The other unique project is for Visually Impaired students where the Department provides lot of learning assistance. It provides them with recorders, tapes and an on-going programme to provide slates, white canes and brail books written in collaboration with the Sri Lanka Eye Foundation.

### **Learning Activity**

There are several grievances expressed by the students who met with the Review Team. The difficulties related to the medium of instruction are one of them. It was explained to us by the staff that the University has decided to change the medium of instruction to English by 2010. Hence during this transitional period the lectures are conducted in bi-lingual mode. This policy has hit the Sinhala medium students very badly and they are of opinion that it is impossible for them to make proper benefit of their University education.

The students also have complaints against the Semester based Course module system because they cannot cope up with the heavy work load involved to be performed within the stipulated times. However, it is impossible for the Department to remedy these grievances because they are inherent deficiencies of the systems implemented by the University.

The students are satisfied with the teaching of the Senior Staff and the new methodologies followed by them. The students participate very enthusiastically and manage the stage completely when discussions and presentations are being held and the lecturers only observe and guide the students.

### **Assessment Method**

The Department follows the guidelines of the faculty in designing methods of assessments. Mid-term test, assignments and semester end exam are the main methods of assessment.

Major assessment is semester end examination and 60% marks are allocated for this exam. The Department follows the University guidelines in preparing question papers and marking

moderated at the Department level by a board consisting  
exam answer scripts are marked by two examiners

Mid-Semester assessments carry a total of 40% marks. It consists of a test, an assignment or a presentation. The staff member responsible for each course unit conducts the mid-semester assessments. The Department has recently decided to give 10% out of 40% for class participation in classes where the number of students is less than 50. In such cases the balance 30% of marks is divided among the other sections of assessment.

The students who follow a special Degree programme should successfully complete a minimum total of 42 course units out of which 32 should be from the particular discipline that they studied for the special degree. Honors passes are awarded based on the Grade Point Average (GPA). The minimum GPA required for a first class honors B.A. special and general degree is 3.5 and for a 2<sup>nd</sup> class upper division the minimum GPA required is 3.25. The GPA is calculated as a weighted average on the grade points obtained for the different courses and the number of course credit hours.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Teaching Learning and Assessment Methods can be judged GOOD***

#### **4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements**

##### **Recruitment and admission procedure**

Recruitment and admission of students to the faculty of Arts are carried out by the UGC as in other universities and the Department has no control over this process. In accordance with the policy of the UGC the Department gets and special intake for history and the number that will be entering can be decided by the department. However because of the popularity of the subject International Relations there is a great demand to enter the DH & INR.

There is no prerequisite to offer History or International Relations for the general degree programme. Yet only a limited number of students are selected for special programmes. Students with highest marks at the two semester examinations of first year will be called for an interview. Based on the performances at the interview, marks obtained for first year examination and knowledge of English (at least a pass in level II in English courses) will be selected to follow a special degree in History or international relations.

##### **Student progress and achievements**

High performance levels recorded at the final examination are a good indication of the quality and achievements. The percentage of students achieved Honors passes are relatively very high and varied between 70% and 100% during the period 2005-2007.

Academic Year	No admitted	1 <sup>st</sup> class	2 <sup>nd</sup> upper division	2 <sup>nd</sup> class lower division	pass
2004-2005	13	-	2	5	6
2005-2006	39	-	2	17	20
2006-2007	13	-	3	6	4

Performance at the Special Degree Examination in International Relations (Number of students)

Academic Year	No admitted	1 <sup>st</sup> class	2 <sup>nd</sup> upper division	2 <sup>nd</sup> class lower division	pass
2004-2005	38	2	14	22	-
2005-2006	51	1	16	13	21
2006-2007	34	2	4	17	11

The above statistics prove the high quality of students and there are more evidence to prove their progress and the achievements. For example

- University Gold Medalist at the 2008 convocation is currently reading for M.Phil at Cambridge University, UK.
- The UGC Survey (2005) has rated the Department of History and International Relation as the best History Department of all the universities in the country.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Quality of Students including student progress and achievements can be judged GOOD.***

#### 4.4. Extent and use of Student Feedback

In order to receive student feed back occasional evaluations are conducted employing formal as well as informal methods. Students are given questionnaires at the end of each unit to comment on structure, contents and on teaching. The review team examined two samples of these questionnaires, one prepared by the Faculty of Arts and the other by the Department through editing the faculty form to suit the requirements of the Department. Both these evaluation forms have parts comprising of quantitative evaluation and qualitative evaluations. The DH & INR states that students' comments and suggestions are taken into account and appropriate changes have been made in curriculum and teaching process.

