

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING**



***FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE  
UNIVERSITY OF MORATUWA***

25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**Review Team :**

Dr. Lochana Gunarathna

Mr. Hemantha Jayasundara

Prof. H. M. Bandara, Sabaragamuwa University of SL

Ms. J. A. S. Jayakody, Sabaragamuwa University of SL

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## 1. SUBJECT REVIEW PROCESS

Subject review process evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. It is focused on the student learning experience and on student achievement; and 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 power to control and to change existing practices.

Review process was 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 Town and Country Planning (DTCP), Faculty of Architecture (FoA), University of Moratuwa (UM) submitted a self evaluation report (SER) consisting of seven sections, namely: Aims, learning outcomes and programme details; Students, staff and facilities; Programme design, content and review; Teaching, learning and assessment methods; The quality of students taking account of recruitment, Admission, Student progress and achievement; Extent and use of student feedback: quantitative and qualitative; and Advisory service and counseling. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the (SER).

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

1. Curriculum design, content and review.
2. Teaching learning and assessment methods.
3. The 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 team visited the department from 25<sup>th</sup> - 27<sup>th</sup> February, 2009. The agenda of the three day visit is attached (see annex 1).

The evaluation of eight aspects was based on:

Meetings held with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Director/QAC, Head of Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, Librarian of the university, Year masters, course coordinators and Student counselors of the Department, undergraduates representing first, second, third and fourth years, some postgraduate students, computer analyst of the department computer center, and supportive staff in the Department; Observation of physical facilities of the Department, Department's computer center, Class rooms, University and Departmental libraries, etc.; Observation of teaching classes of undergraduates and students' presentations; and Reviewing available documents at the Department.

Each of the eight aspects was judged as good/satisfactory/unsatisfactory, based on strengths, good practices and weaknesses in each.

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

The University of Moratuwa was established under the Universities Act, No.16 of 1978. It was evolved from the Ceylon Technical College of Maradana, Colombo, which was established in 1893.

In 1960, the Institute of Practical Technology (IPT) was founded at Katubedde with aid from the Government of Canada on a 50 acre block of land overlooking the Bolgoda Lake. The primary aim of the institute was to provide full-time courses for Technicians of sub-professional grades. It has offered full-time courses for Architects, Junior Technical Officers, Surveyors and Levelers and Draughtsman Apprentices and part-time courses for those employed in the Government and the Private sector institutions.

In 1963, the Government appointed “Commission of Inquiry on Technical Education” recommended expanding the Institute of Practical Technology (IPT) to provide Professional Engineering Education and thus The Ceylon College of Technology (CCT) was begun in 1966. The IPT and the CCT were amalgamated in 1967. Within a period of 6 years of existence the CCT earned University status under the provisions of the Universities Act No.1 of 1972.

The discipline of architecture has been taught in Sri Lanka at tertiary level since 1961, at then the Institute of Practical Technology, Moratuwa, which acquired University Status in 1968; and then consequently moved to the University of Ceylon, Colombo. In 1972, with the restructuring of university education system in Sri Lanka, architectural education was brought back to Katubedda Campus of the newly constituted University of Sri Lanka,.

Subsequently in 1978, with the reconstitution of university education system in Sri Lanka, Katubedda Campus of the University of Sri Lanka (renamed since Sri Lanka becoming a Republic in 1972), became autonomous and renamed as University of Moratuwa with three Faculties of studies namely (i) the Faculty of Engineering, (ii) the Faculty of Architecture and Town & Country planning, and (iii) the Faculty of Physical and Applied Sciences. In 1981, the Faculty of Physical & Applied Sciences was merged with the Faculty of Engineering. To sustain the rapid expansion of Information Technology Industry in the country, the Faculty of Information Technology was established in 2001 as a third Faculty of the University. Faculty of Engineering is the largest faculty among the three faculties of the University of Moratuwa comprising over 200 academic staffs and around 3500 undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The vision of the University of Moratuwa is “to be a centre of excellence of higher learning and related activities with emphasis on national relevance, international recognition, innovation and creativity in Engineering, Architecture, Information Technology and other allied professional disciplines". Within this vision, their immediate focus is to "Produce world class graduates at the University of Moratuwa in an environment that provides a rewarding experience for its students and staff".

The Faculty of Architecture enjoys the unique distinction of being the only seat of education in Sri Lanka. It comprises of three academic departments namely Department of Architecture, Department of Building Economics and Department of Town & Country Planning. The faculty confers Bachelor’s Degrees in Architecture, Quantity Surveying, Town & country

Planning, Facilities Management and Design. In addition it also confers Postgraduate Degrees related to the fields of the relevant academic Departments leading to Masters and Doctor of Philosophy. Many of the courses conducted by the Faculty which are accredited by the national and international professional institutions have reached international standards.

The Department of Town & Country Planning was established in October, 1973 as a fully fledged department of the Faculty of Engineering of the Katubedda Campus. It is presently one of the departments in the Faculty of Architecture in the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. With the establishment of University of Moratuwa in 1978, the department was placed within the Faculty of Architecture. Since then, it has been one of the three Departments in the Faculty of Architecture.

The Department of Town & Country Planning hails the privilege of being the only such Department in an academic institution in Sri Lanka that offers academic programs in Physical Planning and conduct research in planning related areas.

