



INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT

Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

27th Jan – 1st Feb 2020







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Quality Assurance Council

University Grants Commission, Sri Lanka

University: Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

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Section 1: A Brief Introduction to the University and its Review Context

Sabaragamuwa University began in 1991 as the Sabaragamuwa Affiliated University College (SAUC) formed in affiliation with the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Established at Belihuloya in the Sabaragamuwa Province on 20th November 1991 under the Sabaragamuwa Province Affiliated University College Ordinance No. 14 of 1992, the delivery of academic programmes commenced on 7th May 1992.

Consequently, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL) was established on November 07, 1995 as a University under the section 21 of the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and opened on February 2, 1996, with four faculties. It was then decided to amalgamate the Uva Affiliated University at Rahangala and Buttala Affiliated University as Faculties of Agricultural Sciences and Applied Sciences, respectively. Faculty of Agricultural Sciences at Rahangalawas shifted to Belihuloya in 2001. Faculty of Geomatics was established as the fifth faculty, in 2004. Faculty of Applied Scienceswas moved to the main campus in Belihuloya.

As at January 2020, the Sabaragamuwa University had eight faculties, Agricultural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Geomatics, Management Studies, Medicine, Social Sciences and Language and Technology comprising 28 academic departments offering 40 degree programs. The scope of this review covered the following five faculties:

- Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
- Faculty of Applied Sciences
- Faculty of Geomatics
- Faculty of Management Studies; and
- Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages

Sabaragamuwa University offers programmes to undergraduate and postgraduate students and the wider community through the Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL). The University operates under a semester-based model and conducts the majority of its programmes in English.

The University has an ambitious infrastructure program and campus master plan and has ample facilities to serve its staff and student population. This includes the progressive development and ongoing improvement of its facilities for both students and staff.

The University has a Strategic Management Plan 2014-18 and Strategic Vision and Mission statements:

Vision

To be an internationally acclaimed centre of excellence in higher learning and research.

Mission

Our mission is to be a centre in the forefront of generation, advancement and dissemination of knowledge while promoting learning, research and training to produce competent human resources possessing knowledge, skills and attitudes to contribute towards sustainable development.

The University Strategic Management Plan of 2014-2018 has six goals:

- To enhance the employability of graduates.
- To enhance research capacity and its impact.
- To expand the service delivery assuring increased opportunities and access.
- To improve physical, infra and super structures and human capital to improve effectiveness and efficiency of the university administration system.
- To enhance the sustainability, social responsibility and harmony.

There are number of objectives, strategies and actions under each goal.

At the time of the Institutional Review the University had 343 academic and academic support staff and 400 non-academic staff. The university has a student population of 4315 with the majority of students in the Faculty of Management Studies (1329), and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages (1087). The Faculty of Applied Sciences has (1005) students, followed by smaller student number at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences (395) and the Faculty of Geomatics with (274) students.

The University has a Council, which is the governing authority of the University and consists of the Vice Chancellor (as the ex-officio Chairperson), Deans of the Faculties, representatives of the Senate, and the members appointed by the University Grants Commission.

Sabaragamuwa University has undertaken two Institutional Reviews in 2010 and 2013 and a Strategic Action Plan 2014-2018 had been developed to address many of the concerns in those Institutional Reviews. In particular, the University revised its vision, mission statements and objectives, and began the development of monitoring and also strengthening internal quality assurance across the University with the development of an Internal Quality Assurance

Unit(IQAU)and subsequently Faculty Quality Assurance Cells (FQAC). The University has also focused on actions to improve student welfare facilities including a new hostel and canteen for female students.

The University began preparing for its 2019 Institutional Review in December 2018. This process was commenced by the IQAU with the development of an action plan for review. The first planning meeting was held at the Office of the Vice Chancellor on 4 December 2018 and responsibilities were allocated to both academic and non-academic staff.

In early January 2019, the first working session sub committees were appointed for the 10 Institutional Assessment Criteria. Each sub-committee then undertook an information collection and analysis of the relevant evidence for each criterion. At the second working session in February 2019, each sub-committee presented its materials and findings.

Later in February, a meeting of selected academic internal stakeholders was held to consider and give feedback on the materials and evidence collected. The University considered that this gave a good background and gap analysis of the university's strengths and weaknesses for developing the self-evaluation. In March 2019, several groups of internal and external stakeholders, including industry, external examiners, academics, administrative staff, academic support staff and students met to provide further feedback on the self-evaluation.

The Vice Chancellor served as the chair of the SER Steering Committee. He was assisted by the Director of the IQUA and the Chairperson of each assessment criteria team. The SER writing team was chaired by the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages and senior representatives from across the University.

The final SER document was submitted to the University Senate on 12 March 2019 and was approved to be submitted to the University Council on 26 April 2019. The final University of Sabaragamuwa Self Evaluation Review report was submitted to the Quality Assurance Council of the University Grants Commission on 7 April 2019.

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

University of Sabaragamuwa submitted a 220-page self-evaluation document to the QAC in April 2019. The report had three chapters with a number of lists of evidence for each criterion. The report had been prepared in accordance with the format given in the Manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutes published by the University Grants Commission, in April 2015 (pages 92-96).

In Chapter One, there was an introduction to the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka, comprising 1.1 Vision and Mission, 1.2 Brief history, 1.3 Organizational structure (diagram), 1.4 an extensive SWOT analysis and 1.5 Implications of previous review – improvements.

In Chapter 2, the adherence to the 10 criteria and 145 standards explained in the Manual for Institutional Review had been described with a list of documentary evidence. The listed documents were made available for observation by the Review Team. As instructed in the Manual for Institutional Review, under this chapter, the information is tabulated in four columns. The column 1 contains the Standard number and column 2 describes the university's adherence to each Standard. Column 3 highlights the documentary evidence to support the claim and finally, column 4 indicates the code of the document. However, in certain sections, previous/ forthcoming numbers were specified which needed some additional time to trace the documents or the evidence provided was not directly relevant to the standard under consideration.

Under Criterion 1, Governance and Management have been highlighted using 29 Standards. In this section, how the SUSL adheres to the Legal Acts, establishment codes, rules, national policy framework and strategies within the governance and management are explained. In the next section, the Criterion 2, University's adherence to the policies and practices relevant to curriculum design and development has been examined under 15 Standards.

Under the criterion 3, Teaching and Learning is elaborated under 10 standards. In this section, practices of the University on Student Centred and Outcome Based Education are described. Under Criterion 4, Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression have been summarized under 14 standards. The next section deals with the Student Assessment and Awards (Criterion 5). It explains the assessment system followed by the University's strategy to maintain the academic standards of the programmes.

The Criterion 6 deals with the Strength and Quality of Staff under 11 Standards. This section provides evidence to the guidelines formulated for recruitment and promotion of staff, staff development and induction of new recruits (staff) and recognition for outstanding performance.

The next section, which is related to Criterion 7: Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization described 25 Standards. This section demonstrates the level of University's commitment to facilitate the development and maintenance of a good research culture, strengthening of postgraduate education, encouragement of innovation and commercialization of research outcomes.

In Criterion 8, Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach have been discussed under 6 Standards. This section is basically confined to the extension courses and services of the University to engage with public and maintain links with community and the industry. The Criterion 9 which deals with Distance Education has been highlighted under 13 Standards. This section provides evidence for open and distance education which provide opportunities to students who have been unable to enter the internal system of education. The final section on Quality Assurance covers information on policies, processes and practices related to the quality of University's academic programmes.

Conclusions and current actions were presented in the Chapter 3 of the SER. This section discusses SUSL's progress and achievements to date in teaching and learning, and student support services including the library and considers its need to further strengthen activities in terms of industry linkages and community engagement, and a current university discussion regarding teaching excellence.

The SWOT analysis with identified strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats can also be considered as evidence to indicate the quality of the SER report. High employability rates of graduates, a young and energetic academic workforce, well maintained facilities including residential facilities for staff and a positive reputation with the external community are identified as significant features of the University.

Further, the SER has identified some of the issues that affect quality assurance in the University. The more significant issues referred to in the SER are related to negative perceptions about the location of the University, a limited number of on-line and distance education learning facilities and the lack of entry pathways and support for international students.

Review Team considers the SER had been prepared according to the guidelines given in the manual for IR. Even though the documentary evidence was compiled diligently, in some standards the compiled evidence was not directly relevant. Further, evidence of regular analysis of some important review and output data, for example, reporting against objectives on an annual basis, would have greatly improved the SER.

Section 3: A Brief Description of the Review Process

After an Expression of Interest from the Chairman/UGC to the Vice Chancellor of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL), for the University to be reviewed on its quality assurance process, the QAC of the UGC requested SUSL to submit a Self-Evaluation Report according to guidelines in the manual for Institutional Review of Sri Lankan Universities and Higher Education Institutions. A six-member review team was appointed by the Chairman of the University Grants Commission and approval was obtained from the University for this panel.