However there is no clear procedure for the Department to inform the students that their views were taken into consideration and that necessary steps have been taken to respond the feedback. It is evident that the department has taken initial steps to workout a strategy to inform the statements the ways in which their feedback is taken into consideration and the review team trust that the department will proceed with the matter and implement a suitable strategy.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Extent and Use of Student Feed back can be judged as GOOD.***

graduate programmes namely M.A. International Relations (Taught) M.A. in History and M.Phil in history. Among these programmes the most popular one is the Masters in International Relations. It is a two year programme and reputed as the best such course available in the country.

The postgraduate programmes are also provided with the systematic course outlines where course objectives, course outcomes, course contents, assessment method and further readings are denoted. The review team met with the current batch of students and they are very happy with the performance of coordination, facilities provided and specially with teaching. The only small problem they are faced with is the lack of latest books in the main library of the University.

This drawback, to a certain extent is rectified by the Department library where latest books are available. The students could make use of the resource centers such as BCIS library, Strategic Studies Centre library, UNO Office library etc. found close by the University. They been students reading for a postgraduate degree should take efforts to expand their resource circle and could even use the British Council library and United States Information Service Centre library which are not very far from the University.

The medium of instruction for postgraduate studies is English and there is a course coordinator who devotes her full energy to improve the quality of the programme. The following statistic proves the popularity of the postgraduate programmes.

Student Enrolment for Post Graduate Programme in International Relations 2003-2009.

Year	Number of Students
2003	41
2006	38
2007 -2008	47
2009-2010	46

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Post-Graduate Programme is a success story and it can be judged GOOD.***

#### **4.6. Peer Observations**

The DH & INR implemented formal and informal peer observation. Formal peer observation is mainly on examination work. The question papers of the year end examinations are moderated by a board of senior academic members of the Department. However, the department does not get the services of any expertise from the other Universities in moderating the question papers. The marking of answer scripts is done by two members of the staff independently and the department does not seek the services of external expertise even for marking activity.

With regard to assessment procedure the Senior Staff members sit as a board of examiners at the Department level and finalize the marks before sending them to the Exam Branch of the University. As regulated by the Faculty of Arts the Board sends raw marks to the Examination Branch and take care not to send border line and problematic cases there. The Department follows a very positive policy to prevent the emergence of any problems with

maintaining a register where each and every request, certificates etc. by the students are written in their own method has been very useful in examination work.

The formal peer observation with regard to teaching was started at the beginning of 2008 and follows faculty guidelines. The evaluation forms prepared by the faculty and edited by the Department to suit its requirements are distributed among the staff members and one teacher is selected to be in charge of the implementation of the procedure. The Tutors are observed by the staff members who are in-charge of the course units assigned in an informal manner.

The staff members perceive peer observation as a useful method of enhancing the quality of teaching. Yet there is no evidence of using peer observation to enhance the quality of teaching hitherto, but since following the guidelines of recent faculty review the Department has made arrangements to implement formal peer observation and use them to enhance the quality of teaching.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Peer Observations of the DH & INR can be judged as GOOD.***

#### **4.7. Skills Development**

There are several methods and programmes followed by the Department to develop various skills of the students. They intend to envisage critical and analytical thinking, team work, planning, leadership and presentation skills ó in students so that they can apply them in their future careers and to develop interpersonal skills.