The first Professor was Neville Gunaratna who was a pioneer in both professions of Architecture and Town Planning in this country and who held the post of Government Town Planner. He collaborated with Prof. Otto Koenigsberger, then head of the Development Planning Unit (DPU) located in the University College of London University, to set up the course. Prof Koenigsberger came here at least twice and the DPU sent a Planner by the name of Michael Slingsby who worked full-time at the Katubedda campus and helped Prof.Neville Gunarathna to develop a postgraduate course of 2-year duration. It was designed to admit and train graduates from the Social Sciences, Architecture, Engineering and Real Estate Management as Town Planners.

From the date of its commencement until 2002, the Department was conducting Post Graduate levels in Town & Country Planning. The first course leading to Master of Science in Town & Country Planning was commenced in July 1975. So far more than 200 persons have obtained the qualification in Master of Science in Town & Country Planning. In addition to that the Department also offered Post Graduate Diploma in Urban Development since 1979 in collaboration with the Urban Development Authority of Sri Lanka, qualifying more than 150 persons. Two more courses leading to Master of Science Degree in Land use Planning & Resource Management and, Post Graduate Diploma in Housing Development were also offered once each. However, having felt the present need of Sri Lanka to have more numbers of fully-fledged planners, the Department has extended to conduct an Undergraduate Degree program in the Field of Town and Country Planning. As a result the pioneering Four Years, Honours Degree course in Bachelor of Science in Town & Country Planning commenced in 2003. So far the course has been enrolling average 50 candidates for each intake, on the performance of GCE (Advanced Level) results.

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

#### **3.1. Aims**

Department of Town & Country Planning, together with University Academic Policies, adopts strategies and practices for the orderly conduct of undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs. In keeping with the University Corporate Plan of 2007-11, the department aims to provide the following major goals;

- i. Create a well-accomplished, skilled and contended student and staff community with the right attitudes to face the challenges of development both in urban & Rural Contexts;
- ii. Achieve the status of a leading consultant and provider of advanced consultancy services to the state and the private sector;
- iii. Contribute to the government policy making and national development in urban & rural Development including higher/professional education in Sri Lanka;

### **3.2 Learning Outcomes**

Educational mission of Town & Country Planning programs is providing the students with challenging and exciting learning experience aimed at producing competent graduates, who are capable of addressing functional, socio-cultural, psychological and physiological needs of the man who lives in Urban & Rural areas and provide for the comfort, convenience and welfare of those people.

#### **Program Details**

The DTCP offers four year special degree programme for undergraduates and Post graduate Diploma (one year) leading to Master of Science (two years) degree programme.

So far all courses and other academic matters within the Department are conducted in English medium. Motivating “Integrated Spatial Planning”, the Department always encourages the multidisciplinary approach in Planning and therefore, all of its courses comprise of subject modules from a vast range of fields such as design, sociology, economics, environment, governance, law as well as planning supportive areas such as spatial information systems, communication, etc.

The entry into the profession of Town Planning is controlled by the Institute of Town Planners, Sri Lanka (ITPSL) – a body with a history of twenty five years incorporated by Act of Parliament No. 23 of 1986.

Accordingly the students enrolled in this degree program are eligible for student membership of the ITPSL and consequently they become eligible for the associate membership as they complete the 4 years degree program. Further, with four years of relevant professional experiences as specified and approved by the Institute, the graduates of the department become eligible for a corporate member of the same.

The unique feature of the study program is that it is the only undergraduate physical planning degree in the Sri Lankan system. The Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka, (ITPSL) which is incorporated by the Act of parliament No 23 of 1986, has accredited the Honours degree of B.Sc in Town and Country Planning.

## **4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM**

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

To ensure a program is enriched by research and practice in the industry at all levels, curricular seems to be designed and developed by studying the requirements of the local and overseas market demands.

Curriculum Design, Content & Review of performance criteria follow a wide range of careers, so the curricula are designed to impart a varied balance of subject specific knowledge and transferable skills. The involvement of range of expertise from various planning and allied agencies such as Urban development Authority, National Physical Planning department have further strengthened the teaching in terms of visiting lectures, guest lectures and exposure to real world planning exercises.

After four intakes, the department has reviewed the course curricula and structure and proposed several amendments to the curricula. The proposed amendments to syllabus were supported by course revision session conducted with the final year students held in May 2007. The review team also observed the prevailing curricular and agreed with comments made by the students on each module that they had undertaken. Some of the very important comments are as follows:

There have been some overlapping among the contents of various modules as well as repetition within single module (i.e. Basic Ecology, Flora and Fauna, plants and landscape, etc.)

Some lectures undertaken by non-planners without physical planning orientation

Specialization in specific area is necessary (i.e., urban design, remote sensing and GIS etc.)

The necessity of including in-plant training for students in order to expose them to the industry.

The final year students views and views of the industry specialists are considered for reviewing the course, which is very good. The Department had arranged several meetings and appointed a course review committee for proposing amendments and innovations. The review committee headed by the Head of the department has submitted the rational for the need for an amendment as indicated below.

Careful observations (Strengths and weaknesses) in three cycles of the program

Positive elements observed in similar courses

Need to induce immediately expressed changes by the students assuring planning related employment opportunities

Improvements inducible to the fifth batch commencing in 2008 June

Further, the review committee has submitted its observations related to the existing program as follows:

- Repetition of Contents
- Less productive / less relevant modules.
- Positioning & Timing of the modules.
- Lack of Integration among modules.

Having considered the above, the staff has agreed to the proposed amendments to the course structure. The proposed amendments to the performance criteria and syllabus have included the following major innovations.

