

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT



***FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT AND
COMMERCE***

SOUTH UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

16th to 18th June 2008

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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. 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 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 Management Studies of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka submitted a self evaluation report consisting of ten sections, namely: aims, learning outcomes and programme details; students, staff, and facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; quality of students, student progress, and achievements; student feedback; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skills development of management graduates; and academic guidance and counseling. The quality of education was reviewed according to the aims and learning outcomes given in the self evaluation report.

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. 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 16th - 18th June, 2008. 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, Head of Department, academic staff, non-academic staff, Senior Assistant Librarian of the main Library, three student counselors of the Department, the proctor, undergraduates representing first, second, third and fourth years.
- Observation of physical facilities of the Department, IRQUE funded computer lab, Faculty's MIS lab, library and class rooms.
- Observation of teaching classes of undergraduates and students' presentations.
- 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, FACULTY AND THE DEPARTMENT

The South Eastern University of Sri Lanka has a historical record of two phases. Originally, it was ceremonially inaugurated as the South Eastern College on 23-10-1995. Then it was elevated to a National University and renamed as the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka

with effect from 15 May 1996. In May 1998, this university was geographically shifted from Addalaichenai to Oluvil site.

The university consists of four Faculties; namely, Management & Commerce, Arts & Culture, Applied Sciences, and Islamic Studies and Arabic. The University has student population of about 1298.

Vision of the University

To be a Centre of Excellence for creation, enhancement and dissemination of knowledge of national relevance and international recognition and to achieve social harmony among communities.

Mission Statement of the University

To develop high caliber personnel of analytical and inquiring mind, leadership qualities, high ethical and moral values with ability to face challenges, in a changing environment addressing regional and national needs living harmoniously among diverse groups of people, in a conducive physical environment for creation and dissemination of knowledge, facilitating social interaction between the University and the community and achieve international repute with the support of committed and competent staff

The Faculty of Management and Commerce (FMC) started its academic with four academic staff and thirty one students of whom nineteen were admitted to commerce stream and twelve were admitted to management stream with an objective of offering degrees in Business Administration and Commerce. Additionally, in view of the demands of the graduate services in the field of Marketing and Accounting & Finance, the faculty recognized the necessity of offering special degrees in Marketing and Accounting & Finance. As a result the special degree programs in Marketing and Accountancy were started in 1999 and offered for the final year students. They trained at Academic Program Centre (APC) in Colombo and were given professional training in their special fields at private and public organizations. Later the Faculty introduced specialization of academic programs and changed its policy to admit students for specialization programmes.

The Faculty of Management and Commerce comprises two departments namely; Management Studies and Accountancy and Finance. The year 2002 marked as a turning point in the history of the Faculty. It finalized a plan for restructuring which had been working since 1995. The restructuring plan resulted in the formation of six academic units which function under the above two departments offering six undergraduate degree programmes. These units are organized as service units. A service unit is identified as a specific functional area of business whose staff members are solely from that specific area of expertise. They offer courses solely from their own area of expertise for all the degree programs of the Faculty of Management and Commerce. Each unit will serve the needs of all the degree programs. The Faculty is intended to convert these units into academic departments in the future. The Faculty has a link program on exchanging of services of expertise frequently with the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura.

The Department of Management was started with two permanent staff members at the same time when the Faculty started. At the beginning only the BBA degree program was offered, however now the Department offers three degrees namely; BBA in Marketing, BBA in HRM,

and BBA. The Department of Management has established four services units under its purview. They are: Marketing management unit, HRM unit, Business economics unit and management unit. The entire Department is headed by the head of department while the three units namely, marketing, HRM and business economics are coordinated by unit coordinators of the department. The duration of each degree is four years in which first two years are common to all the students in the faculty. Students are admitted to specialization programs at the end of second year based on their choice.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1. Aims

The strategic intention of the Management Department is to be a key contributor for the development of the country through creating and disseminating scientific knowledge and providing competent human resources for the fields of business Management, Marketing Management, and Human Resources Management etc. To reach this broader aim, the department specifically intends to,