Developing English language skills and computer skills is a major concern at the University level and the department also considers these as part of the skills development. Most of the courses are taught bilingual and articles given to students to read are in English. As a requirement in the Faculty, one lecture hour is conducted only in English for first and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students. Although these are good measures to improve English learning skills it is evident that the English knowledge of majority of students who enter the University in Sinhala medium is very poor and the capacity to work in English medium is minimal. They also have to perform a whole heap of work within a very limited period due to the inherent shortcomings of the course unit system as implemented in our Universities. Hence they find it difficult to co-op with the bi-lingual transaction. However, since these are the policies set by the University the Department has no choice but to implement them. The only thing the Department could do is to be attentive towards those impaired students. The Review Team observed that the Department does take every possible step to help those students. For example they have started a project to write course manuals in simple English using retired Professors and the Senior Staff members who are conversant in English and the subject matter as well.

Students, especially those in International Relations programmes are instructed to use computer in writing assignments and Research Papers and to use Internet sources to obtain current and updated knowledge. The main library facilitates this by subscribing to electronic academic sources. However, they are inadequate but the Department does not have sufficient space, computers or other equipments for the students to develop their skills.

unique programmes of History and Community project and orators and organized by the students are very effective in community project helps to build up team work skills, ethical work practice, harmonious social interactions, planning skills etc. while the presentations programme helps to build up the skills of critical and analytical thinking oratory, team work, planning, leadership, organization, presentation etc.

***It is the view of the Review Team that the Skills Development efforts of the DH & INR can be judged as GOOD.***

#### **4.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling**

The Department is linked up with the faculty programme on academic guidance and counseling. A number of students are assigned to staff members when they join as first year students to the faculty. Staff members inform their office room numbers and contact numbers to students. They also provide guidance and counseling in both academic and personal issues of students when contacted. Each staff member displays contact hours for students on their office doors and 6 hours are assigned as contact hours.

***It is the view of the Review Team that Academic Guidance and counseling can be judged as GOOD.***

Based on the observations made during the visit by the Review Team and as per the facts discussed above the judgments given to those eight aspects under review are as follows:

<b>Aspect Reviewed</b>	<b>Judgment Given</b>
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student Feedback	Good
Postgraduate Studies	Good
Peer Observation	Good
Skills Development	Good
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Good

### **5. CONCLUSIONS**

The strengths/ good practices and weakness identified by the Review Team in each of the eight aspects of evaluation of this review are as below.

#### **1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review**

**Strengths / Good Practices.**

- Curriculum has been designed on the basis of Credit-based course module system.

unity with the learning outcomes identified by the

extensive course outlines and distributing them among the

students at the beginning of the year.

- Updating of Curriculum so as to get the benefits of enriched knowledge of the staff members.

### Weaknesses

- Amalgamation of two very extensive subjects in one Department.
- Existence of deficiencies for unimpaired study of the two subjects.

## **2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

### Strengths / Good practices

- Availability of Senior Staff with excellent teaching and presentation skills.
- Very effective teaching methods used by the lecturers.
- Methods followed are standard and adequate to deliver the planned curriculum
- The Department obtains the services of retired Senior Professors in conducting its teaching programmes.
- Majority of students are very enthusiastic in learning.
- The Department maintains a good library.
- The Department utilizes a combination of different assessment methods for the overall evaluation of student progress throughout the course.
- The cordial relations that exists between the staff and students are a stimulating factor in teaching and learning activity.
- The maintenance of a students requests register prevents unnecessary problem specially with regard to examination activities in the Department.

### Weaknesses

- Use of modern teaching technologies such as multimedia and OHA is very limited.
- Class room space to use modern teaching equipments is very limited (only one small room)
- The use of bilingual teaching hinders the effective learning of the Sinhala Medium Students.
- The use of Temporary Tutors who are raw graduates to conduct lectures and discussions even under the guidance of Senior Staff members have proved unsatisfactory.
- Handouts are provided only by few lecturers and they also very rarely do it.

## **3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement**

### Strengths / Good Practices

- Students are enthusiastic and motivated
- Student performance at the Examination is very impressive. High performance levels recorded at the final examinations are a good indicator of the students' quality and achievements. .
- The UGC survey in 2005 has rated that the Department of History and International Relations as the best History Department of all Universities of the country.