Necessity to allow students to major in a specific subject area

Possibility of allowing students to have electives from semester V

Accommodation of necessary changes required in the course structure

Accordingly department has followed a very systematic way of curricular revision. Curricular procedure is also sound starting with departmental level followed at faculty level and at university senate level. Curricula are already available for perusal. Their new curricular is ready to be implemented in 2010. This curriculum is very comprehensive and all the required ingredients in spatial planning are included. The course design is very good, that provides all the required fundamentals, up to semester three and applications, field works etc. after that. Adequate field visits to give spatial orientation is commendable. The skills related to presentation, communication, team work are well integrated into the course design.

However, orientation for students to choose a specialized field of spatial planning at the final year (i.e. Urban Design, GIS, and Projects Management etc.) is not available. This needs to be considered particularly due to skills and talents of students for various specialized fields. For Surveying and Leveling no lectures are conducted, only practical sessions are given and some of the most needed software (i.e. Auto Cad, Sketch up) are not taught.

The review team is of the opinion that the content of the courses offered adequately fulfill the requirements of a degree programme of this nature. The team also has noted that a significant effort has been made by the staff members of the department to ensure producing high quality graduates.

***In relation to the curriculum design, content and review, the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

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

### **Teaching and Learning**

The students follow the course in English medium. This is commendable as there are different ethnic groups and it leads to a social harmony.

The students are provided with a handbook titled “Learning Outcomes”, which clearly indicates the teaching objectives of each module in the program, the expected outcomes, and the assessment methods of the same. Review team had the opportunity to examine them.

The B.Sc program confirms to the university modular teaching structure. Each student must earn 150 credits by successful completion of written exams, tutorials, assignments, studio works, group projects and individual research project in the final semester. The academic calendar of the course consists of eight academic semesters, each 15 weeks in duration.

In order to facilitate its course modules and research activities, the Department is accomplished with the state-of-art teaching technology and learning infrastructure. More broadly, this program offers a multi disciplinary teaching and learning environment mainly focusing on physical, social, economic and environmental aspects of spatial planning within the framework of integrated approach

Owing to the multidisciplinary nature of the profession, the candidates of this course have to complete a range of theory subject modules from a wide array of disciplines, skill development exercises, field studies, etc, and four planning projects, over a period of Four Years at varied levels such as national, regional and local.

The involvement of range of expertise from various planning and allied agencies such as Urban development Authority, National Physical Planning department have further strengthened the teaching in terms of visiting lectures, guest lectures and exposure to real world planning exercises.

Some of the subject modules in the course programs are “Design” oriented, in order to sharpen sensitivity and the creativity of the students, and to promote innovation

The Design orientation is facilitated within the two Studios of the Department, where the students undertake hands-on exercises and actively participate in studio events. In Studio events the students get away from the conventional class room setting and engage in interactive sessions that enables self-learning and learning-by-doing.

The Spatial Information and Remote Sensing Laboratory of the Department is equipped with latest updates of spatial information technology both hardware and software. Students have access to networked computers and print facilities at the laboratory.

As the course has been structured in a multi disciplinary approach, the teaching has been designed in such a manner that ensures various disciplines being taught within the framework of human settlement development

From the second year onwards students are introduced to major projects at varied levels namely National, regional and local levels. Students are involved with real world planning exercises when they undertake these projects.

The significant feature of these projects is it provides an opportunity to the students to apply and test the theoretical knowledge provided in the particular semester. The modules are

arranged in such a manner that supports the major project to be undertaken in that particular semester

As indicated by students as well as staff members, interactive teaching methods are now becoming popular. This was evidenced by the review team during the observation of teaching and practical sessions. Students are given opportunity to make individual presentations as well as group presentations.

The department is currently moving to a *student centred* teaching learning method from a *teacher centred* method. Modern teaching and learning facilities are available in many lecture-rooms. The review team observed that the facilities are being used by almost all the teachers.

Class Room Teaching aims at Gaining theoretical knowledge and Development of Conceptual Framework. Field Work aims at Sensitize students towards different aspects of the Environment and Exposure to ground realities. Objective of Computer & IT study is to equip students with necessary knowledge and skills in the state-of -the- art technology. Studio/Lab work helps the students to acquire appropriate environment for integration, imagination and teamwork. Community Work is People orientation and helps sensitizing students towards Public Perception. Planning Projects aim at integrating knowledge with analytical, design and communication skills and explore real world situations. Non GPA is helpful in Total Personality Development and to produce Graduates with Positive Thinking, & Socializing Skills.

Handouts and reading materials are provided in advance or at least at the beginning of the session. All the students have unlimited access to internet facilities in the computer center of the department. The faculty has a separate reading room with some collection of dissertations, etc. The collection in the main library is adequate. The library orientation programme is also conducted at the very beginning. Computer lab in the library is congestive as there are only 64 computers allocated to the entire student's use.

The DTCP has provided personal computers to all staff members with the internet connection. No restrictions for surfing internet for staff as well as students. Hence, this a mammoth chance to learning and teaching. The Spatial Information and Remote Sensing Laboratory of the Department is equipped with latest updates of spatial information technology. Students have access to networked computers and print facilities at the laboratory. Departmental computer lab comprises 50 desktop computers for students' use. Current state of the software availability at the department computer lab is fairly satisfactory. However some of the most needed software (i.e. Auto Cad, Sketch up) are not taught.