Each member of the review team was given a hard copy of the SER by the QAC quite early in the review process. Each member evaluated the SER individually as a desk review and submitted marks for each standard in each criterion on a template provided by the QAC. The template provided an automatic final score for the desk evaluation by each member according to different weightings given to each criterion.

After QAC received the 6 desk evaluations from the reviewers, the QAC amalgamated all 6 desk reviews and made it available for the members of the review team so that each member was able to see how close their evaluation was with respect to a standard with that of the other five members. This information was available and was discussed among the members at a pre-site-visit meeting arranged by the QAC at the UGC, and also at a meeting in Belihuloya, the day prior to start of the site-visit at the University on 27th January 2020.

The chairperson of the review team communicated with the IQAU Director of SUSL, the Director of the QAC, UGC and the other five review team members and finalized the schedule for the six-day site-visit from 27th Jan – 1st Feb 2020. At the site, however, a few slight modifications to the schedule were made to facilitate more efficient use of the visit time and for the convenience of the team who spent long hours in the evenings perusing evidence in documents.

The schedule included the following meetings which were completed by the review team.

- A meeting of the review team with the Director /IQAU to finalize the Agenda by the review team.
- A meeting with the Vice-Chancellor
- A presentation by the Vice-Chancellor in the presence of the Council, Deans, Directors of Centres, Units, IQAU Director, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, Marshall, Senior Medical Officer, Wardens, Senior Student Counsellor etc.

- Meeting with the members of the IQAU and team leaders of the SER writing team.
- Meeting with the Administrative Staff (Registrar, DRs, SARs, ARs).
- Meeting with Bursar, SABs, Abs.
- Meeting with Internal Audit Department.
- Meeting with the Council members.
- Meeting with non-academic staff of Administrative Sections.
- Meeting with the Librarian and Staff.
- Meeting with Senior Student Counsellors/ Student Counsellor.
- Meeting with the Head and Staff of the ELTU.

Visits were made by the review team to five faculties of the SUSL. These were the:

- Faculty of Management Studies
- Faculty of Applied Sciences
- Faculty of Social Sciences and Languages
- Faculty of Agriculture
- Faculty of Geomatics

At each of the above Faculties the following meetings were held with:

- Dean/Heads of Departments/QAFC coordinator and members
- Academic staff members
- students; and
- support staff

The review team also held meetings with the following personnel:

- Director/CODL, Academic and Administrative staff and students
- Director/Physical Education Unit, Head and Staff
- Chairman URC & CRIC
- Alumni
- Wardens, students

- Director/ UBL Cell and Faculty UBL coordinators
- Director of Career Guidance unit
- Stakeholders

The review schedule included visits to observe the facilities of the University. In the main campus, the facilities observed were ELTU, Library, Counselling Centre – “Sith Arana”, CODL, Physical Education Unit, Gymnasium, Hostels and Canteens, Gender Equity and Equality Centre (GEE) and Computer Units.

In addition, all facilities in the 5 faculties were observed. These included the classrooms, lecture halls, auditoria, laboratories, computer units, staff offices, HoD’s offices and administrative unit and faculty specific locations in each faculty.

Each day the review team spent considerable time reviewing the documentation which was provided as evidence for the reporting in the SER. The evidence coding and filing system was satisfactory. Both senior staff and the young facilitators made every effort to assist as much as possible with this evidence review task.

Considerable time was spent by the review team in discussion triangulating the evidence provided as documentation and the outcomes of their meetings and the observation of facilities. These deliberations were essential in assigning marks for each standard in the 10 criteria. The review team also developed the write up of the proceedings. On the final day of the site-visit the review team held a wrap-up meeting with the Acting VC, Deans, Directors, members of the SER writing team, Director/IQAU and other relevant staff members. etc. The major findings of the review were highlighted at this final wrap up meeting.

The chairperson of the review team sent the preliminary report to the Director/QAC on 14/02/2020, within the 2 stipulated weeks after the end of the site-visit. This final draft of the review report has to be sent within 6 weeks after the completion of the site-visit .

Section 4: Overview of the University's Approach to Quality and Standards

The approach of the SUSL to Quality Assurance is commendable. The central role that must be played by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) has been identified and endorsed by the top administration of the University, which has given a prominent place to this in the Corporate Plan. Further, the University has been able to identify and implement best practices that are vital to maintain the quality of the education and other services provided by the University. Easily accessible convenient space has been allocated to setup an office for the IQAU within the University, which is the area where main administrative buildings are located, and QA Management Committee meetings have been conducted.

In the establishment and expansion of the IQAU system within the university, the guidelines provided by UGC Circular 2015/5 have been followed. Accordingly, a Professor with adequate administrative experience, has been selected and appointed as the Director/ IQAU.

The QA Management Committee of the IQAU representing all the Deans, Registrar, Librarian and a convener (AR) has been appointed. The IQAU performs effectively, coordinating and spearheading all QA activities within the University. Accordingly, Internal Quality Assurance Cells (IQACs) have been established in all the faculties in order to coordinate and implement QA activities. The IQACs are formed representing all the departments in each faculty. This procedure of regularly reporting the QA activities at the Senate and at Faculty Boards has resulted in disseminating such activities across all the staff members, within the University.

In the Senate meetings, there is a separate agenda item for quality assurance activities and various activities have been conducted regularly. The Director of the IQAU is mandated to present the progress of the IQAU activities to the Senate at each meeting. Similarly, the QA activities of each faculty have been regularly reported at the respective Faculty Boards, by the faculty QA Coordinator. The faculties and the Senate are closely monitoring the progress of the QA related decisions and their implementation. Thus, the SUSL has taken effective steps to internalize the QA activities within the University. This was quite evident during the site-visit as all the staff members, including academic and other staff members expressed their awareness of the QA procedures. It was also commendable to note that all the senior academic members have contributed effectively to the QA activities, especially in the preparation of the Self-Evaluation Report (SER) and their presence at the time of site-visits by the review team.

The Director IQAU has taken every effort in coordination of QA related activities, representing the University at QA Standing Committee meetings, liaising with other stakeholders, organizing and preparation of the University for the Program Reviews and the Institutional Reviews that are

key functions of the IQAU. The IQAU has developed their own QA policy, by-laws and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) defining their responsibilities. All faculties are conversant with the national framework of quality assurance in higher education. Academics are aware of Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF) and have aligned their programs with the SLQF.

The SUSL follows accepted norms and regulations which help to internalize the QA aspects into practices associated with the governance and delivering of academic programmes. New approaches in delivering academic programmes, including SLQF, Outcome Based Education (OBE), Student Centred Learning (SCL) approaches are being developed. Several programs are based on the principles of LCT (Learner Centred Teaching) and OBE. However, this is not widely practiced across all the faculties and this needs to be regularized in future.

It is imperative that the higher administration extends its fullest support to the Director IQAU in striving for excellence in Quality Assurance.

Section 5: Commentary on the ten criteria of Institutional Review

5.1 Governance and Management

The governing structure of SUSL comprises the Council, Senate and eight Faculty Boards in compliance with part IV of the Universities Act. No. 16 of 1978. As stipulated in this Act and UGC circulars, the authority for administration rests with the Vice-Chancellor, Registrar, Bursar and the Deans of Faculties. The Organogram of the SUSL was available with the position of officers and their roles, responsibilities and lines of reporting. The position of the Centre for Quality assurance however was notably absent in the organogram. Policies and by-laws on matters relating to students' rights and disciplinary issues are stipulated under the by-laws approved by the Council. The University adheres to the policies approved by the Council on allocating housing and hostel facilities to members of the staff and students. There was no University calendar. By-laws were not dated and many official documents were not dated and needed to be so.

The University Strategic Plans (2014-2018 and 2019 - 2023) and Action Plans had been developed in line with the Strategic Management Plan of UGC 2013-2017 and part one of the National Policy Framework on Higher Education 2009. There were no faculty action plans however in line with the University action plan.

The commitment of SUSL to reflect the national, regional and international trends was not apparent. Documents were incomplete and there was no information about whether the MoUs were active or not. The Confucius Centre given by China is implemented and in operation.

The governance and administrative structure of SUSL is in place to achieve its mission, goals and objectives while facilitating policy development for accountability through statutory and ad-hoc committees. Faculty Board minutes should have had attendance sheets. Some of the documents submitted as evidence were only memos and some documents had only the front page. In some documents, the period under review was not covered.

Even though some participatory involvement of members of the academic, administrative, academic support and non-academic staffs, students, regional government officers and community is taking place in planning processes at the SUSL, Council minutes did not show connection to the strategic plan and Senate minutes did not show connection to strategic plan. There was also no evidence of strategic planning between the University and the faculties. Minutes of meetings were incomplete and relevant minutes were not available.