#### **4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback**

##### **Strengths/ Good Practices**

- Student feedback is obtained by using a standard questionnaire
- Informal feedback is also implemented occasionally.

##### **Weaknesses**

- No clear procedure to incorporate students feedback to curriculum or to remedy the drawbacks in teaching activity accordingly.

#### **5. Postgraduate Studies**

##### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- The Postgraduate programme in International Relations is the only such programme available in the country.
- The postgraduate programmes are organized by the Department with great care and responsibility.
- The students who read for the postgraduate degrees are very happy and contented.

##### **Weaknesses**

- The Department does not pay equal attention to History programmes.
- Since the medium of instruction in postgraduate studies is only English those who wish to study in Sinhala medium are prevented from doing so.

#### **6. Peer Observation**

##### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- Moderation of question papers by the board of senior staff members.
- Paper marking done by two examiners independently and if there are any discrepancies they will be marked by a third examiner.
- Peer observation in teaching activity performed through guiding the junior staff by the senior members.

##### **Weaknesses**

- All the decisive examination work (setting of question papers and marking answer scripts) are done within the Department where the qualified staff members are very limited.
- No arrangements to get the services of external expertise in examination work.

#### **7. Skills Development**

##### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- The DH & IRA has made many efforts to impart subject specific skills and several transferable skills among the students.
- There are unique programmes not included in the curriculum but implemented with the sole aim of developing various skills.



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write Course Manuals in Simple English by teachers  
 t mater with the aim of improving the studentsø skills in

### **Weaknesses**

- The existing arrangements to provide English Language skills and IT skills are inadequate and far from satisfactory.

## **8. Academic Guidance and Counseling**

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- Each and every academic staff member is an academic guide and a student counselor
- Students are given sufficient and convenient times to meet the Counselors and discuss the problems.
- Majority of students make use of the academic guidance and counseling facilities available to them.
- Majority of teachers maintain cordial relations with the students an encourage them to come for guidance.

### **Weaknesses**

- There are teachers who are unable to buildup confidence among the students.

## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

After a careful review made on the several aspects of the Department of History and International Relations at the Colombo University we wish to make the following recommendations to help the university Authorities to take necessary measures to improve the existing situation of the Department.

- 1. To enhance the quality of the academic staff of the department we recommend:**
  - that qualified lectures should be recruited at least to the level of the approved cadre.
  - that the designation of temporary academic staff members should be changed to ðTemporary Lectureö and not ðTemporary Tutorö as practiced at present
  - that opportunity should be provided for the younger staff members to broaden their knowledge and know how by obtaining postgraduate qualifications.
- 2. For the development of the structure of the Department it is recommended:**
  - that it is very essential to bifurcate the Department as approved by the University Council and provide opportunities for the two subjects History and International Relations to develop as two independent disciplines and over come the existing deficiencies.
- 3. For the development of curriculum it is recommended:**
  - that a regular and unified method be implemented to review and update curriculum so as to reflect the expected learning outcomes, instead of the unplanned method that is being practised at present.

**Learning activities we recommend:**

teaching equipments be expanded as soon as possible,  
teaching should be reconsidered by the university  
authorities since it affects the Sinhala medium students very unfavourably and seems  
to be a cause in developing unrest and acute grievances among them.

- that the planners of Higher Education in the country should reconsider and make arrangements to remedy the inherent defects of the Course Unit System as implemented by the Arts Faculties of almost all the Universities in the country including the DH & INR at the Colombo University since the university students community is aggrieved by the whole system.
- that the on going program of writing modules in simple English by qualified lectures should be broaden and expedited.

**5. To improve the quality of assessment functions it is recommended:**

- that the services of resource personnel from other universities should be obtained / the services of the retired professors should be utilized because there are only very few permanent staff members who are qualified to serve as examiners at times.

**6. To use the student feedback to the development of the Department it is recommended:**

- That the system initiated recently to inform the students that their views were taken into consideration and that necessary steps have been taken to respond the feedbacks should be implemented wholly and regularly.