- 3.1.1 Transmit scientific knowledge to the undergraduates enabling them to serve in the fields of business Management, Marketing Management, and Human Resources Management as potential graduates.
- 3.1.2 Offer a range of learning opportunities within the modular teaching structure of the department and the Faculty thereby to develop necessary skills to work in challenging environments
- 3.1.3 Provide a friendly and supportive and responsive learning environment which encourage students to work towards higher achievements of individual learning objectives
- 3.1.4 Ensure a conducive environment for students to develop positive attitudes that help them to employ their potentials socially, friendly manner with the help of acquired broader knowledge and skills during their studies and after the graduation
- 3.1.5 Enhance the professional orientation of undergraduates via having links with professional bodies in the fields of business management etc so as to meet the necessary requirement of the industry
- 3.1.6 Encourage research in undergraduate and postgraduate levels in national and international context in related fields.
- 3.1.7 Support the academic and other supportive staff in their carrier development including provision of feedback and peer advice
- 3.1.8 Have periodic revisions of teaching, learning and evaluation and so on with the view to be in the line with the changing environment

3.2. Learning Outcomes

- 3.2.1 Wider knowledge and conceptual understanding of areas of Business Management, Marketing Management, and Human Resources Management
- 3.2.2 Qualified to commence professional practice in Business Management, Marketing Management and Human Resources Management etc
- 3.2.3 Ability to perceive the behaviour of the real business environment of different industry and its consequences on the national economy

- 3.2.4 Learnt the way of searching new knowledge through research
- 3.2.5 Technical and intellectual skills to gather data/information and critically analyze the character and behaviour of marketers and factors determining the value of different business.
- 3.2.6 Developed a range of transferable skills, which are useful in decision making with regard to firm's resource matters such as handling data and interpretation, computer literacy, information management, teamwork, oral and written presentation/communication etc.
- 3.2.7 Built self-confidence for independence, self-motivation for life-long-learning in the field and go for postgraduate studies

To help to achieve the outcomes in 3.2, the programme offers a learning experience that is intended to enable students to:

- Explore their academic qualifications and potentials at entry by gradually developing knowledge, skills and understanding, based on a broad and multi-disciplinary approach
- Study a choice of subjects within the faculty in a flexible environment but with in a coherent academic framework allowing students to widen as well as intensify their education.
- Conduct an independent research in the final year from the wide range of subjects offered by the department and on the current issues related to the industry.
- Participate in an out door practical component to enhance the knowledge related to experience in the field.
- Nurture the competence of professional report writing
- Cover a convenient and affordable work load within the university guidelines.
- Have clear understanding on the programme objectives, content academic requirements and assessment methods.
- Obtain fair and appropriate assessment for succession and grading and feedback on individual progress.
- Have access to adequate academic support and resources within the university and department.
- Interrelate with staff that are qualified both academic and professional, as well as committed to teaching with in a research culture

Achievements of undergraduates at each level under the degree program

- 1st and 2nd year of the degree program provides an opportunity to obtain the background knowledge of the supportive subjects through the common program offered by the Faculty of Management Studies & Commerce.
- Year 3 provides an opportunity to obtain knowledge in specialization areas about theoretical and technical skills of the degree programme.
- Year 4 enhances the research work with specialization subjects leads to academic and professional competence.

Summary of the Degree Programme

The initial key objective of establishing the different management degree program is to produce professional managers for the Government Departments and marketing managers/experts for other developments has been further emphasized and widened up to now along with the development of the country. This is proven by the employment profile of the passed out management graduates.

The program offered by the department is the B.B.A. in Marketing Management and Human Resources Management (special) & BBA degree. This is a four year fulltime programme conducted in Both Tamil and English medium. Current annual intake is around 55 students, who are directly sent by the UGC having selected based on their preference and A/L performance.

The curriculum of the degree program has been designed to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical exposure. Students are required to follow 24 subjects offered by the department during the first and second year as a common program to acquire basic competency required for the core subject areas of the degree program. During the next two years, students have to follow the rest of the subjects offered by the specialized units in the department with respective specialization area, which are specialized for the degree program.

