

SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

**DEPARTMENT OF
BUSINESS MANAGEMENT**



**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES
SABARAGAMUWA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

29th to 31st August, 2005

Review Team :

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1. Subject Review Process

Subject review evaluates the quality of education within a specific subject or discipline. This review evaluates the quality of education within the specific discipline of Business Management offered by the Department of Business Management of Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. It focused on the student learning experience given by the Department and on its student achievement. The quality of three study programs being offered by the department of Business Management was evaluated under the review.

In accordance with the guidelines given in the Quality Assurance Handbook for Sri Lankan Universities published by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors & Directors and University Grants Commission, July 2002, the Department of Business Management that offers three degrees under the main discipline of Business Management submitted a self-evaluation report. The self-evaluation report consisted of eleven sections, i.e., aims, learning outcomes and program details; students, staff and facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; the quality of students including recruitment/admission students' progress and achievement; the extent and use of student feedback; external education programs and research; peer observation; skill development; academic guidance and counseling and conclusion. The quality of education within the discipline was evaluated in the light of the aims and learning outcomes given in the self-evaluation report submitted.

The review focused on the following eight aspects of education:

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

The evaluation of the above eight aspects of education of the Department was done by using the information obtained from the following sources:

1. The self-evaluation report submitted by the Department
2. Meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Dean, Head of the Department, academic members, non-academic members, and undergraduate students
3. Observation of teaching
4. Observation of all the relevant documents (question papers, answer scripts, marks sheets, evaluation sheets etc.)
5. Observation of the Department and other facilities (library, computer center, lecture rooms etc.)

Each subject review aspect of education was judged by making one of the three standards/levels namely, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. For the purpose, strengths, good practices and weaknesses in relation to the each aspect were considered. An overall judgment was made from the three options, i.e., confidence, limited confidence and no

confidence by taking into account the states of the judgments given for all the eight aspects of education.

The dates the review team visited were 4th, 5th and 6th September 2005. The agenda of the subject review is annexed.

2. Brief History of the University and the Department

Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka was commenced as an affiliated university in 1992 and it was transformed to a full-fledged university in 1996. Belihuloya, where the university is located is an important landmark. Currently the university has 5 faculties, i.e., Faculty of Agricultural Science, Faculty of Social Science and Languages, Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, Faculty of Management Studies and Faculty of Geometry.

At the outset there was no separate faculty for Management Studies and the unit offered a two-year diploma in Tourism Management. In 1996 Faculty of Management Studies was established and it stated its programs of study offering a three-year degree in September 1996. After the completion of the foundation year and two specialization years, a degree in Bachelor of Science could be obtained in Business Management, Tourism Management, Financial Management or Marketing Management. Students from six batches obtained their B.Sc. Business Studies Degrees in Tourism Management, Business Management, Financial Management and Marketing Management and passed out in the years 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002.

The name of the Faculty (Faculty of Business Studies) was changed as the faculty of Management Studies with the approval of the University Grants Commission in 2003. Concurrently, the duration of the Degree programs was changed from three years to four years with the UGC approval in 2003. Currently the Faculty offers four Degree programs, i.e., BSc Business Management (Special), BSc Tourism Management (Special), BSc Financial Management (Special) and BSc Marketing Management (Special). The Faculty has a two-year common program for all the students and then students can either specialize in one of the three areas, i.e., Tourism Management, Financial Management and Marketing Management or generalize in Business Management.

The Department under the subject review is the Department of Business Management that offers three degree programs which are as follows:

1. B.Sc. Business Management (Special)
2. B.Sc. Marketing Management (Special)
3. B.Sc. Tourism Management (Special)

The Degree of Business Management is a generalized degree while other two degrees are specialized degrees in the discipline of Management Studies. The term 'Special' within brackets in the degree title indicates the four years degree not three years degree. Each degree program requires students to complete 35 courses and practical training or independent research report. All the students under the Faculty are required to complete a common program the duration of which is two years and the number of common courses is 20.

The Department has 91 students reading for the three programs in the third year. There are 86 students in the fourth year who have already completed four months practical training in the final year. It serves 297 students under the common program in the academic year 2003/2004. All the students have been provided with hostel facilities. 50 computers are available for students in the Computer Center of the Faculty with Internet facilities. The center has been facilitated with printing equipment. There are 12 academic members attached to the Department. It has two non-academic members.