Only two documents relevant to the standard, which is on mechanisms and approved procedures to be in place to ensure implementation and monitoring of all institutional policies, strategies and action plans, were available. These were the Organization results framework progress of the years 2017 and 2018. In the allocation of resources, the evidence was a wish list. There was no clear evidence for the allocation of resources according to the strategic plan or whether it was developed and allocated in a transparent manner.

In the procurement, management and maintenance of equipment and facilities, the computerized Fixed Assets Register (FAR) of SUSL is maintained by applying Sri Lanka Public Sector Accounting Standards (SLPSAS - 7). FAR shows the property, plant and equipment at cost or revalued amounts less accumulated depreciation charged on a straight-line method as per the rates stated (per annum) in the UGC circular No.649 of 05.10.1995. Some relevant documents were available. Some SOPs were not available.

The financial management procedures of SUSL comply with the requirements of the national and University financial regulations and guidelines and hence financial officers of the University adhere to financial regulations while performing their day-to-day duties. Financial procedures are acceptable. These processes need to be reviewed on a regular basis. The manual of financial procedures is from 1992, and we believe that is the latest available.

In the receiving and disbursement of funds from external sources, most of the documents were not relevant to this standard. Some documents were from 2019 and some were not available. The documents of the 2018 research grants committee meeting were at an acceptable standard.

Even though SUSL has an internal audit division, which should facilitate the Auditor General's Department to monitor transparency of all matters relevant to auditing, no evidence of internal audit checks was available except in one instance.

Also, it was stated that SUSL has in place a policy of ascertaining student satisfaction and performance and employability of graduates through exit surveys at the general convocation. There should be a common template for the performance of employability of graduates for the whole University. A culture to reflect on performance of staff and students was not apparent.

SUSL applies its Management Information System (MIS) in examinations, student registration, payroll, accounting system, procurement process and stock management system. The Faculty of Management has its own MIS to maintain student records. Library has its own computerized systems. However, there was no information of a reliable comprehensive information management system.

The SER reported that the University uses ICT for management (payroll, daily attendance, timetabling, classroom allocation), communication (e-mail), teaching and learning (Learning Management System (LMS)), research (library e-portal), and community engagement via its website and social media. However, majority of the stated evidence to support this claim was not available. Wi-Fi system is in operation in some faculties.

There were irrelevant documents in support of the claim that SUSL ensures all members of the staff and students to have access to efficient and reliable ICT facilities including access to the University web, University email and email notices and information services. There was no documented ICT Policy for the University.

There was only a draft policy from the ethics committee in support of policies that enforce academic honesty and integrity, conflict of interest and ethics. Most of the documents produced as evidence were irrelevant. SUSL has a transparent mechanism to recruit appropriately qualified staff through advertisements based on internal and UGC circulars. The Staff Development Centre (SDC) conducts workshops for both academic and non-academic staff to upgrade their skills while the University provides local and foreign trainings for staff. The University provides accommodation to the University staff at subsidized rates to ensure retention. The advertisement on recruitment was acceptable.

There were no clear policies on the role and duty lists of academic and non-academic staff of the SUSL, code of ethics and academic accountability, circulars, and the university E-code. Much of these information should be available online. Leave forms were available.

Work norms of academic staff were in draft form and the University hopes to adopt work norms for all categories of staff and adherence to the work norms in line with the relevant UGC norms. A common template would be beneficial in this respect. Some of the records are monitored. Some documents were not available, and some others were not relevant to this standard.

There was no specific system in place for separate staff performance appraisal and management systems for academic, administrative and non-academic staff.

In the use of subject benchmark statements (SBSs) and Sri Lanka Qualification Framework, there was no matching of the subject benchmarks with the contents. There was no evidence on regular course reviews and of a Senate subcommittee on academic development, which could be in charge of these activities. In most cases the evidence provided was insufficient as only document cover pages were provided.

SUSL has adopted UGC circulars and established an IQAU; subsequently, all faculties have established FQACs. The IQAU has communicated its standards and policies to faculty members

and administrators. Most faculties have quality assurance cells, which function satisfactorily. The QA policy however is in draft form. There was no mention of quality in the strategic plan

SUSL has considerable financial allocations for research, travel and curriculum development and this was acceptable. It has established a Centre for Research and Knowledge Dissemination (CRKD) and organizes a biennial international research symposium, an annual research symposium and faculty research symposia. However, there was no consistent approach to curriculum development, and teaching and learning development. There was no evidence of community engagement.

Even though the University stated that it has implemented a policy regarding foreign student and staff training, and exchange programs with number of foreign Universities, there was no specific policy. There was minimal evidence of action on MoUs and minimal commitment as a University.

A clear policy on transparent, fair, effective and expeditious disciplinary procedure and a grievance redress mechanism for students and staff was not available. The documentation and evidence on this need to be much more precise.

SUSL has established a separate CODL in 1995 to facilitate both in-person and remote teaching and learning for external students. There was no remote teaching and learning but a separate centre was available where several programs are offered.

SUSL has welfare schemes for students as student scholarships. For members of the staff, distress loans and financial support in the form of loans to purchase computers, vehicles and property are made available. The University has introduced medical insurance to its employees in partnership with Sri Lanka Insurance Corporation. All students and most members of staff are provided accommodation in and around the University premises at concessionary rates. Dining facilities are provided to all students at affordable rates. Welfare schemes are satisfactory. Policies on these could be improved.

The policies and strategies to promote GEE and deter Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) is in good shape at SUSL. The University has established a CGEE as per a UGC circular. SUSL has a council approved comprehensive policy document on GEE and SGBV. The Council of SUSL has appointed a Director for the CGEE. SUSL has been implementing strategies to overcome SGBV since 2017 and has annual action plans drawn up in line with the UGC prescribed policy and SUSL council approved policy framework. SUSL has progress reports of activities conducted by its CGEE. SUSL has included a four (4) hour special lecture on SGBV at the annual orientation programme conducted by the Director / CGEE/ SUSL. SDC of

SUSL organizes lectures on SGBV awareness at the induction and training programme of the probationary lecturers, unconfirmed lecturers and probationary senior lecturers, and are conducted by the Director/CGEE/SUSL with the help of senior resource persons from outside. CGEE of SUSL has conducted a number of workshops to ensure awareness on Gender and SGBV among members of the academic, administrative and non-academic staff. SUSL has formulated faculty gender cells.

University handles online inquiries regarding ragging via its website. UGC circulars developed to curb ragging has been included in the Student Handbook to raise awareness on newly implemented rules and regulations. Student counsellors and advisors have been appointed and informed to minimize intimidation and harassments. Reporting on these aspects is necessary and the procedures needed to be established.

5.2 Curriculum and Programme Development

SUSL has made efforts for the participation of different stakeholders such as the SUSL academics specialized in different areas, public sector officials, industry partners and alumni members in designing and developing the curricula. The approval of course design and development by faculties are channelled to respective Faculty Board's and the Senate for final approval. However, there was no curriculum development framework for the University. Processes are inconsistent across the University. Policy frameworks and templates are needed to be developed. What was available was only a collection of different documents from faculties. Uniformity in documentation was not apparent.

Some work is apparent regarding communication to stakeholders. However, there is no policy or principal adopted on systematic procedures of how programmes are designed. There is no consistency among the faculties. Student Handbooks (SHBs) which contain the necessary details about programme curricula and assessment procedures are distributed among all incoming students in the orientation week. There is no credit transfer policy.

Degree programmes seem to make use of reference points such as SLQF, SBS and Codes of Practice in program development, and some work on mapping and analysis is in progress. There is no indication of Senate or Council contribution to these activities. There was some SLQF mapping available for marketing analysis.

There was some evidence regarding the incorporation of OBE and SCL methods such as interactive lectures and tutorial sessions, small group activities, recommended readings at the library, uploading articles and videos to LMS, in-class assessments in designing and developing the curricula of study programs. However, there was no evidence of obtaining approval for the

policy documents from relevant authorities, or on adoption of policy across the University. There was minimal evidence of how student feedback is being utilized in course review.

Programs offered by SUSL states the respective graduate profile in its course manual while this information is properly communicated to students via the handbook/prospectus. There was no evidence of a University graduate or mapping of faculty graduate profile through the strategic plan to a University graduate profile.

For each study program a document on 'programme specification' is communicated to students via the faculty prospectus at the beginning of each semester. There is a need of a consistent standardized approach across the University. There was a collection of documents, but no framework was available. Faculties have different formats of course specifications.

SUSL publishes the programme and course specifications through respective SHBs, guidebooks, prospectus and website. These are needed to be aligned with an institutional framework. Faculty documents indicate that pedagogical changes are made in degree programmes. This however is not consistent. A framework to measure this at institutional level was not available.