An important feature of the program is the Independent Research Report, which is a compulsory module for all participants. In addition, students have to complete practical sessions, training programs, field trips, and preparation of reports.

The vitality of the role of computer and information technology in all disciplines has been duly recognized in designing the course curriculum. Therefore, computer literacy and basic application, Management Information System and Computerized Accounting System subjects has been integrated with the subjects such as Marketing Management, Business Management and HRM.

This degree program is a blend of academic and professional competence. The degree has an affiliation with professional institutions in Sri Lanka to getting experiences. Therefore, undergraduates have to maintain closer relationship with these institutes while they are getting real experiences.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

Based on the observations made during the study visit by the review team, the eight aspects were judged as follows:

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Presently three undergraduate degree programs in three different specialization areas are being offered by the Department. In curriculum development and revision, the department complies with the following guidelines and strategies.

- Maintain the magnitude of core subjects in higher level and increase if possible
- Add new subjects or topics to intensify the effectiveness of the core subject
- Change the subject name so that to cover wider areas
- Reduce overlaps among different subjects
- Incorporate more practical components

- Convert the specialization program in medium of instruction into English
- Add relevant computer applications.
- Inquire similar programs in other countries through experience of the staff, internet etc.
- Train of staff with relevant areas.
- Arrange guest lectures, field visits, report writing, individual presentation, etc to input additional knowledge
- Consult other universities with similar programs

The courses offered by the Department for the core programme is designed in such a way to provide both basic theoretical and practical understanding of Management for all the students who follow the degree in BBA. At the end of the core programme, students who select Management as their area of specialization will follow advanced courses in Marketing, Human Resource Management and Bachelor of Business Administration offered by the Department.

In the first two years, courses are conducted in both Tamil and English languages. However, all the specialization programs are conducted only in English medium. To support students learning, several credit courses in English are being offered in the first two years with the support of the ELTU. Information Technology and Basic Science are being offered by the Faculty. The introduction of basis science course can be seen as a positive step taken by the department to provide scientific knowledge and it was appreciated by the student community.

Changes to curricula have been introduced three times during the period 1998-2004 by the department. The links established with other universities to exchange information on degree programs and curricula development can be considered as a positive step taken by the department to maintain relevance of the degree programs.

However, the review team noticed that when developing curricula the Department has not adequately considered views of the passed out graduates and employers. It was also noticed that the learning outcome of the overall degree program, learning outcome of individual courses and assessment methods are not related to one another. The faculty has taken initiatives to establish a curriculum review committee at the faculty level about two years ago however it has not been regularized properly. It was also noticed that a university wide quality assurance mechanism to continuously guide, monitor and ensure quality of faculties and departments has not been established. The total number of credits to be earned by a student is 132 which are higher than the standard requirements of a degree. The team noticed that the credits assigned for the independent study are also high. The training offered by the department has to be formalized and included it as part of the curricula with some credits.

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

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods.

The objective of the course, learning outcome, detailed syllabi and the assessment methods are given to students through course manuals and the faculty handbook. The department communicates these by providing the FMC handbook to all students; arranging special lectures and sessions during the orientation of the first year students; explaining learning

objectives of subjects and their relationships to the overall learning outcome of the degree program at the first day of each lecture.

A range of teaching methods are presently being used by the Department staff. They include: lectures and tutorials, group and individual assignments, and presentations, field visits, guest lectures, independent research. The review team observed some students presentations and role plays. However, it seemed that few students were participating in all the presentations and roll plays with little participation of lectures.

During the second semester of the final year students are required to complete a research study in a chosen area under the supervision of internal and external staff members. This provides an opportunity for students to develop their self-confidence and critical thinking.

The lectures are conducted by the senior and junior academic staff of the Department. It obtains service from visiting staff mainly in the universities of Jayewardenepura, Colombo and Eastern.

The Department has 15 academic members; 5 senior lectures, 3 lectures, and 7 probationary lectures. The Dean of the Faculty is a senior lecturer grade 1 and member of the Department. All the senior lectures and lectures have obtained their Master level qualifications in Management related disciplines from the recognized universities. Three members have been registered for PhD programs (one in Malaysia and two in Sri Lanka).