**7. To develop the Post Graduate Programmes to the satisfaction of all the students in the Department we recommend :**

- that it is essential to give equal treatment to Post Graduate Programmes in History as to those in International Relations.

**8. To enhance the opportunities of skills development it is recommended:**

- that the program of discussions be expanded.
- that the "Project of History and Community" be included into the formal curriculum
- that provisions be made for the students to gain subject oriented English skills,

**VIEW VISIT -**

**Day 1  
26<sup>th</sup> (Monday) January 2009**

- 08.30-09.00 Private Meeting of Review Panel with QAA Council Representatives
  - 09.00-09.30 Meeting with the Dean
  - 09.30-10.00 Discuss the Agenda for the Visit
  - 10.00-10.30 Tea
  - 10.30-11.30 Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report:  
Ms. Maneesha Wanasinghe – Pasqual in Room 230
  - 11.30-12.30 Discussion
  - 12.30-13.30 Lunch (at Department)
  - 13.30-14.30 Observing Departmental Facilities
  - 14.30-15.30 Observing Other Facilities (Library/Student Common Room)
  - 15.30-17.00 Meeting with Department Academic Staff
  - 17.00-17.30 Meeting with Non-academic Staff
  - 17.30-18.30 Brief Meeting of Reviewers
- } accompanied by  
Ms. Vajira Wijesinghe

**Day 2  
27<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) January 2009**

- 09.00- 10.00 Observing Lecture – INR/HIS 3245 Dr. Nirmal Ranjith Dewasiri in Room 302
  - 10.00-11.00 Examination of Documents (Working Tea)
  - 11.00-12.00 Meeting with Tutorial Staff in Room 230
  - 12.00-12.30 Meeting with Postgraduate Students in Room 245
  - 12.30-13.30 Lunch (at Department)
  - 13.30-14.00 Meeting with Undergraduate Students (General Degree)
  - 14.00-14.30 Meeting with Special Degree Students: History
  - 14.30-15.00 Meeting with Special Degree Students: International Relations
  - 15.00-16.00 Meeting with visually impaired Students: History & International Relations
  - 16.00-17.00 Observing Lecture – HIS/ INR 3260 Dr. Janaki Jayawardena in Room 226
- } accompanied  
by  
Ms. Vajira  
Wijesinghe  
Room 230

**Day 3  
28<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) January 2009**

- 09.00-10.00 Observing Student Presentations – INR 4282 Ms. Maneesha Wanasinghe–Pasqual  
in Room 230
- 10.00-10.30 History & Community Project (2nd year students) Dr. Janaki Jayawardena in Room 230
- 10.00-10.30 Academic Guidance and Counseling Core MAQ Aspect Meeting: Prof M.G.A. Cooray,  
Visiting Lecturer – Department Office (Working Tea)
- 10.30-11.00 Reviewers Private Discussion – Department Office
- 11.00-12.00 Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting – Department Office
- 12.00-13.00 Lunch (at Department)
- 13.00-17.00 Report writing

## MITTED TO THE FACULTY OF ARTS

NOVEMBER 2008

### **FOR THE BIFURCATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS TO:**

- 1. The Department of History**
- 2. The Department of International Relations**

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Department of History is one of the oldest departments in the Faculty of Arts which came into existence with the establishment of a second Arts Faculty in Colombo in the 1960s. The department was initially named as the Department of History, and later renamed first as the Department of Modern History, and subsequently as the Department of History and Political Science. With the bifurcation of the department in 2002, two new departments were created: 1) Department of History & International Relations; 2) Department of Political Science & Public Policy. This department has a proud history of nurturing other disciplines under its fold. Once the Department of Sociology functioned under this department. Next the subject of Political Science was brought under the History Department. International Relations was later addition. Now time has come for International Relations to part ways with History.