Degree programmes are structured to facilitate achievement of learning outcomes and are assessed based on students' attainment of learning outcomes. The availability of a Senate or Institutional approved framework which articulates all the requirements such as curriculum development, community development, examination setting and student achievement surveys would have been beneficial.

SUSL offers supplementary courses in the forms of vocational, professional, inter-disciplinary and multidisciplinary nature to enrich the general curricula. Postgraduate degrees, diplomas and higher national diplomas are available. More programs could be designed. The scope of the offering could be broadened to meet the needs of the regional community and University students.

To protect the academic interest of students when a program is suspended, there is no institutional policy. The review team recognized however that the University has not suspended any program so far and the likelihood of a program being suspended is minimal. Provision has been made for students when there are old and new curriculum requirements.

SUSL programmes are aimed to be outcome - based, a fact evident through higher retention rates, timely completion of programmes, higher graduation rates at first attempt *etc.* There is some evidence of the use of program data, but regular reporting needs to be strengthened and this activity needs to be consistent across the university.

SUSL conducts annual tracer studies on graduate employment at the time of graduation and later periodically. This needs to be consistent and regular. There was no evidence of how these tracer studies were used in program reviews.

There is some activity by the IQAU and faculty-FQACs which adopt internal monitoring strategies and effective processes to evaluate, review and improve the course design and development through systematic course evaluations of students, peers and stakeholders. However, there was no consistency. These need to be conducted annually across the university and reported and discussed at the Senate.

Degree programmes are reviewed according to the UGC-QAC schedule with the use of the new review manual in the external quality assurance process. There should be consistency in this activity. However, there is a need that these reviews are conducted internally across the University and reported and further developed and monitored by the Senate.

5.3 Teaching and Learning

In this review process, five faculties were evaluated which includes Faculties of Agricultural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Geomatics, Management Studies, and Social Sciences & Languages. These faculties have adopted similar frameworks in establishing their teaching and learning process. The commencement of the study programs follows a framework where the department initiatives are scrutinized at the faculty level curriculum committees prior to the Senate and Council approvals. These programmes are reviewed and revised frequently with the inputs of the staff, students, alumni and stakeholders. The incorporation of inputs and frequency of the review varies between the faculties and it is highly desirable to have reviews every five years to improve their quality by accommodating local as well as global changes.

There is lack of evidences in the use of subject benchmarks in designing the programs in all the study programmes. In fact, some disciplines such as Geomatics which is unique to SUSL has no subject benchmarks. It is recommended to establish subject benchmarks for all the disciplines and implement them to meet the regional and global standards ensuring acceptable quality graduates. Furthermore, there is lack of evidence in the incorporation of innovations and current advances in knowledge into the curriculum.

ICT based learning facilities such as Moodle are used in teaching and learning process in all the faculties. With the availability of equipped ICT laboratory facilities in all the faculties, these activities can be further strengthened encouraging the student-centred learning activities in all the faculties. Introduction of intensive English courses and IT courses during the orientation

program and at different levels in their degree programs is commendable in developing soft skills of the students. Proper execution of modifications to these ICT and soft skill courses based on the student feedback is recommended to make them more productive to the student community.

Several faculties have implemented student centred learning activities with the defined intended learning outcomes (ILOs). Some faculties are behind in this process and some academics have not adopted the ILO concepts in the student evaluations and assessments creating a disparity in the teaching learning process. It is evident that some staff training programmes have been conducted to create awareness among the staff and it is recommended to strengthen such programs through the staff development centre.

It is evident that detailed syllabi, prerequisites and pathways are available to all the students through the internet and faculty handbooks. Students appear to be happy with their course structure and their selections to different honours degree programmes based on the academic merit. Most of the faculties have adopted a quota system in selecting their honours degree students while some degree programmes produce honours graduates only.

Teaching evaluation has been practised in some degree programmes but the incorporation of student feedback to improve the teaching practices are not clear. The evidence provided to the review team indicates that the students are comfortable in their learning process. Peer evaluation is not uniformly done in all the departments. This is encouraged to establish a sound, transparent peer evaluation mechanism throughout the university.

Most of the academics are well experienced and the new recruits have undergone a Certificate in Teaching in Higher Education (CTHE) course enabling them to adopt good teaching practices. A significant number of academics have yet to achieve their postgraduate qualifications. Establishing links with reputed foreign universities will facilitate the training of younger staff exposing to the latest developments in the disciplines and mind setting them to engage in research activities.

The enthusiasm of the students and staff are high in most of the faculties. But there was no evidence of a reward system for innovative teaching. The university could consider the establishment of a mechanism to reward its staff through innovative research and teaching. The learning environments are conducive with space and facilities. However, there is very limited evidence of student group activities in the curriculum to enhance learning processes.

5.4 Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression

SUSL has established its role as a state university away from the capitol city and has provided a decent environment with adequate facilities to support student progression. Providing student hostels for the duration of a student's education is commendable. In addition to several new hostels, rented places in the vicinity of the university encourages students to engage in studies with no additional transport burden in traveling from distant places. With the expansion of the facilities, all the five faculties have established a very good conducive learning environment for the students.

Student welfare support services and activities have been established at SUSL to enable a smooth transition from school to university education. A well-established orientation program is the beginning of the undergraduate progression. Gradually, student's English language and soft skill developments are ensured throughout degree programmes enabling to produce effective graduates.

All the faculties have initiated mechanisms to handle student grievances. Establishing proper grievance process is highly appropriate. Faculty Boards, Senate and University Council address issues related to the student support, scholarships, attendance, examination and student discipline through by-laws and standard operating practices. It is evident that there is a need to adopt formal university level policies in handling such issues.

SUSL has sufficient library, sports, cafeteria facilities and support services to support its student community. Future proposed developments in sport and library facilities will strengthen current infrastructure and support the sports science degree program.

In some faculties there are established career guidance programmes for developing soft skills and teamwork. Students also have access to internships to develop their career paths. Discussion with stakeholders revealed that few of the graduates have become successful entrepreneurs through these programs.

The university career guidance unit has an academic as the director and a fulltime trained person to conduct programs for all the faculties. They coordinate the internship programs and other activities. It is not clear whether all the faculties are obtaining the maximum benefit from this centre.

The university health centre is administrated by a medical officer. The centre serves for all student needs and environmental sanitation. The centre also provides laboratory testing service and pharmacy service. The preventive health section is responsible for overall hygiene of the community including sewerage maintenance. The health centre also conducts educational programmes especially for students among others on sexuality, hostel life, elimination of bed bugs, hostel and canteen hygiene, room management etc. which the students find very useful. The university and staff of the health centre should be commended for the excellent services offered to the university community with limited facility and space.

The English Language Teaching Unit established in the Faculty of Arts conducts English courses to enhance knowledge and skills of the undergraduates. The language laboratory and other facilities and interactive programs give immense support to the faculty and the University.

Establishment and commencement of the successful “Sith Arana” student counselling system has accomplished its goal and become a safe home for the students seeking support. It is noted from all the faculties that destructive student interactions prevail at SUSL. Often complaints were made to the review team by the student community, alumni, academics, supportive staff and they have urged that the university needs to strengthen interventions and that the current support systems are not adequate. University administration needs to make a strong commitment to eradicate unpleasant and hostile experiences for all students particularly newcomers. Maintaining a student friendly environment by students will facilitate acceptance of the newcomers. Over the years, certain arrangements have been adopted by the university to stop ragging. The student counsellors and marshals are key figures in this exercise.

Lack of evidence for remedial action on student feedback and lack of focus on student-centred leaning activities along with insufficient evidence of policies and practices in monitoring student progression are the major draw backs in the study programs. Immediate suitable interventions to overcome these issues are needed at the faculty level as well as the University level.

The information provided to the wider public, for example, the stakeholders is still only through the University and faculty websites. Information especially on financial support, academic calendar, examination systems etc are not clearly conveyed. The University should consider improving the clarity and accessibility of all information provided to stakeholders on a regular basis.

5.5 Student Assessment and Awards

University has an effective procedure for designing, approving, monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies. Students’ awards are presented at the convocation for high performers.

Award system (Deans List) is recommended to the students who perform well in their first three years of education and extra curricula activities by adhering to a standard criterion.

The SER stated that University reviews and amends assessment regulations every five years or as required. However, periodical amendments to assessment regulations were not presented with appropriate evidence. It is recommended to review and amend assessment regulations to ensure that programs remain current and valid in the light of developing knowledge in the discipline and practice in its application. It is recommended that students are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures which are communicated to all students and staff through various means.

All degree programs have assessment strategies, and these include formative and summative assessments which have given common weightage for most of the course units (eg.40% formative, 60% summative) Formative assessments are not treated as learning tools which enable students to receive constructive feedback and an opportunity to improve by reflecting on their own learning. It is recommended to give constructive feedback to students, which enable them to improve their own learning.