The supportive staff consists of a clerk and two office assistants. They are also happy with the prevailing environment in the department and support the academic administration of the department.

The department is equipped with modem teaching aids such as OHP, whiteboard and multimedia. Handouts, lecture summaries, course manuals. Multimedia demonstrations are used in most of the situations. However there is a shortage of multimedia projectors to meet the demand. All the students have unlimited access to internet facilities in two computer centers equipped with 40 computers in each in the Faculty. The library has access to several hundreds of e-Journals and rich with required text books of about 78000 collection, some Journals and good collection of CD ROMs. The Library has equipped with 25 computers for staff and student use.

The teaching and learning environment is favorable. The review team observed that the students are highly motivated and enthusiastic. Both academic and non-academic staff members displayed a commitment to maintain good teaching and learning environment. Both summative and formative assessment methods are being used. Examination papers are set by the academic staff individually and are moderated and doubled marked by external examiners to ensure that questions are clear to the students and the syllabus is adequately covered and marking is done correctly.

Though students are motivated and keen to learn, participation of lecturers in teaching in class rooms with student interaction was not visibly seen. The lack of staff involvement in research and student involvement in staff research was not evidenced in observations. It also viewed that the amount of work carried out by students under continuous assessments was not adequately compensated by marks.

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

4.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

The UGC directly admits students to the Department. 99% of the student population represents Muslim community. Few Tamil students are studying however, there is no single Sinhalese studying in the Department. This is common in other departments too. At present, the student intake into the specialization programme is largely based on their choice. Throughout the program, various measures have been taken to ensure students' progress to achieve expected learning outcome of the programme though they are not very clear. The feedback information (see section below) provides a coherent opportunity for monitoring and evaluating students' learning outcomes, teachers, and student performance and makes corrective actions if intended learning outcomes are not achieved by students. Other measures include monitoring performance through continuous assessments, advising and counseling of weaker students etc. 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 English.

The final results of the last five years indicate a high proportion of students obtaining classes with very low level failure rate. Most of the graduates of the Department have been able to secure employment opportunities both in the private and public sector organizations within one to two months after their graduation.

*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

The team observed that both formal and informal feedback is obtained to improve teaching and leaning environment. The formal teacher evaluations are obtained by the Assistant Registrar of the faculty on the last date of lectures through a questionnaire, however this process has to be further formalized with the intervention by the head of department to serve the purpose of feed-back effectively.

Based on the student comments received informally during the course of lectures, improvements are made to the course materials and overall teaching style of the courses if necessary.

The discussions with staff members and students revealed that the feedback has been effectively used by the lecturers in improving their teaching capabilities. This was evidenced in the existence of a close rapport with students by the staff and available documents in the department.

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

4.5. Postgraduate Studies

At present there is no post graduate program in the department or in the faculty. Hence there is no opportunity for academic staff to involve in postgraduate teaching and research work. Additionally, lecturers are not involved in postgraduate teaching and supervision elsewhere. This can be considered as a major drawback of academic progress and quality of academic

programs. Recent initiatives to commence an MBA degree are a commendable step taken by the Department to strength postgraduate education in the future.

*In relation to the postgraduate studies the judgment of the team is **Unsatisfactory***

4.6. Peer Observations

Peer observation is practiced formally in the Department. The tutorials conducted by temporary assistant lecturers and probationary lecturers have been observed by the senior academic staff and the Head of Department. The continuous guidance is provided to them on all aspects of teaching. Scrutiny meetings can be given as another example. Question papers set by course coordinators and senior lecturers are reviewed by peers in order to make sure that the syllabus is adequately covered and questions are clear to the students. It was found that moderation of examination papers and second marking also being practiced. However, the review team is in view that further formalization of peer observation would help to enhance the quality of teaching and learning environment.