The supportive staff consists of two trained technical officers, a clerk, a lab assistant and two office assistants. They are also happy with the prevailing environment in the department and support the academic administration of the department. The supportive staff is encouraged continuously to undertake further studies. A person joined the department as a laborer at the computer lab has been promoted to a Technical Assistant, after completing relevant training.

The lectures are conducted by the senior academic staff of the department and visiting lecturers. However, extra attention is provided as and when necessary for students by temporary staff members under the guidance of the lecturer-in-charge. 2/3 of the teaching staff is not fully trained; however they are guided by the senior staff. The team is pleased

with the friendly teaching and learning environment maintained in class rooms. The teaching and learning environment is conducive. The review team observed that the students are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Both academic and non-academic staff displayed a high level of commitment.

### **Assessment Methods**

The Department uses established assessment procedures throughout all undergraduate and coursework programs as indicated below.

The B.Sc program confirms to the university modular teaching structure. Each student must earn 150 credits by successful completion of written exams, tutorials, assignments, studio works, group projects and individual research project in the final semester. 150 credits seems to be above the norm, however it is justifiable for the nature of this programme.

The academic calendar of the course consists of eight academic semesters, each 15 weeks in duration. Each module is assigned a credit value representing the student's workload. For a lecture module extending over one semester, one credit shall be assigned for each hour of fifteen academic lectures per week. For a Studio Work, Field Work and Lab Work extending over one semester, one credit shall be assigned for three hours of studio, field, and lab work per week respectively.

The assessment method encompass various assessment methods such as lecture based modules, studio works, field works, group projects, presentations and individually supervised research project at the end semester of the course

The student performance has been evaluated in the following manner.

Every student should comply with 80% attendance in any module to become eligible to sit for the Assessment Examination of each module.

All Lecture-based (L) modules will have a Set-Paper Examination. Each seminar module will be assessed on the basis of a presentation in the prescribed manner.

All Studio Work (St.) and Laboratory work (Lab) modules will respectively have a prescribed number of assignments in a Portfolio for Assessment.

Each Field Work (FW) module will be assessed on a report. Students' participation is compulsory to earn marks for field works.

Each Group Project Work (PW) will be assessed for every individual student in the Group, on the basis of a Presentation in the prescribed manner in front of a panel of examiners.

Individual Supervised Research project (ISRP) will be assessed on the report completed on an approved topic consisting of 5,000 words which may additionally be required to be presented at a viva-voce examination. A Common format is given to all examiners to maintain the consistency among evaluators.

To earn the credits relevant to a particular module, student is required to obtain a minimum of Grade "C".

The performance of each student in each module will be evaluated by continuous assessment during the studio works and computer based lab works and end – of - semester examinations. The continuous assessment of a Student will be based on a prescribed combination involving seminars, Tutorial, Laboratory Work, Studio Work, presentations and assignments, as prescribed in the By-Law.

The performance of student in each Lecture-based Module will be by holding a set-paper examination on completion of the course of study of the respective Module.

The highest academic rating obtainable at a repeat attempt is that of Pass; except where an Academic concession has been granted.

A Board of Examiners appointed by the Senate, will comprise the Examiners. Moderators of all the Modules will meet at the end of each Semester to decide on the performance and academic rating of each student registered for that Semester.

According to the existing evaluation method, students are evaluated at two levels: a final exam and continues assessments. Although there is no unique form for continues assessments, generally 80 percent is allocated for the final exam and 20 percent for continues assessments.

Final exam is a formal examination of three hours length. Final exams are conducted by the exams branch of the university in a fixed time period.

All question papers are moderated by an expertise while the special degree answer scripts are evaluated by two examiners to enhance the quality and transferability. However, preparation of a marking scheme is not a general practice.

Student observation procedure (to see exam papers), a kind of appealing system is a good practice

***In relation to the teaching, learning and assessment methods the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

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

In order to be eligible for admission to a course of study leading to a B.Sc. Degree in Town & Country Planning offered by the Department of Town & Country Planning, University of Moratuwa, a candidate should have passed at least two of the following subjects;

Accounting	Chemistry	Higher Mathematics
Agriculture Science	Combined Mathematics	Logic & Science Methods
Biology	Economics	Physics
Business Studies	Elements of Political Science	
Business Statistics	Geography	

and the other subject from languages and humanities streams.

In addition, the candidates should have obtained at least *Credit Passes (C)* in *English* and mathematics at *G.C.E. (O/L) Examination*.

It is evident that Students are enrolled from all the disciplines such as Arts, Commerce, Mathematics, Physical sciences and humanities; and selected by UGC based on the Z score. It is observed that very high Z score is considered to enter this degree programme reflecting quality of the students at the entry point is high.

In order to encourage the performance, the students are given the Dean's List award for academic excellence or superior academic performance in each semester. The number of

awards is unlimited and the students who obtain Semester Grade point Average of more than 3.7 out of total 4.2 are eligible for this award.

Table 1  
Academic Standing 2002 – 2004

Academic Standing	2002/2003 (A)	2003/2004
First Class	11	09
Second Class Upper Division	23	18
Second Class Lower Division	15	16
Pass	01	04

The Table no. 1 is a clear indication of a successful programme resulting from good teaching systems students' performance. Inauguration batch of 2003/2004 was a successful batch which has recorded 11 first classes and 23 second class upper division passes. The following year students recorded 9 First Classes. Overall results show that over 90 percent of the students have received awards. The waiting time for employment is low indicating 3-6 months. 45% of the graduates were successfully absorbed by the key government town planning agencies and more than 90% of the graduates are employed. In addition to the public sector institutions they have also spread within the fields of Consultancy, NGO's, and Private sector companies which involves a high degree of practical knowledge in implementation of development projects. Also after graduation 6% is already engaged in following higher studies in various related fields and 2% of the graduates have been able to find foreign employment as well.