The assessment strategies are clearly structured in the curriculum and communicated to students before commencing the respective course modules through student handbook, study guides and LMS. The evidence of effective measurement of ILO's are not clearly defined in the curricular. It is recommended to align the assessment methods with ILO's as a key motivator to learning.

All the faculties nominate and appoint second examiners/moderators as a practice in the assessment process to maintain the quality control. Although it is stated in the SER, the policy document on appointment of external examiners (p.133) was not available in the relevant file (1902). There is no declared policy in this aspect within the University and it is recommended that a policy is needed to be developed.

It was reported by students that some faculties take more than three months to release the end semester examination results. This is one of the important aspects, which need to be monitored by the FQACs of the University. Waiting for the marks from the external examiners (as well as from internal examiners in some instances) and the long delay in processing examination results from the central examination unit may be the reasons for this delay. It is worth exploring the use of ICT in processing results and decentralizing the examination branch to faculties to avoid these types of delays in the future.

Permanent staff are appointed as internal examiners. The external examiners are also qualified and have to be approved by the Senate. There is clear evidence that the assessment decisions are documented accurately and kept with required security in all faculties.

There are no policy, mechanisms and procedures for the recognition of prior learning/qualifications, inter-faculty and inter-institutional credit transfer, but there was evidence that some actions were undertaken to transfer credit. It is recommended that a recognition of prior learning/credit transfer policy and regulations are developed to support inter-faculty and inter-institutional credit transfer.

5.6 Strength and Quality of Staff

SUSL follows the standard guidelines set by UGC for recruitment, promotion and leave. Increment forms are used by relevant Heads to appraise the academic performance. There is no formal mechanism for performance appraisal and grievances handling of the staff. It is stated in the SER that SUSL follows a policy on occupational health and safety (p.141). Evidence was not provided to support the claim.

SUSL has an appropriate number of academic staff to conduct each study program in line with current requirements. The total number of academic staff in the university is 343, out of which 169 (49%) academics are lecturer probationary category and temporary staff. This situation is not healthy. It is recommended that the University consider the recruitment of permanent and professionally qualified academic staff to maintain quality and relevance of undergraduate programs. There is no evidence that newly recruited academic staff are mentored and guided by senior staff except in a few cases of higher degree supervision. It is recommended to develop a policy on career development for newly recruited staff.

The Staff Development Centre (SDC) of the University is adequately resourced. It conducts induction program for probationary lecturers and a few professional development programs. There was no evidence of conducting training programs for all categories of staff to retain and motivate them for the roles and tasks they perform. It is essential that staff members should be encouraged and trained on outcome-based education (OBE) and student-centred learning (SCL). Also, there is no evidence given for staff training on OBE and SCL. Peer observation forms were not available.

SUSL follows the UGC circular on academic accountability and work norms in allocating workload for the academic staff in fair and transparent manner. However, the policy was not provided as evidence. Records of job description of non-academic/ administrative staff were not provided.

Most of the faculties in the University conduct Annual Research Symposia so that staff members have an opportunity to refresh, strengthen, and improve their knowledge, and skill levels through interaction with their peers both local and international.

Although the University appraises the academic and non-academic staff annually there was no evidence of a systematic policy and processes for the appraisal of staff regarding teaching, research, patent and other outcomes and achievements. It is recommended to formulate a policy on performance appraisal for all staff to focus on the achievements and outcomes of academic and non-academic staff.

The standard 6.10 underperformance revealed by performance appraisal was not adequately addressed.

5.7 Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization

The postgraduate programmes of the SUSL are centralized at the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGST) from 2016. Some postgraduate programmes were offered at faculty level prior to establishment of the FGST. The Dean is the academic and administrative head of the FGST and the administration is supported by an Assistant Registrar and an Assistant Bursar. The faculty is administered through the Board of Graduate Studies chaired by the Dean of the Faculty and academic affairs are managed through eight boards of studies namely Agricultural Sciences, Computing & Information Systems, Geomatics, Humanities, Management, Physical & Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and Sports Science & Physical Education.

The FGST, offers many taught and research programmes leading to postgraduate degrees (PGD, MSc, MBA, MPhil and PhD) and has planned to expand the courses offered further with the support of the Boards of Studies. The FGST also has the potential to introduce Postgraduate Certificate courses. However, there is no documented uniform system with regard to annual reviewing or monitoring of postgraduate programmes in all faculties.

The scope and tasks of the FGST can be further expanded through strengthening the non-academic cadre positions of the faculty. University needs to encourage and provide more opportunities to promote inventions, patenting and innovations in research, which is at a minimal level at present.

FGST has prepared informative prospectus providing the required details of the postgraduate programmes offered. Clear selection, admission and enrolment procedures are given in the

prospectus with alignment to SLQF. Some actions are taken to enhance the quality of postgraduate programmes and actions are taken to reward the research excellence among academic staff and the University has many opportunities to improve this aspect further. University has an IP policy and ethical guidelines. Commercialization of research outcomes of students and staff needs to be more recognized and supported. However, the University does not provide any specific training programmes to postgraduate academic staff or research students at present. Such training programmes could improve the capacity of staff and students and could be a catalyst in innovations.

5.8 Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach

SUSL has identified the need for community engagement, consultancy and outreach activities in the University Corporate Plan together with identified strategies to adapt at different levels even though policies are not enacted on this aspect. SUSL collaborates with external partners such as industry/business/state sector institutions for work-based or industry-placement learning as part of the programme of study with clearly defined ILOs. University has established mechanisms to encourage and facilitate staff and students to engage in community engagement, consultancy and outreach activities and has taken some steps to publicize and disseminate information on such activities through the website, newsletter, *etc.* However, documentary evidence to show that such programmes and budgets are approved by appropriate authorities are limited. The University adopts strategies to improve the understanding and enhancement of its reputation among stakeholders but does not have a formalized monitoring mechanism to gain feedback on community perceptions of its activities. However, external stakeholders, alumni and community representatives appreciated and praised the involvement of staff and students in several community engagement activities undertaken.

Qualifications of the internal staff engaged in supervising and/or teaching of work-based or industry placement assignments are documented properly but information on external staff needs to be documented.

5.9 Distance Education

The history of the distance education of SUSL is older than its establishment in 1996. It was initially started as a community development centre with the aim of providing certificate programmes to empower students of the region with practical knowledge and skills needed for them to find a suitable job. In the year 2000, the centre was renamed as EDPESU and at present it is known as Centre for Open and Distance Learning (CODL). The mission of CODL is to disseminate knowledge to the external students and assist them to achieve an academic or professional qualification, with the vision of operating high-quality external degree programmes, diplomas, certificate courses and extension programmes by the university.

According to the information provided, CODL currently offers 14 programmes which have specific enrolment requirements (Table 5.1). However, the information available in the webpage indicates only 6 courses.

Table 5.1: Degrees/Diplomas/certificate programmes conducted by CODL

	Name of the Course/Diploma/Degree	SLQF Level	No. of Credits/ Duration of the programme
1	BA General (External) Degree Programme	5	90 credits after SLQL 2 or 60 credits after SLQL 3 or 30 credits after SLQL 4
2	Higher Diploma in English	4	60 credits after SLQL 2 or 30 credits after SLQL 3
3	Higher Diploma in Cooperative Business Management	4	60 credits after SLQL 2 or 30 credits after SLQL 3
4	Diploma in English	3	30 credits after SLQL 2
5	Diploma in Software Engineering	3	30 credits after SLQL 2
6	Diploma in Social Development and Welfare	3	30 credits after SLQL 2
7	Diploma in Tourism and Hospitality Management	3	30 credits after SLQL 2
8	Diploma in Business Management	3	30 credits after SLQL 2
9	Certificate Course in Computer & Information Technology	1	
10	Certificate Course in Networking	1	
11	Certificate Course in English	1	
12	Certificate Course in Web Based Application Development	1	
13	Certificate Course in Advanced Computer Aided Drawing	1	
14	Certificate in Advanced JAVA Programming	1	

All the programmes conducted by CODL have obtained approval from the relevant BOS, Management Committee of the Unit and the Senate and Council of the SUSL, in accordance with the guidelines provided by the UGC. All course learning materials and handbooks are reviewed and revised regularly.

Number of students enrolled in study programmes was based on the course requirements and availability of human and physical resources. Students were of the view that the practical sessions of IT related programmes can be conducted in a more effective manner if the resources are sufficiently available and instructions are given on time. However, the CODL has taken considerable effort to provide ICT facilities required for students to smoothly function in their programmes but from the student point of view there were concerns that some of the available facilities are inadequate. Also, there were some students who had completed courses in the past, but their results have not been released on time.

Information about distant learning programmes provided by the CODL website is an incomplete list. However, descriptions given on some courses indicate the delivery system used, the entry requirements for programmes, duration and course load, learning objectives, evaluation process, exam and completion requirements.