3. The Aims and Learning Outcomes provided by the Department

Department of Business Management was established in 1996 offering 3-year degree program in the field. Considering the demand, job market requirement and the employability of graduates the four-year special degree programs in Business Management, Tourism Management and Marketing Management were introduced in 2003. At present, the Department of Business Management offers the following undergraduate programs:

- 1) B.Sc. Business Management (Special) Degree**
- 2) B.Sc. Tourism Management (Special) Degree**
- 3) B.Sc. Marketing Management (Special) Degree**

The primary aims and objectives of these Management Degree programs are to provide a broad foundation in the relevant academic disciplines, more specifically:

- 1) To provide students with the knowledge of economic, social and cultural aspects of the Business environment to prepare them for the country's future needs of Business Management.
- 2) To encourage students to engage themselves in successful self-employment and employment by enhancing business management education to contribute to the economic growth of the country.

The specific aims of the three Degree programs are as follows:

1) B. Sc. Business Management (special) Degree Program

The specific aims are:

- To develop positive attitudes related to the study of organizations, their management and changing environment.
- To enhance employability of students by providing balance knowledge and support them to develop their career in business and management.
- To encourage lifelong learning skills, decision-making, analytical skills and personal development.
- To increase the capacity to explore and exploit the opportunities and potentials prevailing on the business environment.

2) B.Sc. Tourism Management (Special) Degree Program

The specific aims are:

- To provide an awareness of various approaches and perspectives of tourism management and the basic motivators and constraints which affect tourist consumer behaviour.

- To enhance knowledge of the nature, role, complexity and interdependence of organizations involved in the tourism industry.
- To develop self-confidence and maturity for independence thought and critical self-appraisal necessary for a successful career in tourism.

3) B. Sc. Marketing Management (Special) Degree Program

The specific aims are:

- To provide a comprehensive knowledge to develop career in marketing management.
- To develop research based approaches and to establish advanced knowledge in marketing.
- To establish viable links with professional and business world and contribute as marketing management professionals to contribute national development.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- 1) On successful completion of these degree programs the graduates are expected to have the competencies to acquire gainful employment in organizations as well as in self-employment.
- 2) The graduates would have acquired a broad knowledge of the current development in the respective disciplines.
- 3) They also need to have acquired the necessary skills to manage appropriate organizations in the areas of business, marketing and tourism management.
- 4) These graduates would also have developed positive attitudes for successful management of the respective activities and to ensure their progress and career development as well as those of the organizations for which they are responsible.
- 5) They will also be looking for new knowledge in their respective disciplines.

4. Overall Judgment

The Department commenced its study programs in mid of very limited physical and human resources and was able to make significant progress. The Department is the pioneer in Tourism Management in Sri Lankan University System. As per the observations made by the subject review team, judgment with regard to each aspect of the subject review is given below:

Curriculum design, content and review	Good
Teaching learning and assessment methods	Good
Quality of students including student progress and achievements	Good
The extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative	Good
Postgraduate studies	Unsatisfactory
Peer observation	Satisfactory
Skills development	Satisfactory
Academic guidance and counseling	Good

The reviewers clearly understood that recently a serious attempt has already made to conduct peer evaluation and the Department has a plan to commence a postgraduate program in Tourism Management. A new building complex exclusively for the Faculty is being built. Also the Department has developed a plan (the plan has already been submitted to the UGC for approval-29.08.2005) to establish a mini hotel for the Tourism Management Unit with objectives of introducing a Masters degree, facilitating the training requirements, developing a sustainable tourism industry in Belihuloya area, and increasing the relevance and quality of the graduates.

Overall Judgment - Suspended

5. Aspects of Education

Curriculum design, content and review

Strengths

1. As there are 35 courses and practical training/independent research for each of three special degree programs, the contents of the programs are generally adequate.
2. Nature of the courses is relevant to the respective fields of studies.
3. As there are 15 hours of lectures per week the students have been given with a reasonable workload and a sufficient time for studies.
4. There is sufficient flexibility and student choice because students are selected for the three specializations namely Business Management, Marketing Management and Tourism Management based on students' preferences and merit.
5. Students have been given an opportunity of following first two years common program that covers core courses, which will give a strong foundation on the field of Management.
6. Inclusion of a practical training or independent study report that provides an exposure to the real industry.
7. The programs are conducted in English Medium.
8. There are several courses to improve English and IT competencies of the students.
9. Students' requests and views of the industry were taken into account in designing the curricula.
10. The Department has practiced the semester system and course units since its commencement.

Weaknesses

1. Contents of some courses need to be revised. The courses are MS 112 Introduction to Principles of Management, MS 113 Financial Aspects of Business, MS 221 Internet & Network Technology, BM 311 Management Process, BM 312 Marketing Management, BM 313 Consumer Behavior, MM323 Corporate Policies & Practice, BM 321 Industrial Law and Industrial Relations and TM 413 Tourism analysis.
2. Exclusion of important courses namely Sociology & Psychology and E-marketing.
3. As far as the Marketing Specialization is concerned, the degree of concentration on Marketing Management could have been increased.