This department offers two special degree programmes – History and International Relations, and also offers these two as separate subjects for the General Arts Degree. In the Sri Lankan University system, it is only the Colombo University which offers a special degree programme as well as a Masters degree programme in International Relations. The bifurcation has become necessary partly because it is difficult for one department to handle two subjects which have their own identities. More importantly, further development requires a new orientation for both subjects.

History and International Relations are disciplines that are well established around the world. Both these fields of studies, though related, are taught as separate subjects in the international arena. All lecturers who teach at the Department of History and International Relations have a background in History but half of them have their subsequent post-graduate qualifications in International Relations and related fields.

#### **JUSTIFICATION**

There are several structural barriers to the development of the fields. The core focus of the established fields of History and International Relations differ and they require indepth study in order to explore the full potential. International Relations and History as subjects are rarely taught in the same department in internationally recognized universities.

The students following the special degree programme in History are often compelled to follow the same lecture courses offered for IR students. Students would benefit more from the bifurcation as they would be able to follow specialized subject areas suited for their own study field.

A separate department of History, for example, would provide students with courses specifically geared to History. This is especially relevant as history as a discipline is moving towards a more critical and theoretically grounded understanding. A separate department of

... develop other sub-fields belonging to this discipline such as  
area Studies.

Furthermore, student activities within each specialized field and their potential internship possibilities differ. Two separate departments could focus on nurturing their respective abilities and the course curricula with an outlook towards expanding the potential. It has been extremely difficult to introduce internships as the numbers are too large and the specializations are diverse. When internships were available the students could not be placed since the other group did not have placements.

The future for a separate Department of History and a Department of International Relations lies in creating quality students who are able to face challenges in the modern world. The ultimate emphasis of the bifurcated departments would be on excellence in teaching, research, enhancement of academic inquiry and focus on regular seminars and publications. This will also enable to increase number of student intake to the respective departments.

The subject content of International Relations provides essential information for administrative examinations such as the SLAS, it is an area that will continue to increase in interest.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To create quality students able to take up challenges;
- To create specialized research centers in the Departments of History and International Relations;
- To link up with established programs internationally;
- To create joint programs to enhance international collaboration;
- To start a PG Diploma/A taught Master of Arts in History
- To continue projects such as the History and community project;
- To start a MPhil/PhD in IR (the first in the country);
- To generate funds through MA and Diploma programs;

#### TIME/ACTION PLAN

November 2008	:	Concept paper to the Faculty Board
January 2009	:	Senate / Start on QEF Text book writing project (as two separate subject fields)
March 2009	:	UGC
August 2009	:	Curriculum Revisions of the two degree programs.

**Target:** To operate as two departments for the calendar year 2010-2011 (starting in Oct 2009)  
At initial stages as done previously as in the case of Political Science & Public Policy the two departments will continue to offer joint courses.  
The existing staff will be given an option to select the Department they want to join/ according to subject specialization.

Submitted by  
Head  
Department of History and International Relations  
21/10/2008

21<sup>st</sup> January 2009

Prof. Gamini Samaranyake  
Chairman  
University Grants Commission  
20, Ward Place  
Colombo 7.

Dear Prof. Samaranyake

**BIFURCATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND INTERNATIONAL  
RELATIONS – FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF COLOMBO**

I am pleased to inform you that the Senate at its 317<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 31.12.2008 recommended the Concept Paper for the bifurcation of the Department of History and International Relations with the following Departments of Study.

1. Department of History
2. Department of International Relations

A copy of the Senate decision is enclosed for your information (Annexure I).

The Council at its 414<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 15.01.2009 approved the bifurcation of the Department of History and International Relations and recommended to the UGC, the creation of two new Departments of Study in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Colombo as proposed.

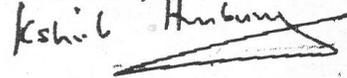
I shall be thankful if you could place this matter before the Commission and take early steps to gazette the creation of the two departments of study in the Faculty of Arts of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka.

It is also planned to have a separate intake of 50 students for the two Departments.

A copy of the Concept Paper is sent herewith for information of the Commission.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,



(Professor Kshanika Hirimburegama)  
Vice-Chancellor

c.c. Head/History & International Relations