During the review of documents related to the CODL it was noted that the degree certificates awarded to those who complete the CODL programmes, specifically states that it is an external degree; this is in breach of the UGC guidelines.

In delivering distance education effectively, Learning Management System (LMS) and Open Source Learning Platform (MOODLE) are important integral components, which were missing at the CODL. Almost all the courses are conducted in face to face sessions and no distant learning mode programme was evident from the list of courses conducted. It was observed that MOODLE platform could be used effectively, and distance mode of learning could be facilitated.

Considering the documentary evidence and information available on the University's website, CODL is managed acceptably but there is a great need of strengthening it and the quality of programmes could be further elevated into the satisfaction of students' aspirations.

5.10 Quality Assurance

In accordance with the Circular No. 04/2015 issued by the UGC, SUSL has effectively established the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQAU) at the University, and Internal Quality Assurance Cells (FQACs) at the Faculty level in order to internalize QA operations. Also, SUSL has developed and adopted their own mechanisms for QA in line with the national framework.

The SUSL has developed their own QA policy, by-laws, SOPs for IQAU and FQACs. The QA aspirations are incorporated into the Strategic Management Plan of the University.

The SUSL has an annual budget allocation for IQA workshops/trainings at the University and faculties which address different aspects of enhancing the “quality culture” within the University. SUSL has in place a policy and procedure for curriculum revisions, programme reviews and institutional review in line with UGC-QAC EQA guidelines.

The University has taken steps to regularly update the curricula, following QA guidelines encapsulating the policies on quality of the academic programmes as outcome-based education (OBE), international standards, subject benchmarks and SLQF. The degree programs are aligned with the SLQF levels and the academic staff of all faculties are quite conversant with the SLQF. When curriculum revisions are carried out, stakeholder feedback had been taken into consideration. All faculties have undertaken student feedback and peer evaluations. However, analysis of feedback and use of feedback for further improvements were not evident in some faculties. Also, the SUSL has identified relevant remedial actions required to address recommendations of the previous IR report (2013). The IQAU has prepared the action plan to compile the next IR report.

The University has established various mechanisms to disseminate important information to all stakeholders. The University has taken steps to establish links with outside organizations through University Business Linkage as a part of the contribution to the society and community engagement.

The interviews we had with the academic staff and after pursuing the documentary evidences provided, it clearly indicates that Quality Assurance has been an area of priority since the establishment of IQAU and IQACs. All in all, the SUSL is now fully adjusted to the concepts of Quality Assurance, through well-established Internal Quality Assurance mechanism that are now in operation and working hard towards continuous improvements.

Section 6: Grading of overall performance of the University

The cumulative total score under each of the ten criterion and final score for SUSL is given in the Table6.1 below.

Table 6.1. Overall Performance of the University of SUSL

No	Criterion	Weighted minimum score	Actual criterion-wise score
1	Governance and Management	90	99
2	Curriculum Design and Development	60	72
3	Teaching and Learning	50	77
4	Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression	40	63
5	Student Assessment and Awards	50	78
6	Strength and Quality of Staff	50	58
7	Postgraduate studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization	50	55
8	Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach	30	37
9	Distance Education	20	17
10	Quality Assurance	60	114
	Total score (out of 1000)		669
	Total score (out of 100)		66.9

- i) Overall University Score is 66.9
- ii) Number of Criteria which received equal to or more than the weighted minimum score is 09
- iii) Criteria which received less than the weighted minimum score is 01.

Accordingly, the Quality of Education and Standards of Awards of the SUSL is given a “C” Grade with an Overall Grade of “**Satisfactory**”.

Section 7: Commendations and Recommendations

Criterion 1: Governance and Management

Commendations

- The University has established both an IQAU and FQACs in each faculty to ensure the quality of study programs.
- Gender Equity and Equality (GEE) is strong and student welfare is a strong focus at all levels of the University.
- University administration has taken considerable efforts to establish a range of facilities for staff and students.
- University has an adequate and transparent mechanism to recruit appropriately qualified staff.
- University conducts its financial procedures in a satisfactory manner.

Recommendations

- There is a need for university wide policy framework. Even though some policies are available in some faculties these need to be consistently developed and adopted across the University.
- There is a need to focus on an integrated planning across all faculties to ensure that all faculty action plans align with the University corporate plan and there is regular performance reporting on these plans.
- There is a need for a University wide policy and staff training on records management, which, includes consistent advice on how to handle confidential materials.
- There is a need to enhance the facilities and practices at the Examinations Division to ensure confidentiality and timeliness of operations.

Criterion 2: Curriculum and Programme Development

Commendations

- Significant curriculum development activities have taken place in all faculties concerned.
- Faculty documentation indicates that pedagogical changes to curriculum have been made.

- Student handbooks containing information on program content and assessment procedures are made available to all students. Program and course specifications are published in student handbooks, guidebooks, prospectus and on websites.
- University offers supplementary courses for enhancement of personality and professional development.

Recommendations

- There should be an approved policy/framework for curriculum development in the University to which faculties would align their own processes of curriculum development.
- A consistent approach to obtaining feedback from students regarding course content and teaching/learning in all curriculum development activities across the University.
- Even though faculty graduate profiles were available, there was no University graduate profile – hence alignment of faculty profiles with a University profile is absent.
- There should be a university statement or documentation and evidence regarding outcome-based education and student- centred learning on an approved policy.

Criterion 3: Teaching and Learning

Commendations

- Facilities and resources available for teaching and learning are relatively good and it has created a conducive environment for learning.
- The staff of most of the faculties are committed and enthusiastic and similarly students as well.
- University has taken an effort to use ICT based learning tools and LMS system in support of teaching.
- There is evidence of the use of student and peer evaluation systems in some faculties.
- Learning resources are shared between the faculties.

Recommendations

- No evidence of a consistent application across the University to prove the effective use of feedback from student and peer evaluation.
- Lack of evidence in use of subject benchmarks in all the study programs.

- Limited evidence of student group activities in the curriculum to enhance learning processes.
- There is a lack of evidence in the incorporation of innovations and current advances in knowledge into the curriculum.
- No evidence for rewarding innovative teaching, and there is no evidence that this is being addressed at a University level.

Criterion 4: Learning Resources, Student Support and Progression

Commendations

- Good student support systems are provided by the hostels throughout a student's education.
- There are sufficient library, sports, cafeteria facilities and support services and there are initiatives in place to strengthen them.
- University offers a smooth transition to a University education with a good orientation programme.
- Faculty websites and student handbooks are informative regarding student progression.
- In some faculties there are established career guidance programme for developing soft skills and teamwork. Students also have access to internships.
- Faculties have established student counselling programmes such as "Sith Arana".

Recommendations

- There is a need to strengthen interventions on destructive student interactions to maintain friendly learning environments.
- Student-staff and student-student interaction are vital for an academic setting which could not be seen in evidence provided. Therefore, it is recommended to establish mechanisms to enhance student-staff and student-student interactions.
- It is recommended to establish a mechanism to record remedial action taken for feedback.
- It was observed that resources are not enough, and less attempt has been taken to focus on developing student-centred leaning activities that should be an important concern.
- It was noted that policies and practices in monitoring student progression is not satisfactory.

Criterion 5: Student Assessment and Award

Commendations

- University has effective procedures for designing, approving and monitoring the assessment strategies for programmes.
- Students are assessed using published criteria, regulations and procedures, which are communicated to all students and staff.
- Disciplinary procedures to handle copying and plagiarism are enforced.
- University appoints qualified staff for student assessments.
- University ensures that assessments are conducted with rigour, honesty and transparency.
- University has accepted the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework in principle.

Recommendations

- It was noted that there is a need of University wide policy framework for nominations and appointments of external examiners.
- There is a need of policy for credit transfer as to facilitate student enrolment.
- Also, it is recommended to find suitable mechanisms to expedite releasing results to avoid unnecessary delays that has been noted in some programmes.

Criterion 6: Strength and Quality of Staff

Commendations

- University has sufficient number of staff who are suitably qualified and adequately trained.
- Newly recruited staff are trained by the Staff Development Centre through an induction Programme.

Recommendations

- A human resource plan or policies including an approach to performance appraisal are to be introduced and the management of underperformance should be adequately addressed.
- Formal grievance handling committees for academics and non-academics were not available.

- Newly recruited academic staff should be mentored by the senior staff.
- There is a lack of periodic training programmes such as procurement management, office management for non-academic staff.
- There is a need for a systematic peer evaluation system.
- Evidence on a workload policy for the allocation of workloads according to established work norms was not available.

Criterion 7: Postgraduate Studies, Research, Innovation and Commercialization

Commendations

- University has formulated by-laws on postgraduate studies and those are made available to all stakeholders.
- University has formulated a policy and follows procedures to promote research excellence.
- University follows a defined process for appointing supervisors for postgraduate students.
- University has formulated IPR policy and Ethical Guidelines.
- University supports academics to engage in research and disseminate research outputs.