In view of the number of strengths and their impact on the improvement of quality and relevance, our judgment on this aspect is **‘Good’**.

Teaching, learning and assessment methods

Strengths

1. Methods of teaching, learning and assessment contribute to achieve learning outcomes.
2. Application of different teaching methods.
3. Adequate learning environment.
4. Generally, the degree of commitment of the academics is high.
5. Students are facilitated with field visits, guest lectures, and training.
6. Use of continuous assessments and unseen examinations is being practiced. Also it is essential for the student to get pass marks from the both.
7. The degree of rigor of evaluation of the student performance on the practical training is high as it involves practical training report (250 marks), record book (75 marks), external supervisor’s report (75 marks) and presentation (100 marks).
8. Interrelationship between students and teachers is good.

Weaknesses

1. Non-availability of course manuals prepared by the academics of the Department, specially for the foundation courses.
2. Non-availability of skills manuals with regard to the courses.
3. Inadequate instructors in English and Business Communication.

Judgment is **‘Good’** with regard to this aspect.

Quality of students, including student progress and achievement

Strengths

1. The admission to the academic programs of the Dept is relatively competitive.
2. Based on our limited observation during the review period, the attitudes and behavior are generally positive.
3. 80% of attendance is compulsory.
4. The degree of employability of the graduates is high. A considerable amount of students had the opportunity of getting jobs in the private sector just after completion of the practical training. E.g. 53 out of 130 trainees were employed by their training organizations.
5. Rate of program completion is very high (94%-97%).
6. There is a practice of recognizing the best academic performance through the gold metal award scheme for the best student of the degree program.

Weakness

1. There is no formal system to monitor the students’ progress to give feedback regularly. Major reasons for this are a rather large number of students enrolled and a limited number of staff members.

Judgment is **‘Good’** with regard to this aspect.

The extent and use of student feedback qualitative and quantitative

1. Several revisions of the curricula of the degrees offered by the Dept were done on the special requests of the students.
2. There is a structured questionnaire method of getting students' evaluation about the quality of the teaching.
3. There is a practice that student representatives participate in the Faculty board meetings.
4. Practice of open door policy that allows students to meet any academic and also the Dean and Heads to discuss their grievances.

Weaknesses

1. There is no student representation on departmental committees.

Judgment is '**Good**' with regard to this aspect.

Postgraduate studies

There are no opportunities for postgraduate studies offered by the Department. At the moment there is no attempt being taken to introduce a Master degree program due to very limited number of senior lecturers, and non-availability of PhD holders.

Judgment is '**Unsatisfactory**'.

Peer observation

There is a strong understanding among the academic members about the importance of peer observation as a powerful tool for improving the quality of teaching. By the time of the subject review, an attempt was made to develop a mechanism for peer observation. With regard to one academic another academic has done the observation and given the feedback. Several academics have tried on their own. However, there is no formal common mechanism being practiced.

Judgment is '**Satisfactory**' with regard to this aspect.

Skills development

Strengths

1. There is a strategy for skills development as part of the curriculum. Mainly the Department has introduced practical training, and continuous assessments for the development of skills relating to the technical aspects of the field of study.
2. Students have been given the opportunities to learn and practice computer skills and communication skills.
3. Students are given the opportunities to improve their presentation skills, report writing skills and analytical skills.
4. Medium of instruction is in English.
5. The students are given with the reading tasks designed for improving their skills in both reading for knowledge and reading for pleasure.

Weakness

1. Non-availability of skills modules for at least very important courses
2. No attempts have been taken to introduce courses or modules to develop soft skills and create very serious good character development.

Judgment is ‘**Satisfactory**’.

Academic guidance and counseling

Strengths

1. Provision of assigning 2-3 individual contact hours per week for offering academic guidance and counseling to students.
2. There is a serious one-month orientation program for fresh students focusing on academic guidance and counseling.
3. There is a detailed handbook of all the degree programs as degree guidance.
4. Each year 2-student counselors are appointed from the Department.
5. There is a satisfactory link between the students and the career guidance unit in the university.
6. A close and positive link exists between the faculty and the students by assuring the students a learning-friendly atmosphere.
7. There is a practice of appointing academic wardens from the Department and the Faculty for several years continuously.