Of those who have left the course after enrolment, majority were due to changing the degree programme, 4 for employment. 6 students have left the course in Year 2005/2006 which records the highest number an increase of one student compared with the previous year.

The department developed Accreditation & Links k between foreign universities to exchange their students and the staff. Associate Membership=BSc (T&CP) + 2 Years Planning experience is awarded by the Institute of Town Planners Sri Lanka. Student Exchange Programme & Internship opportunities are established with the Planners' Institute of Australia. The some staff members presented joint papers with students for conferences. The study team observed that students are very forward and expressing their ideas nicely.

***In relation to the quality of students, student progress and achievements the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

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

A standard questionnaire was developed and distributed among students to obtain the feedback and results have been summarised. However there is no formula to analyse and evaluate the teacher.

When the final year student's batches complete the degree program, there has been a meeting session with all the staff members to get feedbacks from the students. Accordingly the

students consider each and every module that they had undergone and make small presentation on the same. This includes: Whether the major projects helped the students in problem solving and expected planning skills required at the particular academic year; Whether there was appropriate guidance from the staffs and tutors for a good planning process; Whether the assessment method was reasonable to judge the planning process and the final product; Whether the students had been given good guidance in the use of technology to do spatial planning; and Whether the assessment practices by the visiting staff were fair and further inspired the students; Whether the modules and its contents are overlapping; and Whether the lecturers have conducted the lectures according to the learning outcomes guide book and they used appropriate teaching methods.

In addition to that students also provide feedback at an informal level to the head of the department and to individual staff members. These are usually dealt with at the individual member level. It is observed that the students' feedback is integrated into the curriculum review at-large.

Monthly faculty board meeting is another forum where student's grievances are heard. Student representatives are elected to participate in the faculty board meetings which are chaired by the Dean of the faculty with the participation of all faculty members. Students' issues are a regular part of the agenda of each meeting.

*In relation to the extent and use of student feedback the judgment of the team is GOOD.*

#### **4.5. Postgraduate Studies**

The Department of Town & Country Planning of the University of Moratuwa is the only Academic Body in Sri Lanka that offers Post Graduate Level courses in Town & Country Planning. Department was established in 1972 and it had been conducting both Postgraduate Diploma and Masters Degree courses. The Duration of the Course to complete the Postgraduate Diploma may vary from 03 Semesters (minimum) to 06 Semesters (maximum). At the end of the successful completion of the course requirements to complete Post Graduate Diploma, candidates will have a choice either to obtain the Postgraduate Diploma or to convert Candidature for the Master of Science Degree. Those students who successfully complete the Postgraduate Diploma will be able to register for Masters Degree programme, and may obtain the Degree by completing the course requirements within an additional period, vary from 01 Semester (minimum) to 04 Semesters (maximum). Most Lectures and Tutorials will be conducted on Fridays and Saturdays, and the other modules, including three Main Projects, will be carried out as intense-full time course modules over 6 weeks (Two week at the middle of the semester and Four weeks towards the end of the semester), before examination.

The admission to postgraduate programs is always performed by the University Senate on the recommendation of the Faculty Board and relevant academic department, where; Calling of applications is done by the academic department, through the University for already approved programs of study, Candidates are selected by an interview according to the eligibility requirements stipulated in the relevant bylaws. The selection results are then submitted to the University Senate through the Faculty Board for ratification after careful study by the Higher Degrees Committee.

The Review team observed that a good mixture of students have been selected (from various disciplines) that provides the environment for development of multidisciplinary nature of the programme. The programme is very flexible due to “Semester System”. Team work of the students is very strong (it appears that this is due to Semester System”). Students are encouraged to do more self studies (as the case for post graduate students). Students were eager to have more modules included in the course. The completion rate of applicants is high.

The academic staff members are involved in inter-institutional teaching as well. Most of the lectures are affiliated to various associations and professional bodies.

The Town & Country Planning Research Unit is facilitating the Research and Development within the Department. A few research projects are presently undertaken by the Research unit with the supervision of the Academic Staff of the Department.

The Department is equipped with capacities to undertake both research and development consultancies for outside agencies in the areas of Spatial Planning, Information Systems, Socio economic profiles, capacity Building, Computer Program development, etc. The Department has already started a few consultancy projects for both State Sector and Private Sector Agencies. These projects will be taken as opportunities for students to be exposed into different areas of planning and related activities in real world practices. All undertakings are subject to University Policies and guidelines.

The Department Level Presentations will be organized at the end of each academic year in which the Final Year Dissertation Candidates and their Supervisors will be presenting their work for Department level review.

The Department has hosted the APSA (Asian Planning Schools Association) conference in August 2007. This was taken as an opportunity for maximum number of students and staff members to participate and present their work, as well as to establish a network of contacts with international research personnel and organizations.

The Department has already started a few consultancy projects for both State Sector and Private Sector Agencies. These projects would be considered as opportunities for students to be exposed into different areas of planning and related activities in real world situations.

The Department is planning to recommence the ‘Development Planning Review’, which had been published by the Department until 1980’s. The Publication will be half yearly for first three years. This will provide an opportunity for the Members of the Academic Staff, Students, and outside scholars to publish their research work and working papers.