Recommendations

- There is a need to give attention on innovation, commercialisation, and networking through actions based on the strategic plan by the University.
- University needs to give more attention on ensuring a conducive environment that inculcates and promotes innovation and commercialization.
- University need to give more attention to award and reward high impact innovations and research disseminations.
- University needs to provide access to training programs for postgraduate students to enhance their skills and knowledge and feedback of such programmes need to be obtained to further improve the effectiveness of such programmes.
- University needs to device appropriate monitoring mechanism to review postgraduate programs and monitor the progress of all the postgraduate students.
- University needs to give attention on enacting and implementing policies on the management of personal data and overall record management including maintaining confidentiality, handling conflict of interests, complaints and appeals procedures.

- University needs to give attention on enacting policies on criteria for authorship of research output and publications of papers.
- University needs to make sure to implement the ethical guidelines through appropriate mechanisms.
- University needs to give attention on interaction with industry on applied research and research incubation.

Criterion 8: Community Engagement, Consultancy and Outreach

Commendations

- University maintains a good reputation among its stakeholders.
- University collaborates well with external partners in terms of providing work based industrial placements.
- University provides some professional services to public and more potential exists for expansion of such consulting, research and professional services.

Recommendations

- University needs to devise clear policy on consultancy and extension services and their implementation to benefit a wider range of stakeholders including regional communities.
- University could periodically assess the impacts of the consultancy and extension services among the external stakeholders, alumni and community representatives.

Criterion 9: Distance Education

Commendations

- The university and CODL has made many efforts in providing Open and Distance Learning (ODL) to the community who are unable to enter a university.
- CODL provides an array of programmes such as degrees, higher diplomas, diplomas and certificate courses in demanding subject areas.
- CODL has developed their own facilities such as lecturing facilities, computer laboratories and communication facilities to offer their programmes smoothly.

Recommendations

- Currently, distance education is not an option to those who are engaged in jobs but wish to continue their education. This is an important objective that CODL has to achieve as all the CODL programmes are conducted through face to face sessions.
- It is recommended to establish an internal mechanism to monitor the quality of programmes offered by the CODL as at present there is no such mechanism in place to obtain student feedback on CODL services and administration that to encourage continuous quality improvement.
- For CODL students, there is no mechanism in place to access the library resources/e-library of the university that is much needed and was one of the main concerns of the students
- In delivering distance education effectively, LMS and MOODLE are important integral components which are recommended to bring into the practice.

Criterion 10: Quality Assurance

Commendations

- IQAU and IQACs are well established and operating according to the guidelines of QAC of the UGC. The IQAU is located at a convenient place in the University where anyone can access easily.
- IQAU office has been successfully established and is operating with the support of a qualified staff.
- IQAU has taken a leadership role in the adoption of quality assurance framework accepted by QAC through IRs, PRs, subject benchmarks and SLQF.
- All levels of staff at the University are aware of the QA process and consider it as an important activity for the development of the University. Efforts of some members of the faculties are commendable and have shown their understanding and ownership of the University's quality processes.
- Actions proposed by the QA Management Committee are reported to the higher decision-making bodies such as the Senate and the Council for approvals.
- QA is a permanent agenda item of the Senate and Faculty Boards and progress of QA activities are monitored by the Senate.
- Institutional Reviews and Programme Reviews have been conducted on time and the recommendations have been addressed accordingly.

Recommendations

- It is recommended to establish a suitable recoding mechanism for academic staff to record their workload and maintain transparency about their own accountably.
- There is a need for regular monitoring process to be established to evaluate the programmes and activities conducted by CODL to improve the quality of the Centre's outputs.
- Updated procedures for conducting examinations and proper guidelines for examination procedures are important areas to be developed

Section 8: Summary

- The Institutional Review of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL) covered five faculties (Agricultural Sciences, Applied Sciences, Geomatics, Management Studies, and Social Sciences and Languages) and the newly added Faculties of Technology, and Medicine have not been included in this review process. The University has well-defined vision and mission statements and has aligned its degree programs with the SLQF.
- SUSL has recognized its role as a state university located away from the capital city and has provided the basic facilities for students and staff. Providing hostel facilities for all the students throughout their education is a big achievement. However, retention of staff due to lack of good schools for their children will be a challenge for the University.
- University has an organizational structure, which is similar to other state Universities in Sri Lanka. The organizational structure, governance and management system are in full compliance with respective Acts, relevant Ordinances and their amendments, Establishment Codes, rules and regulations issued by the UGC and the relevant Ministries. However, monitoring methods using the existing structures need to be improved and strengthened.
- University Strategic Plans and Action Plans had been developed in line with the Strategic Management Plan of UGC and part one of the National Policy Framework on Higher Education 2009. However, there were no faculty action plans in line with the University action plan.
- SUSL applies its MIS in examinations, student registration, payroll, accounting system, procurement process and stock management system. The Faculty of Management has its own MIS to maintain student records. Library has its own computerized systems. However, there was no information of a reliable comprehensive Information Management System.
- The library is computerized and can support student centered learning if the books are updated and a greater number of copies are purchased. The services provided by the Physical Education Unit, University main Health Centre, Career Guidance Unit and Student Counsellors Office to support student life at the university are satisfactory.
- English Language Teaching Department (ELTD) offers services, depending on the requirement of each faculty. The English proficiency of students in most of the faculties are

satisfactory. The activities of ELTD show that the University has realized the importance of English for the purpose of enhancement of English knowledge of undergraduates.

- Although curricular are monitored and revised from time to time, the formal mechanism for reviewing curricular on a regular basis is not available in most of the departments. There is no formal mechanism or policy for assessing programs periodically on the basis of student attainment of learning outcomes. All the faculties have procedures for designing, approving and monitoring and reviewing the assessment strategies.
- One of the important aspects of student-based learning is to provide students with appropriate and timely feedback to enable them to monitor their progress and promote learning. All faculties on regular basis have not undertaken this. The assessment process goes through moderation, second marking which facilitate transparency and fairness. There is no declared policy on external marking and wide variation of assessment methods are being practiced by different faculties. Time taken to release results also vary widely among faculties.
- University has developed few postgraduate taught courses but the infrastructure is inadequate, and administrative and financial mechanism for research and postgraduate degrees have to be developed. The University tries to support research activities through providing support for publications and presentations in the conferences. Some of the staff have published in high impact journals and have obtained research grants.
- The diversity of mandates of different faculties has enabled SUSL to engage in community development and outreach activities. The Faculty of Agriculture provides support to farmers to improve their knowledge. The University does not fully utilize its potential for community and outreach activities in view of its location and the available resources. SUSL offers significant number of programs through the CODL but not in open and distance learning mode. In delivering distance education effectively, LMS and MOODLE are important integral components which are recommended to establish.
- SUSL has effectively established the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (IQUA) at the University, and Internal Quality Assurance Cells (FQACs) at the faculty level in order to internalize QA operations. Also, SUSL has developed and adopted their own mechanisms for QA in line with the national framework. The SUSL has developed their own QA policy, by-laws, SOPs for IQUA and FQACs. The QA aspirations are incorporated into the Strategic Management Plan of the University.

- According to the final score received (66.9%), the overall performance of the SUSL is given a “C” grade with a performance descriptor of “Satisfactory”. Quality Assurance Units established at the faculty and University levels have taken initiatives to establish a quality education in SUSL. These “initiatives” were considered favourably when assigning the combined scores for respective standards. Continuing these good practices with improved policies and documentation SUSL is in a position to achieve a better standard in years to come.