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

4.7. Skills Development

The curricula are designed in a way to develop problem solving, leadership, teamwork, negotiating skills, technical, interpersonal, self-directed learning skills, communicative and critical thinking. Students are trained to gain efficient and effective problem solving skills by engaging in various individual assignments and group activities and case study analysis. The final year research project could be given as one of the best examples where students gain problem solving skills including analytical skills by carrying out independent research projects in which students are encouraged to identify research problems, determine the appropriate learning resources to address the research issues, refining learning issues based on new knowledge acquired through review of literature, determine the appropriate methodologies for carrying out field work to gather necessary data and relate the findings to the existing body of knowledge.

Opportunities are provided for students to develop various technical skills such as skills that are required to analyse data, and to carry out linear programming, econometric model building and simulations using computer software, through provision of class room instructions, demonstrations and hands on experience. Interpersonal skills such as communication skills, team work skills are imparted on students through group activities.

There is no subject specific society. The review team viewed that having a subject society helps to improve their skills by organizing different activities such as publishing a magazine, guest lecturers, excursions, etc. to enhance the students experiences.

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

4.8. Academic Guidance and Counselling.

The department has taken adequate measures to ensure effective academic guidance through formal and informal manner. Three members of the department have been appointed as student counselors and their commitment is commendable. During the research project period, the internal supervisors provide guidance for students. Sometimes students have

personal problems that could have an effect on their studies and, in such instances members of the academic staff do assist them. The student-staff relationship towards academic and other counseling activities is satisfactory. However formal training for these staff for counseling has not been given.

*In relation to academic guidance and counseling the judgment of the team is **Good**.*

5. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the observations made during the study visit by the review team, the eight aspects were judged as follows:

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment Given
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Satisfactory
Teaching Learning and Assessment Methods	Satisfactory
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative	Good
Postgraduate Studies	Unsatisfactory
Peer Observations	Good
Skills Development	Good
Academic Guidance and Counseling	Good

The overall judgment is suspended

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Curriculum Design, Content and Review

- Curriculum Review Committee should be formalized with the senate approval.
- University wide Quality Assurance unit has to be established for improving quality and relevance of all the degree programs of the university.
- Reduce the total number of credits for compulsory course units to meet with the standing committee standards
- Reduce 4 credit allocated for certain courses and include practical within 3 credit courses (hours remain same)
- Learning outcomes of the overall degree program should be matched with that of Learning Outcomes of subjects and assessment methods.
- Redesign subject codes to reflect the year / semester / subject no / credits
- Introduce Industrial Placement Training program into the curriculum with appropriate number of credits.
- Change the name of research project into dissertation and Introduction to Career Guidance as “ Introduction to career Development”

- Introduce “Sinhalese” language course as a supplementary course during the first year.
- Introduce new subjects such as Disaster and Conflict management & inter disciplinary courses.

Teaching Learning and Assessment Methods

- Lectures should be conducted with a wider participation of students.
- Learning process should be facilitated with appropriate audio visuals such as multimedia.
- Lecturers should be encouraged to follow higher degrees such as PhDs.
- Specified short term training for lecturers are recommended to improve their teaching, learning, assessments, etc.
- Continuous assessment system should be made systematic and give more weights (30-40% of total marks).
- Appoint a subject coordinator for management unit to run the unit smoothly.

Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

- Encourage students to form subject related societies which provide them opportunities to improve their self confidence, organizing skills, leadership skills etc.

Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Results of feed back should be conveyed to lecturer in writing and these activities have to be coordinated by the head of department.

Postgraduate Studies

- An appropriate amount of research funds should be provided competitively to enhance the research skills.
- Use of students in staff research has to be explored more.
- Initiate a postgraduate program with the assistance of other universities.
- Explore opportunities for exchange programs with foreign universities.

Peer Observation

- The currently adopted format should be changed to serve the real purpose of peer observation and it may be liberalized to select qualified peers.

Skills Development

- The industrial placement should be formalized with the staff and industry participation.
- Provide opportunities for dissemination of outcome of student research in research sessions.
- Skill development should be identified at the course unit level and necessary events and strategies have to be pre-designed to give such experiences to all the students in the delivery of that session.
- Provide opportunities to learn in real-life settings in the area as much as possible.

Academic Guidance and Counseling

- Motivate staff to involve in counseling by provision of training and facilities.