Library facilities and computer facilities for post graduate students are inadequate. Computer lab is not fully accessible to post graduate students. GIS, Remote Sensing and Urban Design Skills are not included in the course curricular, which considered to be a weakness. Number of lending books from the main library is not enough and there are no adequate text books in the department library. Lecture hours seem to be inadequate. Since the course is designed on semester basis, students have to be at their work places for four days and therefore always they are under severe pressure. Inadequate space is a key issue (Further the available space is not comfortable for making the output of the students more productive.).

Inadequate number of qualified academic staff members is a severe constraint in postgraduate teaching and supervision. The staff is encouraged to find overseas placements to do their postgraduates; however finding scholarships is rather difficult, according to the views of the junior staff. Although some of the staff members have contributed to research publications in local and international journals, paper presentations at international conferences, textbooks and other reading materials for local readership, the team is of view that most of the staff members have not disseminate their knowledge.

***In relation to the postgraduate studies with taken into consideration of research and publications the judgment of the team is SATISFACTORY.***

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

Sharing of information regarding teaching methods, student assessment, class participations etc., take place informally. This happens in two forms: (1) conducting departmental meetings regularly to converse teaching learning and assessment methods they use, (2) inviting peers to sit in the rear of the lecture; however evaluation forms are not given to fill up at the end of the lecture.

Apart from formal peer observation of teaching, academic staff members have the opportunity of monitoring standards of courses by moderating exam question papers and evaluating answer scripts in two stages called first marking and second marking. The later, however is limited as most of the lectures are juniors.

Apparently, peer observation is practiced to some extent in an informal way with mutual understanding. However, lack of a formal mechanism for peer observation and lack of follow up actions were noted by the review team. The review team is in view that establishing a formal mechanism for peer observation would further help to enhance the quality of teaching.

***In relation to peer observations the judgment of the review team is SATISFACTORY.***

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

The skill development is achieved (1) through the inclusion of separate compulsory modules in academic degree programmes (e.g. training in research methods, computer awareness etc.), and (2) through the incorporation of these skills in teaching, learning and assessment process.

Almost all the skills required for physical planners are adequately built in to the programme such as, IT, Team work, leadership, communication, presentations, negotiations, conducting effective field work, effective technical report writing, time management, working with community, English language proficiency and confidence development.

The department provides facilities for special degree students to acquire basic computer literacy with the help of computer unit in the department as well as the library computer unit. Special degree students are trained on analytical computer software for real world problem solving.

Programme is conducted in English as students come from all the disciplines and ethnic groups. This mixture provides students to communicate in English and enhance their English knowledge. However at the beginning students face some problems in English; however gradually they catch up and finally they are fluent in English.

Many young academicians used to include multimedia / viva voice presentations in particular course units as assignments and it helps to develop and enhance personal and communicative skills among students.

An independent dissertation is a compulsory part of the academic programmes for final year students. This component trains students on skills of scientific methodology of research. It is required to publish the findings of the final year research component in a refereed journals or present papers in conferences or seminars. Now some academic members are practicing this activity. Further, this enhances research skills not only for students but also for staff members.

The department organizes field trips for almost all the course modules. Students generally undertake field surveys with the help of academic members in these field trips. Consequently a report is prepared by using the survey results. Apart from that, students undertake field surveys for their final year independent dissertations.

Interpersonal skills such as communication skills, team work skills are imparted on students through group activities. In group activities members are given the opportunity to solve problems through brainstorming, discussing, learning and receiving and giving constructive feedback on self and peer as a group. Presentation/ communication skills are imparted on students by necessitating them to do presentations.

In self-directed learning skills, students are trained to determine what needs to be learnt, identification of learning resources and seeking information, critiquing learning resources and applying the synthesised knowledge to the problem at hand. The final year research could be given as a lucid example for this.

Although a large number of extracurricular activities are available in the university due to heavy work load, most of the students are compelled to ignore them. A limited number of students of the department have used them widely. Subject specific society in the department helps to improve their skills by organizing different activities such as publishing a magazine, guest lecturers, field trips, etc. Community related services make opportunities to improve, organize and develop leadership skills among undergraduates.

During the discussions held with the students as well as teaching sessions observed by the review team, the students were found to be quite confident and demonstrated good communication skills.

***In relation to the skills development the judgment of the team is GOOD.***

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

Academic guidance and counseling operate formally and informally at department, faculty and University levels.

At university level, formally designated student counselors who are available for both academic and personal guidance and counseling are appointed. The Senior Assistant Registrar for Student Welfare offers a counseling and advisory service to all students on request.

At faculty level Students' handbook provides information on the various degree programmes, entry requirements, Course structures, Examination regulations etc. A course unit office (CUO) provides information on academic programmes and its registration. In addition, the Dean and Head of Department give an introduction to the system, general information about the degree programmes, entry requirements, information on course structures and options etc. in the orientation programme organized for new entrants. Orientation programme organised by the library is an alternative informative procedure for new comers and is supported by the faculty staff members.