Weaknesses

1. Non-availability of professionally trained counselors, specially for females.

Judgment is ‘**Good**’.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

‘Good’ judgment was given to six aspects of education evaluated, ‘Satisfactory’ was given to one aspect, and ‘Unsatisfactory’ was given to one aspect. Overall judgment of ‘Confidence’ was given unanimously to the quality of education within the discipline of the Department by the review team. Following recommendations are given by the review team to further improve the relevance and quality of the programs being offered by the Department:

1. Revise appropriately the contents of the courses namely *MS 112 Introduction to Principles of Management*, *MS 113 Financial Aspects of Business*, *MS 221 Internet & Network Technology*, *BM 311 Management Process*, *BM 312 Marketing Management*, *BM 313 Consumer Behavior*, *MM323 Corporate Policies & Practice*, *BM 321 Industrial Law and Industrial Relations* and *TM 413 Tourism analysis*. For instance include the following to the content of BM 321: Introduction to Labour Relations, Trade Unionism, Industrial Disputes, Workers' Participation, Collective Bargaining, Joint Consultation, Suggestion Schemes, Profit Sharing & Co-Partnership, International Labour Organization and Sri Lanka, Technology and Labour Relations.
2. Introduce a course namely Sociology & Psychology to the common program as it gives an understanding of Sri Lankan culture, families, and individuals, *inter alia*, to the students who are expected to be managers.
3. Introduce an equal weight to the Degrees of specializations of the three degrees being offered. At present, the percentage of the degree of specialization of the Tourism Management is 33.3 while the percentage of the degree of specialization of the Marketing Management is only 22.2. We recommend having a consistency.
4. Develop course manuals written by the academics of the Department (at least for the common program). If writing is hard for many academics, as a first step, we suggest to compile from suitable sources by adopting and/or adapting with due acknowledgement.
5. Establish a Departmental Advisory Committee consisting of relevant eminent professors and senior eminent industry professionals.
6. Develop skills manuals at least for very important specialised courses.
7. Appoint a right permanent academic for English and Business Communication.
8. Introduce a formal system to monitor the students' progress to give feedback regularly (At least annually if semi-annually is not practicable due to resource constraints).
9. Make arrangement to have student representation to some relevant departmental committees. For instance, committees for Social Harmony and Curriculum Development.
10. Formulate and implement a formal peer evaluation system. Special attention is to be drawn to policy, form and procedure.
11. Introduce a Postgraduate Diploma in Tourism Management with an objective of expanding it to Masters level at a later stage. In fact the Department has the advantage of being the pioneer in offering a Degree Program on Tourism Management in the State University System in Sri Lanka.
12. With regard to External Supervisor's Evaluation of the Practical Training, introduce 5-point scale instead of 4-point scale. Accordingly marks also need to be revised as follows:

Descriptive Standard	Marks
Excellent	10
Good	08
Satisfactory	06
Poor	04
Very Poor	02

13. Increase the duration of the practical training up to six months in future.
14. Make independent study report compulsory for each student when the Department has a sufficient number of academics with research experience.

Annexure

Agenda of the Subject Review

Day-04/09/2005

- 09.00 - 09.30 a.m. Welcome meeting with the VC, Dean and Head of Department
- 09.30 – 10.00 a.m. Discuss the Agenda of the Review
- 10.00 – 10.30 a.m. Tea Break
- 10.30 – 11.30 a.m. Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
- 11.30 – 12.30 a.m. Discussion
- 12.30 – 01.30 p.m. Lunch Break
- 01.30 – 02.30 p.m. Observation Department facilities
- 02.30 – 03.30 p.m. Observing Other Facilities (Library, Computer labs etc.)
- 03.30 – 04.30 p.m. Meeting with Department Academic Staff
- 04.30 – 05.30 p.m. Meeting with Students
- 05.30 – 06.00 p.m. Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day-05/09/2005

- 09.00 - 10.00 a.m. Observation of Teaching 1
- 10.00 – 11.30 a.m. Observation of Documents (Working Tea)
- 11.30 – 12.30 a.m. Meeting with Technical Staff and other Non-Academic Staff
- 12.30 – 01.30 p.m. Lunch Break
- 01.30 – 03.00 p.m. Observing Teaching 2
- 03.00 – 04.30 p.m. Visiting the Practical training Unit and Observation of Documents
- 04.30 – 05.30 p.m. Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day-06/09/2005

- 09.00 - 10.30 a.m. Meeting with Academic Members of the Faculty
- 10.30 – 11.00 a.m. Reviewers Private Discussion (Working Tea)
- 11.00 – 12.00 a.m. Academic Guidance and Counseling Core Aspect Meeting
- 12.00 – 01.00 p.m. Meeting with Head & Staff for Reporting
- 01.00 – 02.00 p.m. Lunch Break
- 02.00 – 05.30 p.m. Report Writing