Annex: Schedule for the Institutional Review

Day 1 (Monday) 27th January 2020

Time	Activity	Coordinator	Venue of the meeting
08.00-08.30	Finalizing the Agenda by the Review Team with the Director /QAU	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/QAU	At the IQAU
08.30-08.45	Meeting with the Vice-Chancellor (Courtesy visit)	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/QAU	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom
08.45-09.30	Presentation by the Vice-Chancellor (in the presence of Council, Deans, Directors of Centers, Units, IQAU Director, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, Marshall, Senior Medical Officer, Wardens, Senior Student Counsellor etc.)	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/QAU	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom
09.30-10.30	Discussion (with tea)	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	At the Vice Chancellor's Office
10.30-11.00	Meeting with the members of the Internal Quality Assurance Unit , Team leaders of SER writing team	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/QAU	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom
11.00-12.00	Meeting with the Administrative Staff (Registrar, DRs, SARs, ARs), Bursar, SABs & ABs	Mr. VD Kithsiri Registrar	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom
		Mr. KARS Jayakody Bursar	
12.00-12.30	Meeting with Internal Audit	Mrs. CH	At the Vice

	Department	Pathirana Head / Internal Audit	Chancellor's Boardroom
12.30-13.30	Lunch	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	Staff Development Centre
13.30-14.00	Meeting with the Council members	Mr. VD Kithsiri Registrar	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom
14.00 -14.30	Meeting with Non-academic staff of Administrative Sections	Mr. VD Kithsiri Registrar	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom
14.30–14.45	Meeting with the Senior Medical Officer and Staff	Dr. WM Anoja S Wijerathna Chief Medical Officer	At the Medical Centre
14.45 -15.00	Meeting with the Librarian and Staff , Observing facilities (with Tea)	Mrs. TN Neighsoorei Librarian	At the Library
15.00-15.30	Meeting with Senior Student Counsellors/ Student Counsellor ; Observing facilities	Mr. D.Jasinghe Snr. Student Counsellor	At Sith Arana/ boardroom of FSSL
15.30-16.00	Meeting with the Head and Staff of the ELTU ; Observing facilities	DR.(Mrs.) KSN Prasangani Head/ELTU	At the English Languages Unit/ FSSL
16.00- 16.30	Meeting with the Staff Development Centre	Dr. STC Amarasinghe Director/IQAU	At the Staff Development Centre
16.30- 18.30	Review of documents	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/IQAU	At the Staff Development Centre

Day 2 (Tuesday)28th January 2020

Time	Activity	Coordinator	Venue of the meeting
Visit to Faculty of Management Studies			
08.15-08.45	Meetings with Deans/Heads/QA Faculty cell coordinator and members	Prof: WK Athula C. Gnanapala Dean Dr.SampathWahala FQA coordinator & Miss.RN Neluwapathirana Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Management Studies Boardroom
08.45-09.15	Academic staff members		
09.15-10.00	Meetings with students		
10.00-10.15	Tea	Miss.RN Neluwapathirana Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Management Studies
10.15-10.45	Meeting with supportive staff	Prof: WK Athula C. Ghanapala Dean Dr.SampathWahala FQA coordinator & Miss.RN Neluwapathirana Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Management Studies Boardroom
10.45-11.45	Observing facilities (Laboratories, Lecture halls, common facilities)		
12.00-13.00	Lunch	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	Staff Development Centre
Visit to Faculty of Applied Sciences			
13.00-13.30	Meetings with Deans/Heads/QA Faculty cell coordinator and members	Prof: UdayaRathnayaka Dean, Dr. EPN Udayakumara FQA coordinator & Mrs.AAY Abeysinghe Faculty AR	At the faculty of Applied Science Boardroom
13.30-14.00	Academic staff members		
14.00 -14.45	Meetings with students		
14.45 -15.00	Tea	Mrs. AAY Abeysinghe Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Applied Sciences
15.00-15.30	Meeting with supportive	Prof: UdayaRathnayaka	At the faculty of

	staff	Dean, Dr. EPN Udayakumara FQA coordinator & Mrs. AAY Abeysinghe Faculty AR	Applied Science Boardroom
15.30-16.30	Observing facilities (Laboratories, Lecture halls, common facilities)		At the faculty of Applied Science
16.30- 18.30	At the Staff Development Centre		Staff Development Centre

Day 3 (Wednesday) 29th January 2020

Time	Activity	Coordinator	Venue of the meeting
Visit to Faculty of Geomatics			
08.15-08.45	Meetings with Deans/Heads/QA Faculty cell coordinator and members	Dr.HM IndikaPrasanna Dean, Dr.MDEK Gunathilaka FQA coordinator & Mrs. HHKN Dharmasiri Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Geomatics Boardroom
08.45-09.15	Academic staff members		
09.15-10.00	Meetings with students		
10.00-10.15	Tea	Mrs. HHKN Dharmasiri Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Geomatics
10.15-10.45	Meeting with supportive staff	Dr.HM IndikaPrasanna Dean, Dr.MDEK Gunathilaka FQA coordinator & Mrs. HHKN Dharmasiri Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Geomatics Boardroom
10.45-11.45	Observing facilities (Laboratories, Lecture halls, common facilities)		
12.00-13.00	Lunch	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	Staff Development Centre
Visit to Faculty of Agricultural Sciences			

13.00-13.30	Meetings with Deans/Heads/QA Faculty cell coordinator and members	Dr. MMP Sumith Dean, Dr. Ruvini K. Muthucumarana FQA coordinator & Ms. MDNK Meddage Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Agricultural Science Boardroom
13.30-14.00	Academic staff members		
14.00 -14.45	Meetings with students		
14.45 -15.00	Tea	Ms.MDNKMeddage Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Agricultural Science
15.00-15.30	Meeting with supportive staff	Dr. MMP Sumith Dean, Dr.Ruvini K. Muthucumarana FQA coordinator & Ms.MDNKMeddage Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Agricultural Science Boardroom
15.30-16.30	Observing facilities (Laboratories, Lecture halls, common facilities)		At the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences
16.30- 18.30	Review of documents	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/IQAU	At the Staff Development Centre

Day 4(Thursday) 30th January 2020

Time	Activity	Coordinator	Venue of the meeting
Visit to Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages			
08.15-08.45	Meetings with Deans/Heads/QA Faculty cell coordinator and members	Dr. W Manoj Ariyaratne Dean, Dr. UPLEkamge FQA coordinator & Mrs. YS Chandrasekara Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages
08.45-09.15	Academic staff members		
09.15-10.00	Meetings with students		
10.00-10.15	Tea	Mrs. YS Chandrasekara Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages
10.15-10.45	Meeting with supportive staff	Dr. W Manoj Ariyaratne Dean, Dr. UPLEkamge FQA coordinator & Mrs. YS Chandrasekara Faculty AR	At the Faculty of Social Sciences & Languages Boardroom
10.45-11.45	Observing facilities (Laboratories, Lecture halls, common facilities)		
12.00-13.00	Lunch	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	Staff Development Centre
13.00-13.30	Meetings with Director/ CODL /Academic/Administrative staff	Mr. D.Jasinghe Director CODL & Mrs. HKIP Abeysin ghe AR	At the CODL Board room
13.30-14.00	Meeting with students		
14.00 -14.45	Observing facilities (Laboratories, Lecture halls, common facilities)		
14.45 -15.00	Tea	Mrs. HKIP Abeysin ghe	At the CODL

		AR/CODL	
15.30- 18.30	Review of documents and discussion among members of the Review Team	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/IQAU	At the Staff Development Centre

Day 5 (Friday) 31st January 2020

Time	Activity	Coordinator	Venue of the meeting
8.00 - 9.00	In main campus - Visiting Hostels & Canteens; Observing facilities, meeting with wardens, students	Prof. HMS Priyanath Director/ Student Welfare Mr. GADM Thennakoon Coordinator: SAR Student Affairs	At the Hostels Premises
9.00 – 9.30	Meeting with Chairman URC & CRIC		At the Vice Chancellor's Office
9.30 - 10.45	Team 01 Gender Equity and Equality Centre	Dr. UP Lekamge Coordinator: Director/ GEEC	At the GEE centre
	Team 02 Meeting with Director of UBL Cell and Faculty UBL coordinators	Prof. DAI Dayarathne Coordinator: Director UBL Cell	At the UBL CELL
	Team 03 Meeting with Director of Carrier Guidance unit	Dr. S Malavipathirana Coordinators: Director Carrier Guidance	At the CGU
10.45 -11.15	Tea		
11.15- 12.00	Meeting with Alumni	Coordinators: Faculty QA Cell coordinators	At the Vice Chancellor's Office

12.00-12.45	Meeting with stakeholders	Coordinators: Faculty QA Cell Coordinators	At the Staff Development Centre
12.45 – 13.30	Lunch	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	At the Staff Development Centre
13.30-14.00	Meeting with Postgraduate students	Prof. HMS Priyanath Dean/Faculty of Graduate Studies	At the Staff Development Centre
14.00-14.30	Meeting with Director/ Head and Staff/ Physical Education Unit	Mr.WALalithRohana Director (Physical Education & Sports)	At the Department
14.30-15.00	Observing facilities at Gymnasium		
15.00-15.30	Discussion among members of the Review team and summaries findings	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/IQAU	At the Staff Development Centre
15.30-18.00	Discussion among members of the Review team and write up	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/IQAU	At the Staff Development Centre

Day 6: (Saturday) 01stFebruary 2020

Time	Activity	Coordinator	Venue of the meeting
9.00 – 9.30	Site Visit to the Examinations Branch	Mr. AwanthaWijayarathne Assistant Registrar/Examinations	At the Examinations Branch
9.30 – 10.00	Site Visit to the University Museum		At the University Museum
10.00-11.30	Wrap-up meeting with the VC, Deans, Directors etc	Prof. JMCK Jayawardana Director/IQAU	At the Vice Chancellor's Boardroom

11.30– 12.00	Lunch	Mrs. MPG Silva Secretary/QA	Staff Development Centre
12.00	Departure		