At the department level, students are encouraged to discuss their problems either academic or personal with academic staffs in particular Year Masters. A student counseling program has been initiated and continues to be in force in order to enhance students' welfare. Under this program, each student is allocated to a lecturer of the Department, who could be consulted at anytime to seek relief for any matter that could disturb the students, personally as well as academically. Hence, academic guidance and counseling is available for all students through Year Masters at individual year levels. Department wise students are informed by the courses, its structure and much other valuable information with regard to the academic courses monitored by the department by Year Coordinators, Student Mentors and course coordinators. At the beginning of the semester information of the objectives of the courses, week by week coverage of topics and relevant reference materials are given to students via the "Learning outcome". Senior students of the department are organised Annual Department Trip, Other Interactive Events, Cricket Tournament, Peduru Patiya, Fresher's Welcome, New Year and Christmas Celebrations, etc. that guides students to live with the real world. Academic staff are also encouraged to announce due dates for assignments well in advance to help students to plan their semester workload. Students are required to meet their allocated dissertation supervisors on a regular basis and it is also a kind of personal counseling. Students are encouraged to meet with head of the department and / or individual staff members at an informal level for academic guidance. All staff members generally make themselves available to students for this purpose. The review team realized that the student-academic staff – non academic staff relationship is very good.

***In relation to academic guidance and counseling the judgment of the team is 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	Good
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student Feedback	Good
Postgraduate Studies	Satisfactory
Peer Observation	Satisfactory
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.**

- The DTCP follows a systematic procedure in curricula design.
- Views of the students and industry are considered for reviewing the course, which is very good.
- New curricular is developed and is very comprehensive and all the required ingredients in spatial planning are included
- The course design is very good, that provides all the required fundamentals, up to semester three and applications, field works etc. after that.
- Credit system, GPA and Semester system were adopted.
- Independent Research Report is available for the undergraduates to follow in the final year which encourages the undergraduates to apply the theoretical knowledge to the real world.
- The ‘Learning Outcomes’ provides week by week breakdown of the curriculum.
- Programme is conducted in English Medium.
- Adequate field visits to give spatial orientation is commendable.
- The skills related to presentation, communication, team work are well integrated into the course design

#### **Weaknesses**

- Orientation for students to choose a specialized field of spatial planning at the final year (i.e. Urban Design, GIS, and Projects Management etc.) is not available. This needs to be considered particularly due to skills and talents of students for various specialized fields.
- Curriculum does not include industry training.

- Some of the most needed software (i.e. Auto Cad, Sketch up) are not taught.
- Some modules are overlapping (i.e. Basic Ecology, Flora and Fauna, plants and landscape, etc.)
- The total four year curriculum carries a weight of 150 credits. This appears to be too much and students are under pressure always.
- For Surveying and Leveling no lectures are conducted, only practical sessions are given.

*The judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"*

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

### **Strengths / Good practices**

- Medium of teaching is English
- Good learning environment is maintained as Inter-relationship between students and teachers are very high.
- Aims at student centered teaching. Self learning and learning by doing are prominent
- Modern teaching methods are used. Multimedia, handouts, white board, OHP, etc.
- Group activities enhance the English knowledge, presentation skill and sharing the facilities
- Practicing of second marking and moderation with other external academics
- 80% of attendances are strictly maintained.
- Student observation procedure (to see exam papers) is a good practice
- The services delivered by non academic staff in the department in supporting for the lectures/lab practical are very positive.
- Students are facilitated with Field Visits and Independent Research Report
- Maintaining a faculty reading room
- Maintaining a good departmental computer lab
- All the staff members are facilitated with a personal computer and a separate cubicle

### **Weaknesses**

- Poor with qualified and experienced staff. 2/3 of academics are juniors.
- Physical facilities such as class rooms, computers, reading materials, etc. restrict a comfortable teaching learning environment
- Assignments take 20% or 30% - Weight is not enough as heavy project work/practical is in practiced.
- E-learning is rarely practice.
- Non-availability of the most needed software (i.e. Auto Cad, Sketch up)
- Preparing marking schemes for question papers is not a usual habit

*Judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"*

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

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- The selection criteria for special degree programmes is very sound leading to social harmony.
- Dean's list award encourages students
- The opportunity of getting jobs just after completion of the degree programme.

- The degree of employability of the graduates seems high.
- Expression of ideas by undergraduates are very positive
- Failure rate is very low or nil and more than 90% of students are getting awards
- Accreditation and links with national and international organizations
- Subject union is functioning well

#### Weaknesses

- Dissemination of knowledge is not enough

*Judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"*

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

#### Strengths/ Good Practices

- A questionnaire is developed, distributed among students and results are summarised.
- The Head, the staff members and students meeting sessions support rapport development between undergraduates and lecturers in the department
- The undergraduates do participate in the faculty meetings and their voice is given due consideration.
- Students contribute to the development of the programme, i.e. syllabus revision

#### Weaknesses

- Students Evaluation sheets are not analysed therein feedback could not be incorporated.
- Students are not fully aware or ignorance the important information regarding their programme, i.e. number of credits to be achieved

*Judgment assigned to this aspect is "satisfactory"*

### **5. Postgraduate Studies**

#### Strengths / Good Practices

- Well recognized Post Graduate diploma programme leading to MSc is conducted.
- The senior members of the academic staff have had the opportunity to perform duties as teaching, supervising and coordinating the postgraduate programmes
- Good mixture of students (various disciplines) that provides the environment for development of multidisciplinary nature.
- Very flexible due to "Semester System"
- Team work is very strong (it appears that this is due to Semester System")
- post graduate students are encouraged to do more self studies
- Students were eager to have more modules included in the course
- Teacher student relationship is very good
- Very low failure rate

#### Weaknesses

- Computer lab is not accessible to post graduate students
- GIS, Remote sensing and urban design skills are not included in the course curricular
- Number of lending books from the main library is not enough and there is no adequate text books in the department library

- Lecture hours are not enough
- Since the course is designed on semester basis, students have to be at their work places for four days and therefore always they are under severe pressure.
- Inadequate space is a key issue. (Further the available space is not comfortable for making the output of the students efficient)
- The staff does not have enough scholarships for post graduate studies
- A few research projects, inadequacy of publications
- Lack of qualified internal academic staff

*Judgment assigned to this aspect is "satisfactory"*

## **6. Peer Observation**

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- Moderation and second marking system is in practice.
- Departmental meetings are regularly held.

### **Weaknesses**

- No formal peer observation system.
- Limited ground for sharing views of staff members.

*Judgment is "satisfactory" with regard to this aspect.*

## **7. Skills Development**

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- Almost all the skills required for physical planners are adequately built in to the programme such as, IT , Team work, leadership, communication, presentations, negotiations, conducting effective field work, effective technical report writing, time management, working with community, English language proficiency and confidence development.
- Availability of a large number of extracurricular activities. Some students of the department have used them widely.
- Programme is conducted in English Medium so that students can manage circumstances.
- Presentation skills are improved by individual and group presentations.
- Community related services make opportunities to improve, organize and develop leadership skills among undergraduates.

### **Weaknesses**

- No possibilities exist for specialization at the final year. (i.e. urban design, urban environmental management, projects management, GIS and remote sensing)
- Although a large number of extracurricular activities are available in the university due to heavy work load, most of the students are compelled to ignore them.
- Absence of industry training.
- Students subject union do not pave way adequately to disseminate their knowledge.
- IT and Computer learning facilities are inadequate.

*Judgment assigned to this aspect is "Good"*

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

### **Strengths / Good Practices**

- Orientation programmes conducted by the faculty and the library for fresh students gives familiar environment in the University.
- Making available the undergraduates, at the beginning of the Programme, a copy of the Faculty Prospectus which contains the details of the degree programmes conducted by the faculty and “Learning Outcomes” distributed among students by the Department.
- A student counseling programme is available in the university
- There are academic advisors, year coordinators, student mentors and year masters in the department. In each year there are 2-3 year masters appointed from lecturers and instructors to see student enrolments, Student registration, Hostel facilities, etc.
- Dissertation supervisors act as an academic counselor.

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of formal training for staff on the student counseling and guidance.

*Judgment assigned is 'Good' for this aspect*

## **6. ECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made by the Review Team for further improvement of the programme being offered by the Department of Town and Country Planning as the Review Team felt that they will be useful:

- Flexibility be introduced so as to provide choices for specialization, such as urban design, urban environmental management, projects management, remote sensing and GIS etc. so that students can choose specialized fields depending on their talents and liking. This will also provide much better job security.
- Lectures can be conducted for Surveying and Leveling
- Marking schemes can be provided to second examiners
- To improve the employability of the graduates of the department, it is advisable to incorporate practical training as a compulsory credit course unit
- The most needed licensed and updated computer software (i.e. Auto Cad, Sketch up) be used
- Incorporate feedback from the undergraduates in teaching as well as a formal mechanism for peer observation would help increasing the productivity of the department. Develop a formula to evaluate teacher.
- Steps should be taken to train junior staff.
- Create more opportunities for the staff to dissemination knowledge.
- The staff in the DTCP be given a formal training on Academic Guidance & Counseling.
- More English lecture hours for the first semester can be conducted.
- Lowering the workload of students to engaged in extracurricular activities.
- Physical facilities should be developed, i.e. class rooms, computers, reading materials transportation facilities for Field visits
- Varieties of non GPA modules, i.e. music, dancing, etc. can be introduced

## **7. ANNEXES**

### **Annex 1. AGENDA FOR THE REVIEW VISIT -**

#### **DAY 1- 25th February 2009 (Wednesday)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
08.00-9.00	Private Meeting of Review Panel with QAA Council Representatives
09.00-9.30	Discuss the Agenda for the Visit
09.30-10.30	Observing Other Facilities (Library, Computer Centre, Medical Centre etc.)
10.30-11.30	Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
11.30-12.00	Discussion
12.00-12.30	Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head, Faculty QA Cell
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.30	Observing Department Facilities
14.30-15.30	Meeting with Department Academic Staff
15.30-16.00	Tea
16.00-17.00	Meeting With Undergraduate Students
17.00-18.00	Brief Meeting with Reviewers

#### **DAY 2- 26th February 2009 (Thursday)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
09.00-09.30	Observing Teaching
09.30-10.00	Observing Teaching
10.00-11.15	Observing Documents
11.15-12.00	Meeting with Technical Staff and Other Non-Academic Staff
12.00-12.30	Meeting with Postgraduate Students
12.30-13.30	Lunch
13.30-14.30	Observing Students' Presentation
14.30-15.30	Observing Practical Class
15.30-16.30	Meeting with Final year students
16.30-17.30	Meeting of Reviewers

#### **DAY 3- 27th February 2009 (Friday)**

<b>Time</b>	<b>Program</b>
09.00-09.30	Observing Teaching (Practical Class)
09.30-10.00	Observing Teaching (Practical Class)
10.00-10.30	Meeting with Academic Advisors & Year Masters
10.30-11.00	Reviewers Private Discussion
11.00-12.00	Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting
12.00-13.00	Lunch
13.00-15.00	Report Writings